

The Methodist Church Thames Valley Circuit Meeting
7.45 pm Tuesday, 11th September 2018, at Hampshire Avenue Methodist Church

MINUTES

Note: CA. stands for Church Action needed.

Welcome and opening devotions.

The opening devotions of a hymn, a prayer and a reading from Mark chapter 3 were led by Sonia, who welcomed everyone to the meeting, mentioning particularly Andy, back from Sabbatical, and Sue Le Page and Anne Haggarty, in their new Circuit posts. The theme for the circuit for this year is “Being family”.

Membership of meeting and apologies for absence

The membership of the meeting was agreed, with 31 members present, and 12 apologies, as noted on the attendance list. 9 members neither attended nor sent apologies.

Agreement of the agenda; notification of items requested for AOB

The agenda as distributed was agreed, with two extra items for AOB noted.

Minutes of last meeting (as already circulated) and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting, with one addition to the apologies, and one phrase in the finance section removed, were signed as a true and correct record of the last meeting.

Matters arising:

- 3Generate. Mindy reported that she still has three tickets, in the 8 – 18 age range, for the 3Generate event in the last weekend in November. Sonia and Mindy encouraged us to think of young people who could benefit and to let Mindy know as soon as possible.
- The Vine. This is a resource available for churches leading Local Arrangements. All churches in the circuit have to agree, and most have already done so, replying in the affirmative. Cost is £20 per church which the circuit will fund. The meeting agreed to this.
- “Our iceberg is melting”. Sonia checked whether all members had read this book, as recommended at the last meeting, and urged those who hadn’t to do so before the next Circuit Meeting. **CA**

Stationing & Staffing updates

Connie reported:

- Stationing Process has started with the meeting with District, and the profile for the Maidenhead section produced. District has said that we are in a better position this year than last.
- Lay worker. Although there had been responses to the advertisement, no one really suitable had applied. The post is being re-advertised.
- Circuit Administrator. The CLT is still considering various job specifications. If any member of the Circuit Meeting is willing to offer help in putting the job together, please let Connie or Sonia know. **CA**

Pastoral care arrangements

Sonia outlined the pastoral care arrangements for the Maidenhead churches while they are without a presbyter:

- St Mark's Crescent. Sonia will be in pastoral charge, with Julie there for a third of the time (as a supernumerary she cannot have pastoral charge), and help from Richard Cattley, a retired Anglican priest.
- High Street. Mindy will continue, with Connie doing the Church Councils, and Julie covering the development meetings. Sonia will deal with Property and Finance meetings, and Andy the Friday coffee mornings.
- Woodlands Park. Sonia in pastoral charge, with Andy covering most of the work.

Sonia reminded the meeting that the staff are doing their best for all the churches.

Safeguarding

Glenice read the report from Kathy on safeguarding (see Appendix 1), highlighting the next CSS courses to be held, the need for three members of each Church Council to have DBS checks, and the next Circuit Safeguarding meeting, when the District Safeguarding Officer will be present. **CA**

Property

- Property Steward's report. (See Appendix 2) Joy mentioned that Windsor church is due for its quinquennial inspection, and that all church property stewards should go on-line and check what is needed for the annual returns. Contact Joy for help if needed.
- Priesthaus. Glenice reported that the buyer at £990,000 has withdrawn, and the process started again, this time at £950,000 (as advised). A potential buyer has offered £935,000 which has been accepted. In anticipation of a presbyter being appointed to Maidenhead, a replacement manse is vital, but is proving difficult to find. Members gave permission unanimously (31 for, none against) to approach Chapel Aid, should a bridging loan be needed.
- Annual inspection of the certificates. This has been done. All the churches marriage and worship certificates are in the Circuit safe, except St Andrew's.
- Seeking approval. Sonia reminded members that the correct sequence for approval for property work is: Church Council, Circuit meeting, District. The "wrong" sequence causes problems and delays.
- Residential property. All churches with residential property need a "Connected Person Certificate" every time, even when the same tenant is involved.

