

Thames Valley Circuit – Methodist Church

Minutes of the Circuit Meeting held at Old Windsor – 17th March 2011 at 7.45 pm

Present: Rev Andrew Baker plus 3 other Ministers, 5 Circuit Stewards, and 35 other members (plus 5 non-voting observers)

Welcome and Opening Devotions

On behalf of Old Windsor, Mr David Thomson welcomed members. Rev Andrew Baker led the opening devotions, and included a hymn written by Andrew Pratt following last week's earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

Membership of the Meeting and Apologies for Absence

Attendees are listed in the register. Apologies for absence were received from 9 members as noted there.

Agreement of the Agenda; notification of items requested for AOB

The agenda as distributed was agreed. Items notified to the Secretary in advance were added at the relevant points.

Minutes of last Meeting

The minutes of the last Circuit Meeting, with the minor modifications suggested with the calling notice, were agreed and signed as a correct record. (Proposed by Mr David Thomson and seconded by Mr Neville Walton.)

Local Preacher

On behalf of the Local Preachers' Meeting, Mrs Connie Jeffery brought to this meeting the recommendation that Mr Henry Mensah-Brown should go from being on trial to being a fully accredited Local Preacher. Mr Evan Richardson seconded the proposal. Members agreed unanimously.

Henry's Accreditation Service will be at St Andrew's on 17th April 2011.

Reports

The Circuit Annual Report 2010 has been circulated via the website plus printed copies distributed to all churches. It includes, for approval at this meeting, the report from the Circuit Stewards and those from the Circuit Committees.

Members accepted the report unanimously and *in toto*. Rev Andrew Baker thanked Mr Ian Haggarty and Mrs Naveela Asif for their hard work behind the scenes, in producing this informative document.

Updates

- Circuit Stewards: Mr Phil Mount reported that, in August 2012, the circuit will be losing Rev Barbara McIntivey (retiring) and Rev Dr Emmanuel Jacob (moving on). We shall therefore be seeking two new ministers (see below).
- Children & Youth Committee (formerly Education & Youth): Rev Andrew Baker reported that the planned Circuit Fun Day on 2nd May has been cancelled (due to the illness of the organiser). Instead, there will be "May Day Desserts" at the Slough Manse.
- Smaller Churches' Support Group: Rev Barbara McIntivey appealed for help on behalf of Eton Wick. From mid-May to the end of June, only one Church Steward will be available. If any current or former Church Steward from any other church can help out (even if only once or twice), please liaise with Miss Daphne Hogg.

- Safeguarding: A report was circulated (and is filed in the Minute Book). Safeguarding should be included as an item on every Church Council agenda, and all churches need to review and display their safeguarding policy. Copies of the current Methodist Safeguarding Handbook were distributed to all the churches for their safeguarding officer. To receive an electronic copy, please contact Mr Phil Mount.

Finance and Property

The Circuit Treasurer, Mr Chris Wren, presented the financial report.

2009/10 Accounts

The Management Accounts for 2009/10, ready to be signed off by the auditors, are included in the Annual Report. These were approved unanimously. (Proposed by Mr Chris Wren, seconded by Dr Ed Filmore.)

2011/12 Budget and Assessments

The 2011/12 Budget was distributed at the Treasurers' Meeting. The budget is £257,870, and £267,900 is being sought in income (reserves have been depleted in recent years).

A sub-committee appointed by the Treasurers' Meeting will be meeting to try and formulate a "sensible" reserves policy. This will be brought to the June Circuit Meeting. All but one Church Council has agreed to the proposal for the assessments to be increased by 3% from this year's figures. That church is deferring agreement of the increase until the reserves policy has been reviewed.

Mr Chris Wren proposed, and Mr Phil Clack seconded, that the budget and assessments be accepted. The motion was carried with 40 votes FOR, 1 AGAINST and 2 ABSTENTIONS.

One member then pointed out that her Church Treasurer had not circulated details of the budget. It was agreed that details be appended to these minutes, with any queries resulting being raised at the June meeting.

[For those receiving the minutes on email, this is being supplied as a separate file.]

