



STEERING GROUP MEETING/REPRESENTATIVES

PARISH OF WEYBRIDGE

January 2026

“Responding together to the love of Christ”

Following the open meetings of November 2025 and the Inauguration Mass of 7th December, the Representatives met on 19th January 2026, and the Steering Group met on 27th January 2026, and discussed the question:

What would be your hope for where we will be as a parish by the end of 2026?

The following reflects the feedback of all three meetings (Open, Representatives and Steering Group).

Summary

By December 2026, the new parish of Weybridge hopes to feel like **one connected parish family**—where people **know the whole clergy team**, parish life is **sustainable for priests**, and shared communication, events, and structures make the new parish **visibly real** rather than just a structural change.

From Fr Chris Spain, Moderator of the Parish, a message to all parishioners to mark the new year:

“Even though the Holy Year is over, I hope we still continue to journey forward as ‘Pilgrims of hope’. We never know what is around the next corner but continue as ‘earthen vessels’ to serve God in humility and aware of the rich treasure we carry. We are so blessed in our new parish with energy and enthusiasm, and I am sure that great things will happen. We need patience and perseverance: ‘Rome wasn’t built in a day’.”

Priests and people

There is a strong desire that people across all church communities recognise and relate to **all the priests**, not only the priest they see most often. Currently not all the clergy team are known across the parish. This implies a culture shift: accepting more **fluidity** in who celebrates Mass, so that parishioners experience clergy as one team.

Representatives (input)

Stability of provision of Mass and pastoral support is seen as foundational. The representatives also emphasised that delivery and communication cannot sit with a small central group alone, and needs strengthening through how the Steering Group/clergy work with parish pastoral teams and administrators/secretaries.

Sustainability as a priority

There was much emphasis that parish life must be sustainable for priests—protecting them from exhaustion and “running from pillar to post”, and safeguarding time for prayer, preparation, and real pastoral presence. Sustainability may require hard conversations, including the timing of Masses.



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Representatives (input)

Clergy wellbeing was also strongly affirmed, alongside recognition that **Mass schedules may have to change**. A specific local pressure-point is noted: **Esher/Thames Ditton operating without a priest** due to long-term sick leave. The clergy and Steering Group are jointly considering how to respond to this very real need.

Communication that makes the new parish visible and trusted

Communication is a constant need: people require clarity about **who is where**, why things are changing, and the “direction of travel”. Practical channels mentioned include a **website**, newsletters, stronger links with schools, and ensuring key moments (e.g. major Masses/events) are communicated well so the new parish feels real and trusted. There is currently a proposal to **recruit a Head of Communications**.

Representatives (input)

Communication is described as one of the biggest themes: people want clear, accessible information on **Mass times, adoration, and events across all communities**. There is frustration that information exists but isn't reaching people.

They also add three practical/structural points:

- A **new parish newsletter** and better use of existing local newsletters, and school channels.
- Communication across **multiple channels**, not newsletters alone (website + social media + simple formats).
- A shared-responsibility model: **representatives, parish priests, and parish secretaries** as “key communicators”, with **ongoing local mechanisms** in each community so communication and welcome don't depend on a small central group.

Parish-wide events that build shared identity

There is appetite for a few **high-quality, well-communicated parish-wide events**, rather than many small initiatives.

There are also plenty of existing initiatives in the parishes. How can clergy and parish teams work together to coordinate timings/content/promotion of these (retreats sometimes programmed at similar times, special Masses, 24-hour adoration, pilgrimages, an anointing Mass, and the idea of a major shared Mass/event that becomes a visible milestone of unity).

Representatives (input)

They strongly support cross-parish events and shared experiences as identity-builders,



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adding concrete “social bonding” examples such as **Christmas market/night, summer social/fête, and family events**. They propose a major parish gathering format of **Mass followed by a social** (using suitable shared space). They also highlight pilgrimages as meaningful experiences that deepen bonds across communities.

Schools and young people as a key “engine” of unity

Schools—primary and secondary—are seen as uniquely placed to represent the whole parish and strengthen unity. There is a strong focus on youth, including the desire for a youth event and appointing a **paid youth ministry coordinator**.

Representatives (input)

They affirm the need for a youth coordinator and add operational clarity: youth work should be done **locally in each church community**, with stronger coordination **across the whole parish**. They also identify a specific gap: the “**missing middle**” (post-confirmation through to parenthood), calling for more involvement and representation for this age group.

Getting the practical foundations in place: property, committees, finance

Operational priorities include completing a **property survey/quinquennial reports in order to understand the current situation** of buildings and their needs; getting parish **committees** functioning (mission/formation, communications, estates/safety, youth, etc.); and developing finance as mission-enabling through a parish finance committee with wider delegated spending limits, supported by the right people stepping forward. Clarity is needed about finances and the Parish Finance Committee and current stewardship teams, and a close relationship with existing pastoral teams to ensure that individual church community mission/formation/youth/prayer initiatives are integrated into parish-wide ones and vice versa

Representatives (input)

They reinforce practical resourcing and add two missing emphases:

- **Administration and systems:** current admin is fragmented (different databases/inconsistent systems). A key 2026 need is to **standardise and simplify admin**, so communication and coordination can actually work.
- **Buildings support:** a request for **hands-on practical help** with buildings, not only inspections/surveys—support that enables local communities to maintain and manage spaces effectively. **1.**



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Inclusion: families and diversity as signs of health

A clear call for broader involvement—especially **families**—and an explicit commitment to inclusion. Parish demographics are diverse; leadership groups and committees should reflect this, and diverse cultural traditions could become shared moments of parish celebration.

Representatives (input)

They underline inclusion as **representation in roles** from groups who feel underrepresented, and they name particular communities already present (e.g. **Polish, Italian, Ukrainian**) with a desire for integration into wider parish life **beyond separate Masses**.

Measuring whether the change has mattered

A proposed success-marker: by year end, run a simple parish survey with at least one headline question—whether forming one new parish has made a **positive difference**—hoping for a clear improvement on the current baseline.

Representatives (input)

Their discussion did not cover a measurement exercise explicitly, but it implies the same desired outcome: a functioning one-parish culture evidenced by clearer leadership, stronger youth and inclusion, better communications (especially digital), joined-up admin, shared events, and practical resourcing.

Our parish prayer

We close all these reflections with the parish prayer:

Heavenly Father,
You have blessed our individual parishes with years of faith, service, and love.
Now, you call us to unite as one family in Christ as the Catholic Parish of Weybridge.
Fill our hearts with gratitude for the past, openness to the present, and hope for the future.
Pour out Your Holy Spirit to guide us, deepen our love, and strengthen our mission.
Bless our priests, deacons, and our communities.
Help us welcome everyone warmly, share the Gospel joyfully, and build a parish where faith grows and Your presence is felt.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us as we journey in faith, hope, and love.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen