

BROUGHTON CATHOLIC CHARITABLE SOCIETY
SECRETARY'S REPORT
TUESDAY 10 June 2025

Welcome to the 237th Whitsun AGM and Lunch and my 8th year as Secretary.

2024-25 has continued to be very busy. I have administered and maintained the Society's Membership and Alms Giving records, recording and banking all membership fees and donations, helped maintain the Society's finances, bank accounts and Xero Accountancy system and assisted in the preparation of the accounts for external audit etc.

I have edited and published the Annual Newsletter, organised and minuted the AGM and Board Meetings and corresponded with members and external organisations and petitioners. I have kept the social media up to date, produced three Society advertisement banners and updated the tri-fold membership leaflets.

The role of Secretary continues to be very demanding and practically impossible without help. My thanks, once again, go to my wife Helen for assistance in proof-reading, refreshments and lots of cups of tea, our President Mr Tony Baron for hosting and arranging a very successful President's Mass and meal at Oakhill School & Nursery, and personally contributing to a very successful raffle at the Christmas lunch. Members of the Board of Management have assisted at various stages throughout the year and my thanks go to them.

A special mention to Mr Mike Cowley who has been invaluable in assisting with organising Masses for our deceased Lay & Priest Members of the Society, and to our Incoming President Mr Paul Briers for his prompt help in planning the forthcoming year and providing information needed for the Annual Newsletter. Thanks also to the Hotel Staff who have, as always, been very helpful when planning today and various Board Meetings.

The Board have met regularly throughout the year and have endeavoured to ensure that the Society is represented within the Dioceses of Lancaster, Salford, Shrewsbury and the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

We welcome Canon Adrian Towers (Lancashire), Mr Ken Dennis - incoming VP (Liverpool) on to the Board.

Our thanks go to Mr John A Holland who has now completed his three year term on the Board and we wish him well.

I will be continuing to increase the use of email as a form of communication during 2025-26. The Newsletter covers all events during 2025-26 and Broughtoners are asked to retain the Newsletter as it has booking forms for AGM, Autumn and Christmas events as well as information on setting up a standing order or electronic payment to pay membership fees, lunches and donations. Cheques cost 75p to bank whereas an electronic payment costs the society only 30p. ***Your membership number is always shown on your address label on the envelope.***

The Website continues to be maintained although this is proving expensive to host. We have a Society Facebook page: www.facebook.com/broughtonsociety which is 'free' and where possible I will be posting information on there.

We continue to welcome ladies as members of the Society and to our social events. Priest members are particularly welcome, and we look forward to their company, but we need to increase their numbers. I would ask all members to encourage more Priests to join and help the oldest Catholic Charitable Society in England stay in business!

92 Broughtoners joined us for our AGM and Whitsun Lunch in 2024, this year it is 110. 43 members and guests joined the Society for our Annual Christmas Lunch on 8 December and a very joyous, musical and festive celebration was had by all. We hope to have new musical entertainment for the Christmas Lunch 2025. Please book early using the form in your Annual Newsletter on page 9. If any member has any further suggestions for inclusion in the Newsletters, please inform the Secretary.

We welcomed recipients of the 2024 Almsgiving during our President's Mass and meal at Whalley on 24 November 2024, and handed out cheques to the value of £4,500 to 2 petition recipients including Bolton Young Parents and CRY/Heartfelt (Preston). Photos were printed in our Annual 2025 Newsletter. The Relief of Hardship Framework has now drawn to a close and to date we have supported 4 Causes with grants of £52,000. A board decision was taken to reduce the level of support in the final year as, unfortunately, we did not have sufficient member donations to continue the support into the future.

A Reminder...

I would ask members, including life members, to continue to look at their level of donations to the Society. The newsletters alone cost the Society £2.50 each year to print and send out, and Spiritual Benefits (masses for deceased members), presently cost the Society nearly £60 when a member, or spouse of a life member, passes away. There are over 1,100 members, priests and spouses of life members, but only 1/3 donate regularly. The costs of maintaining membership, newsletters, spouse benefits, postage and administration expenses are increasingly having to come out of Society reserves.

May all members of the Society who have passed away in 2024-25 Rest in Peace.

Finally, I hope you have a very enjoyable and spirited Whitsun Lunch and AGM!

Peter Van Parys (Secretary)