Property Consent

Lets of Church owned property must now go through the consents procedure, with Circuit Meeting approval:

- Cookham Rise: Mrs Sue Le Page stated that the church has a house which is leased on an annual basis, and sought (retrospective) approval for this year. Agreed unanimously.
- High Street: Similarly Mr Freddie Daniel sought approval for the letting on their Caretaker's house. Agreed unanimously.

Ledger's Road: Mr Phil Mount presented the "Ledger's Road Property Project Summary" distributed at the meeting and filed in the Minute Book. The two key needs are for:

- Essential building work as per quinquennial report and to satisfy health & safety requirements .
- Providing a mission-based centre for serving the Chalvey community.

Members approved the project unanimously. (Proposed by Mr Phil Mount, seconded by Mrs Anne Haggarty.) On behalf of Ledger's Road, Rev Dr Emmanuel Jacob thanked the Circuit for its continuing support.

Circuit Website

Mr Ian Haggarty reported that, in the last 12 months, use of the website has trebled, its size has doubled and it is currently being expanded further. Much of the behind the scenes implementation is done Mr John Salthouse, a disabled voluntary worker, who does not charge a penny for his work or expenses. Mr Haggarty proposed that, in recognition of his work, we make a token donation of £200 from the Mission Development Fund to John's chosen charity. In seconding this motion Rev Andrew Baker also thanked Ian

for his work and opined that this was probably kept as the most up-to-date circuit website in the connexion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Seeking to fulfil God's Mission / Circuit Re-organisation

Rev Andrew Baker stated he has a vision of a mission-based circuit with a compassionate heart.

On behalf of the CLT, he thanked all the church councils for their serious consideration of the questionnaire, and to Mr Phil Clack for co-ordinating the feedback.. The CLT has considered the responses very carefully. Andrew stated that:

- We need to sort out NOW our requirements for September 2012
- It makes sense to keep to our current structure until then.

To give the team more time to concentrate on the re-organisation and to obtain further feedback from the churches, the Circuit Meeting originally planned for 24th May has been postponed until 22nd June. Hence the proposed timescales are:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| • <i>Next four weeks</i> | Circuit Staff | Produce initial proposals |
| • 13 th April | CLT meeting | Review / modify initial proposals |
| • <i>April / May</i> | Churches | Ministers seek reactions from churches on these proposals |
| • 24 th May 2011 | CLT | Review feedback and finalise proposals |
| • 22 nd June 2011 | Circuit Meeting | Agree structure |
| • <i>July / August</i> | CIC | Produce profiles for circuit and staff sought |
| • 7 th September 2011 | CLT | Review profiles |
| • 14 th September 2011 | Circuit Meeting | Profiles presented for approval |
| • <i>From then on</i> | | Stationing process ... and matches found ... |
| • 1 st September 2012 | | Re-organisation takes place |

Mr David Black pointed out that the decisions about staffing should affect the amount of finance for staffing included in the budget; the figure in the budget should not be a constraint when considering the staff needed.

Mr Jon Garde said that before we consider how we reorganise the circuit, we need to start by agreeing our vision, and go on in stages from there.

Rev Dr Emmanuel Jacob listed the circuit's priorities, as included in Ledger's Road Property Consent Summary. For convenience these are repeated here:

The circuit's mission is to support and encourage local churches in:

- Developing the quality of worship such that it reflects expressed needs and diversity.
- Faith and its outworking in people's lives.
- Caring for individual people and communities.
- Telling the good news of Jesus.
- Over the next few years to have a "village focus", putting particular resources into helping the smallest churches to identify "solutions" and move forward.

The values and principles that underpin our work are mutual openness, trust, equality, respect for diversity, valuing each other, participation and collaboration

Rev Gary Homewood drew on his experience in other circuits, saying that the closure of smaller churches had started a downward spiral there; he welcomed the emphasis in this circuit on mission and growth. We need to be missionary and visionary, aiming at what God wants us to do.

Other points made during the ensuing discussion included:

- The need to review and update regularly our statements about vision, priorities, policies and strategy both short-term and long-term.
- Including in our mission statement aspects such as:
 - Taking our place within the world church.
 - Delivering Christian ecumenical work
 - Valuing the contribution of the larger churches [alongside supporting the smaller churches].