Finance

Sue reported that she is still without copies of the signed accounts from some churches. The Circuit Treasurer needs to have these. **CA**

Mindy reported that she has been in conversation with Ealing Trinity Church about the possible sharing of an Urdu-speaking minister, presently at Ealing Trinity. Mindy will bring information and figures to the November meeting.

Sonia said that she was still NOT receiving copies of the bank statement, as agreed at the last meeting [and originally specified as a condition when the Circuit Meeting authorised the use of on-line banking].

Other reports

Conference

Ian reported on this year's Conference, held in Nottingham. Points he covered included:

- The inspirational worship, led on the weekdays by members of 3Generate.
- Jill Baker being appointed to Chair on the Methodist Council for the next four years.
- Safeguarding – Past Cases Review to complete its work next year.
- Marriage and Relationship – work continues, but churches, circuits and districts are requested to discuss and provide feedback. **CA**
- A motion was passed expressing deep concern about the deteriorating conditions in the Gaza strip.
- Improving our environmental image with more “reduce, re-use, re-cycle”, and less plastic. **CA**
- After this year the October count becomes three-yearly.
- Prediction: about 50% of stationing appointments may not be filled for September 2019.
- A petition to remove VAT (20%) on renovation and rebuilding work on churches. The direct link to the petition is on the Circuit website, but here it is:

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/225494/signatures/new>

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders, including Worship Leader training

David Ridley reported that the Circuit has 28 accredited Local Preachers (of whom 11 are currently not preaching), 3 Local Preachers on trial, and 8 Worship Leaders. The Local Preachers meet regularly for fellowship, support and study, and annually with the Worship Leaders. He emphasised the support that Worship Leaders give to ministers and preachers. The Local Preacher peer review is still being developed. Anne reported on the very successful Worship Leader training course, organised by Naomi Sharp, and run by her and Anne in July. Two Sunday afternoon sessions each of three hours. Participants were very enthusiastic, and the “homework” was very well done.

Worship Leaders should be reviewed every three years, and the reports sent to the Local Preachers Secretary. **CA**

Smaller Churches

Nothing to add to the report sent out (see Appendix 3), except for the postponement of the Rural Ministry workshop, due to the illness of the leader.

MWiB

Lynn's report (Appendix 4), was circulated and she was able to add that £175 was raised at the Canal Boat Festival for the Alexander Devine Hospice. She expressed concern that few people attend the meetings, and Sonia agreed that the CLT should look at the situation. Lynn will send out more information.

Other matters from CLT

- Assignment of Staff members to Church Councils. This was sent out and churches should make sure that those assigned to their Church Councils are sent agendas, minutes etc. **CA**
- Sabbaticals. Margaret will be on Sabbatical from mid-February to mid-May.
- Annual report. This year will be the “short report Superintendent, Senior Circuit Steward, Finance. 2019 will be the FULL 5-year one, with reports from all. **CA**

Data protection

Changes brought about by GDPR mean that more care has to be taken about using other people's personal information. Public prayer can only include an individual's name if that person has given permission.

The Circuit Website now has a password protected Circuit Members only section (password available from Ian). If a poster for the website diary includes personal details (phone number / email address) Ian needs to have explicit permission before uploading it.

Each Church Council must sign up to the guidelines. **CA**

There also has to be mapping of the information held about individuals; Sonia will bring more about this to the November Circuit Meeting, and all Church Councils will need to agree. **CA**

Membership of CM

Sonia informed the meeting that she is going to review the membership of the Circuit Meeting. The guidelines we have are not in line with other circuits – eg Staines and Feltham – and also some committees have representatives on the meeting, but have never been “elected”. There is also a need to sort out our ecumenical observers. Everything to be in place for the March Circuit Meeting.

Strategy Paper report

Postponed until the November Circuit Meeting

Circuit Greetings

Sonia has received thanks from Graham Hindle and from Naomi Sharp for gifts to mark the end of their time in the Thames Valley.

A card has been sent to Ian Pruden, who was to have run the Rural Ministries workshop, as he is unwell.

Good wishes will be sent to Jon Garde, as he begins his ministerial training.

