

**Our Lady of Lourdes, Sawston
Community Open Forum**

“...We are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person’s problems are the problems of all. Once more we realised that no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together.” (Pope Francis Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti, On Fraternity and Social Friendship, Paragraph 32)

Record of the first meeting of the Community Open Forum – 11th January 2023

Attendees: Father John and 18 other Parishioners

Apologies were received from: Pat Richardson, Trish Morgan, and Julie Ball

Father John opened and closed the meeting with a prayer.

1. The meeting opened with Acting Chairperson of the Forum (Dominic Bell) explaining its background as follows:
 - The Open Forum was a response to the desire for opportunities for the OLOL Community to meet to encourage participation and collaboration so that the life of the community in all its aspects may be sustained and developed as expressed during the synod meetings/consultations early in 2022.
 - The proposed structure and remit of the Forum and the need to elect and/or appoint a Chairperson and a Secretary of the Forum was briefly explained. The meeting asked for more time to consider this and thus the Acting Chairperson and Acting Secretary agreed to continue in their roles whilst such consideration took place.
 - Questions were raised concerning the relationship between the Forum and the former PAC and indeed other groups within the Community such as the Finance Committee and the Fabric Committee. The understanding reached was that those and other groups were separate from the Forum and were unaffected by its introduction.
 - The meeting agreed that the proposed constitution of the Forum provided a positive basis for enhancing participation and collaboration in our community.
 - The importance of the Forum being informal and “light touch” was emphasised
2. It was noted that the rich diversity of the parish community was not reflected in the people who attended the meeting. It was suggested that the data arising from the questionnaire that was used during the synodal discussions should be revisited.
3. The meeting broke into smaller groups to discern priorities to enhance participation and collaboration within our community. Issues emerging from these discussions are summarised as follows:

- Encouraging ecumenical contacts with other denominations within Sawston and the wider Parish whilst being aware of the ecumenical contacts and cooperation which already exist. Father John would like to establish a network of catholic representatives in each village throughout the Parish to liaise with other denominations in their villages and develop links through shared events. Also, Father John would welcome a directory of village representatives.
 - Enhancing activities for children with special reference to filling the gap between first Holy Communion and Confirmation and the involvement of children in the liturgy. It was proposed that the practice of Altar Serving be revived after Covid, as it has at OLEM and Cambourne. A lead person is required to take this initiative forward. Also, it was requested that the monthly children's liturgy with its adapted liturgy and full children-centred participation be revived. In the context of the children's liturgy attention was drawn to onerous safeguarding measures in place and some of the difficulties arising.
 - The monthly music mass venture has been a helpful and motivating way for young people to participate in parish life. Could the dates for masses and rehearsals be more clearly advertised. In this regard apps such as "WhatsApp" could be used to create stronger communities within the wider community of the parish.
 - Offering opportunities for adult religious formation; for example, Bible Study, Prayer Groups or Retreat Days
 - Seeking ways to enhance energy levels within the Community to counteract the rather traditionally passive lay culture together with encouraging people with particular in demand skills and talents to attend Open Forums.
 - Creating opportunities for members of the Community to get to know one another better developing what Pope Francis calls "a culture of encounter" perhaps through social events in which we celebrate our diversity.
 - The importance of the Implementation Group was emphasised, and it was encouraging that two people, Amy Harrison and Clare Watkins offered to be part of that group
 - It was suggested that, perhaps, use could be made of a questionnaire to develop more up- to-date information about the skills that parishioners were prepared to offer to serve the parish community.
4. It was agreed that a member of the Finance Committee be invited to the next meeting of the forum to provide an up-to-date picture of parish finances and to answer any questions that Forum members may have.

The second meeting of the Forum will take place in the Parish Hall on the 19th of April 2023 at 7.30pm.