Annual Circuit Appointments *(Please refer to the list distributed with the agenda.)*

Circuit Stewards

Mr Phil Clack completes his term of office at the end of this church year. Rev Andrew Baker nominated Mr Alan Crowle as Phil's successor. Seconded by Mr Phil Mount, this proposal was carried unanimously. The other Circuit Stewards, including the Circuit Treasurer and Circuit Deputy Treasurer, were re-appointed unanimously.

Circuit Meeting Secretary

After 8 years, this is Mr Ian Haggarty's last meeting as Circuit Meeting Secretary. He was thanked for what he has done. Rev Andrew Baker nominated Mrs Sue Le Page as Ian's successor. Seconded by Rev Barbara McIntivey. Carried unanimously.

Other appointments

The system of annual review of ministers is changing. The reviews of Circuit Ministers will be carried out by their Superintendent, and the superintendents by the Chair of the District with, in all cases, a mutually agreed lay member. This Circuit has proposed that the lay member should always be from a different circuit. The outcome is awaited. It is therefore not known whether our panel of Circuit Staff Development Reviewers will be called upon.

All the other officers were re-appointed unanimously.

For convenience, the Circuit Appointments for 2011-12 are listed in Appendix 1.

The Post of Faith and Development Officer in Slough

After an introduction to this topic, Rev Andrew Baker handed over to Mr Peter White, the circuit's representative on the panel looking after this post, who presented the situation. Points made then and in the ensuing discussion included:

General

- This is an ecumenical post with the current 5 year appointment expiring in 2012.
- It is managed by Kingsway Connections, and is based at Kingsway URC Church.
- The current incumbent is Rev Linda Hillier, an Anglican minister.
- The emphasis in the job description is on industrial chaplaincy.

Funding

- The current arrangement is that Linda works 20% (1 day per week) as the URC minister, with that part funded by the Kingsway Church.
- The remaining 80% (4 days per week) is funded jointly by Methodist, Anglican and URC sources.
- Much of the Methodist funding has come from the Connexion and a 5-year grant paid up-front from the former District.
- If the post continues (whether with Linda or a new incumbent) it is unlikely that we should get the same level of funding from either Connexion or District; if anything, it would be from one and not both. We could stand more chance with a new venture

Mr Chris Wren itemised the Methodist funding of £50,000 over 5 years, paid at £10,000 per year:

| <u>Source</u> | <u>Annual</u> | <u>5 year total</u> |
|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Connexion | £5,000 | £25,000 |
| District (previous) | £2,500 | £12,500 |
| St Andrew's Church | £1,000 | £ 5,000 |
| <u>Circuit</u> | <u>£1,500</u> | <u>£ 7,500</u> |
| Total | £10,000 | £50,000 |

Concerns

- How does this post fit into the circuit's vision?
- Why are we supporting this work - to make converts or to offer a service?
- This post applies just to Slough, and there is no equivalent "help" for Windsor and Maidenhead.
- Although Linda is doing good and vital work, there is concern that much is outside the key aspect of her appointment, namely, industrial chaplaincy.
- Linda is working on her own without lay help, and without training up lay helpers.

Canon Allen Walker pointed out that

- This is an ecumenical appointment
- We are not alone; all the churches are reviewing this post, taking into account financial and resource restraints.
- The last 10 years have seen a fundamental change of attitude. Large industrial companies used to have chaplains; this is no longer the case; industry no longer sees chaplaincy as a key element.

We are faced with a dilemma. How best do we use our resources and finance? Do we spend money elsewhere or re-define the post and support Linda? Suggestions included:

- We need to provide support other than with money, e.g. prayer, lay workers alongside the minister.
- Ensure this fits into our mission.
- A major need in Slough is our mission in Chalvey, based at Ledger's Road. Mrs Jean Barnett proposed that we put our money into that instead.
- Mrs Joyce Brown said she would prefer to see money going into projects for young people (giving them purpose instead of hanging around the streets).

