

Thames Valley Circuit - Methodist Church Circuit Meeting at Colnbrook & Poyle - Tuesday, 20th November 2012 at 7.45 pm

Minutes

Present: Rev Andrew Baker plus 3 other ministers, 6 Circuit Stewards, and 30 other members as listed in the register of attendees. Apologies from 11 members noted there.

The meeting shared in Holy Communion led by Rev Sonia Hicks.

Agenda as distributed plus under AOB: The need for two new Circuit Stewards for next September.

Minutes of last meeting with the following amendments:

- Under LEP Reviews: *“That for Colnbrook, where the building is shared with the URC”* changed to *“That for Colnbrook & Poyle, one united Methodist / URC congregation in a jointly owned building”* and in the next paragraph *“These two are now one church”* to *“The two Anglican churches are now one church.”*
- Under Property, Manses: *“Over the summer £34,000”* to *“Over the last year £34,000.”*

were agreed and signed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

Safeguarding: Kathy Rickman reported that nearly 200 people in the Circuit had attended the *Creating Safer Places* awareness course. It had provoked much discussion on a very topical subject. At least two more sessions are planned followed by a discussion on the way forward. She thanked the Safeguarding coordinators in each church for encouraging attendance. This meeting thanked Kathy and the team of trainers.

Conversation on the work of God: Deacon Andy Packer’s reported on his first 10 weeks of Diaconal ministry. See Appendix 1. The YMCA has offered to help local churches with jobs that need doing such as decorating. There was a very positive response on Twitter to the recent youth work initiative and concert. Andy would welcome details of more local contacts.

Rev Gary Homewood reported that both St Mark’s and High Street Church Councils are discussing feasibility studies commissioned to secure a mission-focused future for both churches. High Street will be hosting an interfaith service sharing what we have in common.

Rev Sonia Hicks reported on

- *Wake Up Wednesday* at Burnham starting with bacon butties for students waiting for their school buses, followed by activities for toddlers, a quilting group and a local Anglican puppet group in different corners of the same hall.
- Eton Wick have as many different activities as members!
- Hampshire Avenue is holding a pizza evening for Junior Church to find out how they can participate in worship.
- Ledgers Road is growing in numbers.

Rev Andrew Baker reported on the Big Church initiative at St Andrew's to encourage fellowship and Bible Study by a quarterly session from 10 to 12.30 including it with worship.

Linda Harrison reported on ecumenical outreach at Woodlands Park with events and free refreshments: the next one on 15th December will have a carol theme.

Finance:

The audited **Circuit Accounts** for the year to 31st August 2012, showing the General Fund net income of £28,486, were presented and accepted unanimously. Proposer: Linda Harrison, Seconder: Peter White.

After transfers to meet our reserves policy, the balance on the General Fund was £55,000 compared with the £25,000 needed to manage risk and meet unplanned expenditure.

It was noted that the balance on the Manse Fund will need to increase by a further £25,000 by end of August 2014. In questioning the high level of audit costs, Peter White suggested looking for a church member, who was not a member of the Circuit Meeting, to provide an independent examination next year. The budget for 2012/13 will go to the Treasurers' meeting on 16th January.

Schedules are now outstanding. Please contact Chris Wren as soon as possible if there are any problems with this, as he has to present his report to the Spring Synod. Chris was thanked for his work on this.

Property Report: Attached as Appendix 2.

Circuit Property The four manses owned by the Circuit are all in a good condition, following works done during the summer. The rented manse still requires some attention, which is mainly the responsibility of the landlord. Phil Clack is compiling a list of tradesmen, contractors, etc, who have been recommended for their work. Phil would like to hear about anyone working within the Circuit whose work can be recommended, so that he can add their names to the list. Quinquennial inspections next year (2013) are due for Burnham and Eton Wick Churches.

Ledgers Road Project Phil Mount reported that the promise of a further grant of £5000 has now been received and the work is planned to start in the New Year, with Phil as the contact person.

Property Consent was given by the Circuit Meeting to Cookham to re-let its cottage for a further 12 months, and to High Street to re-let the large office upstairs when the current tenants leave. Burnham gave notice of plans to apply for District funding towards a new heating system.

Mission in Britain Fund: Churches are encouraged to hold a collection for this, which is especially relevant to our Diaconal work, and Rev Sonia Hicks has a supply of collection envelopes, posters and bookmarks.

Two new Circuit Stewards for next September: Members are asked to suggest names to Rev Andrew Baker for him to approach. The rôle is to be one of the lay executives of the circuit, to belong to the Circuit Leadership Team, to have particular responsibility for a minister, including his/her accommodation and family.

