

## **Parish Development Group**

22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022

The meeting was held at St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Church 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2022

Chair Father Stephen Myers

Minutes taken by Jo Seymour

### General Overview and Discussion

Father Stephen reported that the Thurrock Partnership further advanced than others in the diocese. The Bishop of Brentwood was keen to move everything further forward.

A condition survey was undertaken in 2009. Peter Johnston from the diocese is to consider the possibility of another one being undertaken. It was questioned if this was appropriate as the previous one would still be fit for purpose. It is essential that whatever is undertaken must be sustainable.

South Ockendon has a large plot and is considering selling the main hall. Tilbury has two presbyteries and will sell one as it is not habitable.

There needs to be a sense of urgency as St Thomas' is deteriorating. We don't have an option to do nothing. St Thomas' is not currently listed but could become so and this would have planning implications.

What is the plan for St Peter's? No plan yet as it seems that the building is not in need of work. It is a long-standing community.

Clarification regarding the partnership. It was discussed and questioned if Tilbury should always have a parish priest. No conclusion reached.

Discussion around if there is a plot of land in Thurrock to build a church large enough to serve the community. A 33% drop in attendance since 2020. The community needs to be reminded that there is a Catholic church in Grays.

Small hall, Parish office and garages are not fit for purpose.

Details of plans (architectural suggestions) Father Martin had drawn up meant the church could legally hold 350. Nothing has been decided.

Restoration fund has been in place a long time. Could it be reported on more clearly. It is important that it is not paid to the Diocese.

What will the Church be in 15 years? Discussion focused on it being more than a building, what is our mission and that being central. It is important to have the longer term vision otherwise there will not be a church and the mission and vision of the past community to have a church and school will be lost. We need to have a vision on where we going to go before spending money on it. Father Stephen stated he has discussed with the Bishop the possibility of a Catholic secondary school for boys being established in Thurrock.

Actions: Father Stephen to speak to Peter Johnston. Reconvene following the decision to have or not have another condition survey.