AOB

Sonia reported that she had had a conversation with the owner of the “Quench” Christian Bookshop in Maidenhead. She urged us to use this, (or other Christian bookshops) or they will be lost. It was suggested that there could be bookstalls at eg Circuit Meetings, Local Preachers Meetings, with “sale or return” agreements. Other books could be ordered in advance.

Mary Hall is stepping down as a Manse Visitor. Liz Tottingham was proposed as the replacement and this was endorsed by the meeting. Mary was thanked for all her work.

Dates for Diaries

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|---------------------|-----------------|--------|-------------------|
| • Wed 14 Nov 2018 | Circuit Meeting | 7.45pm | Windsor |
| • Thurs 21 Mar 2019 | Circuit Meeting | 7.45pm | Colnbrook & Poyle |
| • Tues 14 May 2019 | Circuit Meeting | 7.45pm | St. Andrew's |

Closing thanks and prayer

Sonia thanked Hampshire Avenue for its hospitality, and Andy closed the meeting with a prayer. The meeting ended at 9.27 pm.

Appendix 1 Safeguarding Report

The second of this year's Creating Safer Space Refresher course was held on June 9th, and there was good discussion and feedback. The next one is on October 6th 10-1 at Eton Wick – with apologies that the date has been changed. A CSS Foundation Module session has been arranged for Wednesday November 7th at St Andrew's in the evening. Church Councils are responsible for ensuring that all those who should attend because of the role they have been given do so. This includes Pastoral Visitors.

Church Councils are reminded that there should be at least three members of the Council, including the Senior Steward, who have a current DBS check. DBS checks need to be re-done every 5 years.

The next Safeguarding Officers' meeting is next Tuesday September 18th 7.30 for 7.45 at Windsor Methodist Church. Our District Safeguarding Officer, Philippa Read, is coming to the meeting as part of her tour round the District. If your church's Safeguarding Officer is unable to come please would you ensure that someone comes to represent them. I am aware that a couple of Safeguarding Officers will be on holiday on that day. Others are welcome to come and meet Philippa if interested. Please let me know who is attending.

Thank you.

Kathy Rickman

Appendix 2 Property Report

Quinquennials due this year have now been completed apart from one due in November – Windsor Church.

In respect of the Manse Visitor Reports and the On-Line Property Returns, those concerned should be commencing collection of their information in order for completion of the reports/returns. If anyone requires help please let me know and I will do all I can.

Thank you to everyone for all their hard work this year.

Joy Brown

Appendix 3 Smaller Churches Report

It has been a quiet summer for the Smaller Churches group – as a group. However, all the individual churches have been busy with their different forms of mission and outreach. Some have taken a short break during August, others have continued all through.

We meet shortly to plan this year's series of events and activities, to which all members of the Thames Valley are invited. We organise them – all you have to do is come! Information will be on the Circuit website.

On 22nd September, we are holding a Workshop on rural ministry, based on the workbook "A Discipling Presence." It will be at Old Windsor, starting at 10.30 am. Further details to come. Contact me if you are interested.

Anne Haggarty

Appendix 4 MWiB Report

MWiB continues to meet to arrange the Easter offering, which was held at High Street this year with Naomi Sharp as the Speaker. She was also very helpful with the organisation of the power point.

The Coffee morning at High Street is an annual event arranged by Ann Hardiment, and we thank her for her continued support with that.

Last year, instead of the Canal Boat festival, we organised a Craft Stall at the Create and Craft group on a Tuesday at St Andrew's, and raised money for local causes – the Slough night shelter and the Poppy Appeal.

Jo Webb always arranges the trip to the Daffodil Day at Methodist Central Hall and that continues to be a popular event with a full coach most times.

This year we took part in the Canal Boat festival again.

We are finding more and more that those who are representatives are struggling to come to the meetings and we have been running meetings with two or three people. I think age and other commitments seem to be the factor with this.

I am continuing until September 2019 then I will step down after the Canal Boat festival next year.

Lynn Packer

Editorial note: *Minutes are subject to being accepted at the next Circuit Meeting.*