Dates for Diaries:

9 th December	Riding Lights family show	2 pm at High Street
1 st , 2 nd February 2013	Broken Shoestring pantomime	at St Mark's
10 th February	Circuit Healing Service	2.30 pm at Eton Wick
28 th February	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm at St Marks
12 th May	Circuit Easter Offering Service	Tea at 4 pm, Service at 5 pm
22 nd May	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm at Hampshire Ave.
20 th November	Circuit Meeting	7.45pm at Cookham Rise

The Meeting closed with thanks to our hosts and the Blessing at 9.25 pm.

Appendix 1: Deacon Andy Packer's Report

My first 10 weeks in the Thames Valley Circuit have been extremely strange. Coming from an appointment which was familiar, well established and filled my time, to one which is new, exciting and demands a lot of watching, listening and patience, is not easy.

A lot of my time has been observing the areas around the three churches (St Andrew's, Ledgers Road and Hampshire Avenue) and learning about the people, cultures and groups or organisations that exist. This has not always been easy as some groups have not replied to my email enquiries. However, patience and persistence are producing a few positive results and contact is being made.

Through attending a Network meeting arranged by the Slough Council for Voluntary Services (CVS), I was able to make contact with:

- Superintendent Richard Humphries (Slough LP Area Commander),
- Moseen who runs Drop in Youth Club in Ledgers Rd,
- Rev Linda Hillier (Kingsway URC),
- Norma Palmer (Slough Furniture Project),
- Anthony Fomuso (Voice of the Child)
- plus others

Through Ledgers Road Stewards I was able to get in contact with Kam Bhatti (Slough Borough Council) and Karen Mohammad (Chalvey Partnership). Following a meeting with them, I had a whole list of people to contact! This included Colin Young and Iuliana Demeter (YMCA) who will be bringing a group of young people to look at Ledgers Road Methodist Church as part of the *Interfaith Week*. There is a real desire from YMCA to work together wherever possible.

Following the Chalvey Partnership meeting, the Assistant Head at Slough & Eton College asked for my card to pass to the Head of Religious Education.

The persistence with trying to contact people paid off, and I will be meeting with Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Pawel Pietras to learn about the Manor Park area.

I have also met with Sue Njuguna from Destiny Support and will be exploring with her how we can work together in the future.

Since moving to Slough I've completed my Street Angel Training and six of us were commissioned as Street Angels at a special service on 9th November. I have also been elected as a trustee.

I have discovered that the three churches are all very individual and work in different ways but we (Lynn, Leanne, Maxine and I) have had a very warm welcome from all three. I look forward to exploring further with them, how we can make God relevant and personal to the people of Slough.

A **huge** "thank you" to all the circuit for the support and interest which they have shown in Diaconal ministry and what it's all about – hopefully in the next 5 years we will find out!

God bless you all,

Andy Packer

Appendix 2: Property Report

Care and Cover for your Church and other premises

A presentation by Martin Barnard from Methodist Insurance in September was attended by 22 members covering 11 of the 12 churches with property in our Circuit, and several Circuit Stewards with responsibility for the manses.

The presentation covered a wide range of topics including type and level of insurance cover required, risk assessments (fire, health and safety etc), contents inventory and cover, electrical inspections, portable appliance testing, gas installation inspections, annual checks of fire extinguishers, asbestos issues, checks, labelling and management of asbestos in properties, Trustee Indemnity Insurance, theft, damage and loss and the use of Smartwater on metal objects, safeguarding policy and active implementation of the policy and monitoring that the policy is accepted and operated by church and non church groups using the premises.

Management system for church premises key holders.

Churches should be safe and pleasant places for visitors and users. Attention to the above topics will help bring that about and in turn can reduce the likelihood of accidents, theft, damage or unpleasant actions and that, in turn, lowers the need to claim.

Methodist Insurance encourage policy holders to contact their offices to discuss any concerns or issues as they are there to help and advise. The company is non-profit making, any surplus made is passed to the Methodist Connexion for their use.

Church Insurance Cover

At the above meeting, property stewards were offered the opportunity to have their buildings inspected and their premiums checked to ensure their cover is adequate and is not unnecessarily high. As a follow up from that meeting, some dates in November have been earmarked for visits by Martin to the Circuit for these inspections and appraisals to be done.

Church Property Schedules

Property Stewards should, by now have completed their annual property inspections, completed their 6 page Property Schedule A and presented it to their Church Council for their guidance on the condition of their property and actions needing to be taken. Following Church Council approval of the report and presentation of Schedule A, one signed copy should be sent to the Circuit Property Secretary, Phil Clack, for him to consolidate into a report to District. Property Stewards please do this *asap*! Any church having difficulty in achieving this should email Phil detailing the nature of the issue. Thank you.

P A Clack
26.10.12