

Catholic Parish of King's Lynn

# The Elders' Group

Celebrating 30 years

1989 - 2019

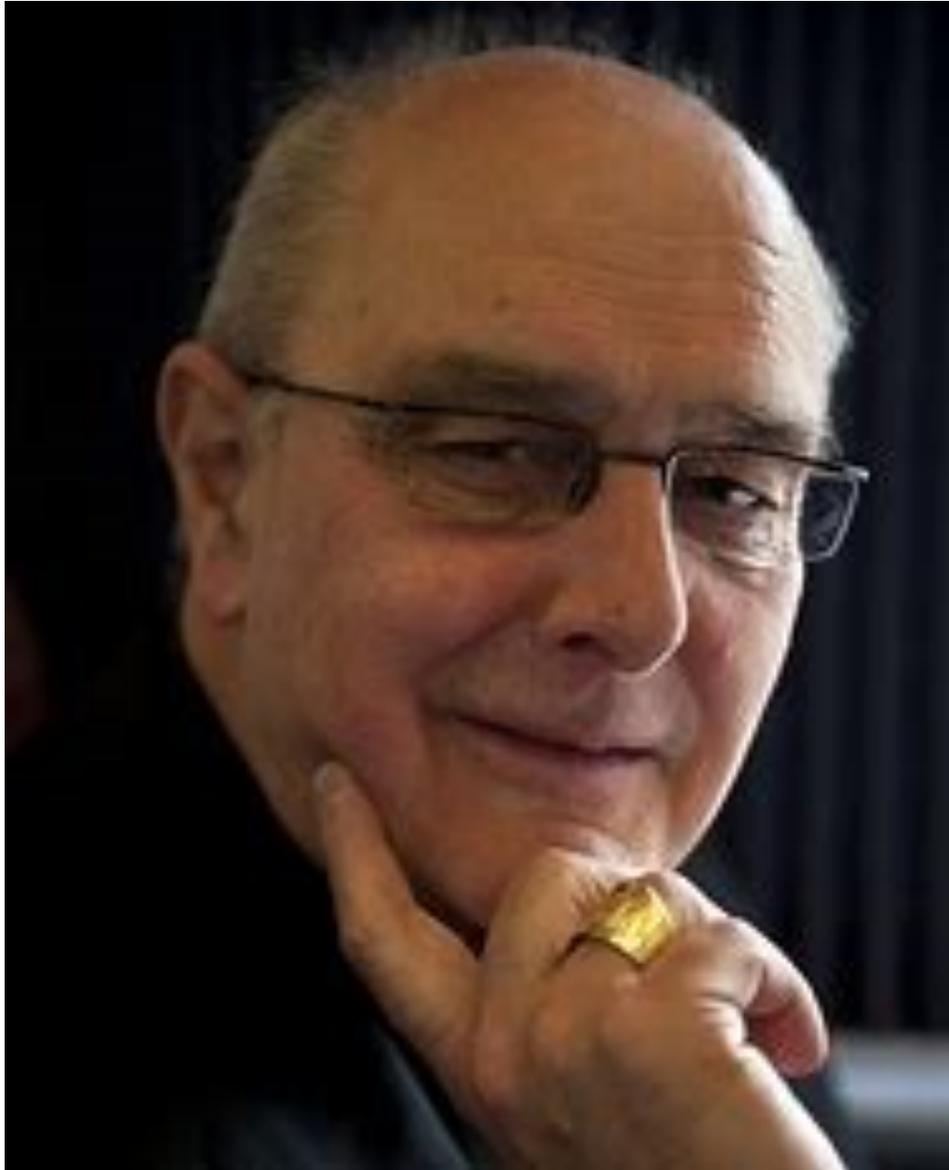


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The Right Reverend Alan Stephen Hopes  
4th Bishop of East Anglia

In commemoration of their 30th Anniversary,  
Bishop Alan Hopes is guest and celebrant at Mass  
to the Elders Group in King's Lynn  
at the Holy Family Church  
29th January 2019

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## HISTORY

In October 1988, Pat Harrington approached Renee Thomas, now the only remaining founding member, and asked if she would be happy to be involved in forming a group for the elderly of the parish.

Having established that along with a number of older members (including Pat's mother) who were unable to move about unaided, it was decided to mention the idea to Fr. Tony Shryane, who said he would not only give his support, but also promote a group within the parish.

The logistics was next to be discussed. Where and when should the group meet? The first gathering took place on Friday 20th January 1989 in the Narthex of the Holy Family Church and thereafter every two weeks.

The "Helpers" as they were then called, decided to look at ideas for filling the time each meeting took place. As many as 45 new members would be there, the maximum number allowed to meet as a group in the Narthex due to Fire Regulations, and a waiting list of parishioners waiting to join.

It was important to remember why Pat's idea for an "Elders" group was formed and with this in mind, socialising was number one! This included food and drink at a subscription of £1 being charged.

So what next, with approximately 20 meetings a year and a lot of time to fill? - Speakers were encouraged to visit the group and share their vocations, hobbies and travels. Games sessions such as

Scrabble, Dominoes and sometimes Chess filled in some of the time. Quizzes were organised, some of which supported local charities and visits to various places of interest plus Flower Festivals in the summer.

During Christmas breaks a festive lunch was provided by local venues and during the summer a visit to the local Pub for lunch.

On each occasion when the group met at 12.00 noon, Special Prayers and Readings were recited in the Lady Chapel of Holy Family Church and visiting Priests celebrated Holy Mass.

Visits to Walsingham took place over the years, especially on the day for the Mass for the Sick which was organised by the St Vincent de Paul Society.