Dates for Diaries

- 16th/17th April *various* Bible Festival
- 17th April 6.30 pm at St Andrew's Circuit Service of Admission to the office of a Local Preacher for Mr Henry Mensah-Brown.
- 2nd May 2 - 6 pm at 36 Upton Road May Day Desserts
- 22nd June 7.45 pm at High Street Circuit Meeting
- 9th July 2.30 pm at St Mark's Circuit Missions Strawberry Tea
- 14th September 7.45 pm at Woodlands Park Circuit Meeting
- 24th November 7.45 pm at Burnham Circuit Meeting
- 28th February 2012 7.45 pm at Ledger's Road Circuit Meeting

AOB

Rev Andrew Baker said that, from Pentecost, the circuit will be reflecting on Philippians, and invited everyone to participate.

The CLT have agreed that a member of the Local Preachers' meeting should be on the CLT. Currently, this will be the LP Secretary, Mrs Connie Jeffery.

There being no further business, the meeting closed with a prayer and the Grace at 9.35 pm.

Appendix 1 Annual Circuit Appointments for 2011 - 2012

Appointed by Circuit Meeting

Appointed in:

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------|------------------------|------|
| Circuit Stewards 2007 | Mr Phil Mount | 2007 | Mrs Ruth James | |
| | Mrs Anne Haggarty | 2008 | Mr Paul Newton | 2009 |
| | Mr Alan Crowle | 2011 | | |
| Circuit Treasurer | | | Mr Chris Wren | 2010 |
| Circuit Deputy Treasurer | | | Mr Imran (Lexi) Daniel | 2010 |
| Circuit Meeting Secretary | | | Mrs Sue Le Page | 2011 |

Nominations from Circuit Committees for ratification:

| | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|---------------------|------|
| Children and Youth | Lay Secretary | | <i>vacant</i> | |
| Local Preachers' Mtg: | Secretary | | Mrs Connie Jeffery | 2006 |
| | LWPT Secretary / Treasurer | | Miss Daphne Hogg | ? |
| Methodist Homes | Representative / Secretary | | Miss Daphne Hogg | ? |
| Ministries | Lay Secretary | | <i>vacant</i> | |
| Missions | Representative for Mission in Britain and World Mission | | Mrs Pam Newton | 2010 |
| | JMA Secretary | | <i>vacant</i> | |
| Action for Children | Co-ordinator / Secretary | | Mrs Evelyn Thomson | 2003 |
| Network | President | | Mrs Ann Hardiment | 2008 |
| | Secretary | | Mrs Audrey Lelliott | 2008 |
| Circuit Property | Secretary | | Mr Phil Mount | 2002 |

Circuit Representatives to Synod: Ex officio member + 7 representatives + 1 substitute

| | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|------|-----------------|------|
| | Mr Phil Mount (<i>Ex officio</i>) | 2002 | Mr Philip Clack | 2005 |
| | Mrs Ruth James | 2007 | Mr Paul Newton | 2007 |
| | Mr Bill Barnett | 2008 | Mr Jon Garde | 2009 |
| | Mrs Anne Haggarty | 2009 | Mr Peter Trout | 2010 |
| <i>Substitute:</i> | <i>vacant</i> | | | |

Membership of Invitations Committee:

Circuit Leadership Team

Other Appointments

| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------|------------------------|------|
| Circuit Auditor | Messrs Bridgen, Watkins & Wainwright | | | 2005 |
| Circuit Safeguarding Officer | | | Mrs Kathy Rickman | 2004 |
| Circuit Webmaster | | | Mr Ian Haggarty | 2009 |
| Circuit Deputy Webmaster | | | Dr Ed Filmore | 2009 |
| Circuit Staff Development Reviewers | | | | |
| | Mr Keith Ayres | 2009 | Mr Henry Brown | 2009 |
| | Mrs Gill Franklin | 2009 | Mr Gordon Franklin CVO | 2009 |
| | Mrs Mary Hall | 2009 | Mr Keith Le Page | 2009 |
| | Mrs Sue Le Page | 2009 | Mrs Doreen Lloyd | 2009 |
| | Dr John Long CVO | 2009 | Mrs Sara Motion | 2009 |
| | Mrs Veronica Mullix | 2009 | Mrs Mary Stock | 2009 |
| | Mr Neville Walton | 2009 | | |