Representatives from St Joseph The Worker and Cathedral Parish Pastoral Councils met in St Joseph’s Parish Hall on 30th April 2024. This is the third Partnership meeting to discuss the relaunch of the Brentwood Diocese Vision Document: Shaping our Future.

In our meeting of 23rd April we discussed Strand 2: Christian Life and Worship; at this meeting we discussed Strand 12: Young People.

Strand 12 – Young People

From the Vision document:

Young people, Faith and Vocational Discernment have just been the focus of the synod called by Pope Francis and … the fruits of that synod will inform our future work.

To be a young person right now is to enjoy a blend of opportunities for discovery, travel, new technologies, and the ability to immediately communicate internationally. All this is set alongside family breakdown, living with stress and anxiety, and poverty. For parishes to be able to dialogue with young people about the timeless truths of our faith requires a cultural change and freshness of approach.

We spent time at the meeting considering ways in which we could engage more effectively with young people in our parishes. To assist the discussion, we invited a youth worker from a local catholic school, as we believe strongly that the voice of our young people should be expressed by someone who has daily interactions with them.

The list below summarises the resulting ideas. These will be explored further at a subsequent Parish Partnership meeting when detailed action plans will be produced. The summary ideas were:

· Young people are attracted to a joyful community and must always be welcome.

· Youth service at Brentwood Cathedral, first Thursday of every month - circa 150 people.

· Faith in action award being developed – e.g. pin, bronze, silver and gold.

· Social justice group for the Partnership.

· Parish partnership to consider employing a youth co-ordinator, the Diocese will provide a grant towards the first year’s salary.

· Walsingham House at Abbotswick is offering a 2 year course (in conjunction with St Marys, Twickenham) – leading to a formal youth coordinator qualification. · St Vincent de Paul (SVP) has a community for young people – mini Vinnies – which includes many online resources and activities: See - Think - Do!

· Build and promote a Youth webpage including links to social media.

· Year 5 retreat days including assistance from older pupils.

· Youth and church: altar servers (on a rota), music/choir, seeing friends, raising money for charity, cakes, etc.

· Consider Partnership activities for parish first holy communion and confirmation groups.

· Promote more engagement between parishes, the Partnership and schools.

· Support parents – including new mums and dads in a social space.

· Possible youth/travel opportunities – watch this space.

· Restart Children’s’ Liturgy at St Joseph’s parish.

· Provide laminated children’s order of mass cards for the Partnership (they are available in St Joseph’s so we will consider providing them in the cathedral).

· Create and distribute child-friendly prayer sheets/cards.

· Whilst children attend their first holy communion/confirmation class, offer parents a course such as Sycamore to help in understanding the faith.

· Once a month, a class in the Catholic schools read, provide music and the offertory at mass.

Chris Brooks Jon Avery

Chair, St Joseph The Worker PPC Chair, Cathedral Parish of St Mary and St Helen PPC