Over the past 30 years each of the Bishops of the Diocese has joined the Elders Group on Special Anniversaries and today, 29th January 2019, the Elders are joined by the Rt Rev Alan Hopes, Bishop of East Anglia, Fr. Tony Shryane, Fr. Henry MacCarthy, Fr. Peter Rollings, Deacons John Belfield and Michael Jordan who celebrated and concelebrated Mass at 12.00 noon, and with the choir of St Martha's School to mark this special 30th anniversary.

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## 30th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

From 10.00 a.m. onwards on Tuesday, 29th January 2019, parish members started to arrive at the Narthex of Holy Family Church, the founding location and venue of the "Elders" group, to celebrate this special anniversary.

Current Chairperson of the Elders, Jane Ballantyne together with former Chairperson Mike Griffiths welcomed members and parishioners to the celebration event.

*"It was unfortunate that Renee Thomas, the last founding member of the Elders group had been admitted to hospital only yesterday (28th January) and could not be with us today",* Mike explained.

Jane Ballantyne commented that, *"The Elders are part of the community in this parish and brings the senior and retired parishioners together to socialise and communicate with one another. For some of them who live by themselves, the group offers a range various activities and communication with like-minded people who share common interests.*

*"We are delighted that Bishop Alan is with us today to celebrate Mass together with Fr. Tony Shryane, the parish priest of King's Lynn thirty years ago, who encouraged the Pat Harrington and Renee Thomas to form a parish group for the senior parishioners.*

*"We have between 20 and 25 members that attend our regular meeting and welcome new members so that the legacy may continue."*

During the celebration gathering many of the members gave their comments:-

Evelyn Lucraft aged 80 and a member for 25+ years comments - *"The Elders has great community spirit. It give us a unique opportunity to socialise, have a good natter and gossip."*

John Smith commented, *"We have a wonderful scribed remembrance book for our deceased members who we dearly remember and pray for."*

Teresa Cannon said, *"Mother looks forward to the Elders' meeting, it is her favourite outing."*

Denis Green aged 89 exclaimed, *"Nothing can beat the camaraderie of the Elders' group. It is such a worthwhile organisation for the senior members of the parish."*

Behind the church lay a barren store area which housed a storage container. The Elders decided to make better space of this area. Instigated by John and Pat Carney together with Betty Dockney, they developed a wonderful garden landscape to include a beautiful children's memory garden and a memorial columbarium for the burial of ashes of the cremated deceased. To complete the garden area paths were widened for wheelchair access, a large storm porch built and a Marian Garden developed (flowers and colours of the Blessed Virgin Mary) by Ron and Caroline Glazebrook.

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## THE BISHOP'S VISIT & CELEBRATION MASS

At 11.00 a.m. on Tuesday, 29th January 2019, the Rt. Rev. Alan Hopes Bishop of East Anglia, arrived at Holy Family Church to be welcomed by the Elders' Chairperson, Jane Ballantyne and Parish Priest, the Very Rev. Canon Peter Rollings VF.

Being a "senior" himself, Bishop Alan felt quite at home with the Elders' group. He circulated amongst them for a good 45 minutes, listening to their stories and achievements of legacy contributed by its members, before preparing for the 12.00 noon celebration Mass.

Fr. Tony Shryane also arrived and was brought up to date with the Elders' stories as he circulated amongst his many friends and members of his old parish.

At approximately 11.45 a.m. the group moved from the Narthex and into the Holy Family Church. A children's choir from the neighbouring St. Martha's Catholic School accumulated in the Choir Gallery in readiness to bring joyful vocals and hymns to the celebratory Mass.

Just before 12.00 noon Mass and within the body of the Church, Mike Griffith gave a brief introductory history of how the Elders' parish group got established thanks to the efforts of Pat Harrington and Renee Thomas and the support of Fr. Tony Shryane, then parish priest.

The Mass commenced with the opening hymn. The acolyte, Peter Martin, brought the cleric procession into the church. He was followed by altar servers,

concelebrating priests, Fr. Peter Rollings, Fr. Tony Shryane and Fr. Henry MacCarthy, Deacons John Belfield of King's Lynn and Michael Jordan from Wisbech and Bishop Alan Hopes.

In his homily, Bishop Alan highlighted that in the Gospel of Mark, which was read by Deacon John Belfield, Mary is not mentioned, She is silent. However She is part of the background in the teachings of Jesus, and that anyone who does the will of God, like Mary in her humbled way, belongs to this inner circle of the Lord's family.

The Mass continued with the bidding prayers with remembrance of those who founded the Elders, those who were sick including Renee Thomas and those who had died.—The Mass continued.

In his closing address, Bishop Alan thanked the Elders for the great commitment they showed to the Parish of King's Lynn and long may it continue. Unfortunately he was unable to join them for lunch as he had a further appointment in Peterborough that afternoon. He wished the Elders "Bon Appetit" and gave them the final Mass blessing.

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**JANUARY**

|                   |                 |          |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------|
| Bridget Linney    | 14 January 1992 | 86 years |
| John Osborne      | 12 January 1999 | 71 years |
| Marjorie Green    | 16 January 2001 | 74 years |
| Bob Rostron       | 23 January 2007 | 79 years |
| Kate Thornborough | 29 January 2007 | 83 years |
| Aileen Byrne      | 18 January 2008 | 90 years |
| Josephine Lee     | 29 January 2014 |          |
| Emily Gamble      | 13 January 2015 | 98 years |
| Karina Tomlinson  | 13 January 2016 | 73 years |
| Daphne Farr       | 28 January 2018 | 93 years |



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Video of the Mass is available on the Parish Website  
<http://www.catholicparish-kingslynn.org.uk/>

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