

# **The Methodist Church Thames Valley Circuit Meeting at St Mark's Crescent - Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at 7.45 pm**

## **Minutes**

**Present:** Rev Andrew Baker plus 4 other ministers, 6 Circuit Stewards, and 31 other members as listed in the register of attendees. Apologies from 11 members noted there.

**Agenda** as distributed plus:

- under item 7: Donation to MWiB,
- under item 8: Ledgers Road Project update,
- under item 12: Fairtrade, and Requests for letters of greeting or condolence from the Circuit.

**Minutes of last meeting** were agreed. There were no matters arising.

**Safeguarding:** Kathy Rickman reported that there are two more 'Creating Safer Places' awareness raising sessions this quarter. Each church, through its safeguarding officer, will be asked to produce a safeguarding audit. Kathy was thanked for her work in making us a leading circuit on this in the District.

Rev Andrew Baker reported that the South-East and Southampton Districts were to be the first to undergo a safeguarding past cases review back to 1950. Ministers will be sent forms to fill in about anything with safeguarding consequences and members should be aware that old cases will be brought up. Kathy also commented on the need for churches starting young church groups to ensure appropriate training undertaken.

**Circuit 2012 Annual Reports** from the Superintendent Minister and the Senior Steward were adopted unanimously by the Meeting. These will be available on the website with one paper copy in each church.

## **Finance.**

The 2013/14 Budget for

- net Circuit expenditure of £255,850,
- keeping the total assessment the same as last year at £250,624,
- taking the balance from our currently high reserves, and
- adjusting the shares of this to the schedule provided as agreed between the churches,

was agreed unanimously.

The Church Treasurers had considered various formulae for calculating each church's responsibility towards this budget and then recommended using a share system starting from last year's figures and adjusting between those churches who were experiencing problems in raising this income and those who were in a position to help financially.

In answer to a question about the Retirement Fund, it was stated that the rate of increase for this was not yet fixed but a recommendation for a 1% pension fund increase was going to Conference and the Circuit reserves would allow the taking of the risk that a higher figure if agreed. Chris Wren and the treasurers were thanked for their work.

Donation to Reading Citizens Advice Bureau of £200 was agreed in recognition of the work John Salthouse does for the Circuit website, to be included in the budget from now on. Our thanks to Ian Haggarty recorded.

Donation to Methodist Women in Britain of £200 was agreed.

The Circuit Property Schedule D was approved to be sent to District. This shows fewer exceptions than the previous year. Thanks to all Church Property Stewards for their work in inspecting their properties and completing the forms. In future, these schedules can be completed online if Phil Clack has your email address.

**Property Matters** The Connexion has recently distributed the second issue of Property Matters (the successor of Property Points) which keeps property stewards up to date on changes to rules and regulations regarding properties as well as information and advice on how to manage your property. If anybody would like to be included on the internet mailing list please visit [www.methodist.org.uk/signup](http://www.methodist.org.uk/signup).

All Methodist properties should have commissioned an asbestos survey since 2006 to determine whether any asbestos is present in the premises. A written report should be available from this inspection which should be shown to all contractors before they start work on the property. This is a legal requirement.

Methodist Insurance have inspected some of the churches and assessed their risks in various areas. A report followed advising each church where they may be at risk and how they could reduce the risk. This may result in premium reductions if taken up and less risk of properties being broken into or personal accident or injury occurring. Any church which has not yet been inspected can contact Phil Clack to arrange for a visit. Churches had reduced their insurance premiums by contracting for 3 years or combining church and cottage policies.

**Office for Rev Conrad Hicks** being considered for September when he will be taking up a full-time appointment split:

- part-time presbyteral appointment in the Hampshire/Surrey Borders Circuit
- part-time Assistant Chair of the South East District responsible for the Western Area of which this Circuit is a part.

while residing with Sonia in Slough.

**Ledgers Road Church Project** was on course to finish in 7 weeks time, until an asbestos find on the day of this meeting. The Circuit agreed to fund any consequent shortfall in the first instance subject to CLT approval. Photos of the work in progress were to be posted on the Circuit Website.

**Circuit Property Consent** was given to:

- Eton Wick to negotiate a continuance of the current let or if required, seek new tenants.
- High Street to re-let the large office space at a reduced rent to the current charity tenant, and to let the small office upstairs to a new tenant. –
- Woodlands Park to re-let one cottage to the current tenant and seek new tenants for the other.

**Annual Circuit Appointments for 2013/14** were agreed as shown on the attached sheet. Mrs Connie Jeffery was appointed a Circuit Steward, effective from September 2013, but we are looking to fill vacancies for fifth Circuit Steward, Local Preachers' Meeting Secretary and fifth Representative to Synod.

**Authorisation to Minister** within the Methodist Church – Circuit unanimously agreed to apply to Conference for this status for the Anglican Rev Malcolm White. His work at Cookham Rise is much appreciated.

**Our Vision for the Circuit** Rev Andrew Baker spoke of Shared Resources as witnessed by

- our Treasurers,
- Shared Prayers – the Circuit Prayer Diary, sharing time slots for 24 hours continuous prayer starting 28<sup>th</sup> September at 4 pm at St Andrew's, and
- Shared Presence – people freely moving between the churches especially among the smaller churches.

In Slough the 3 churches are working together in "Alive in Slough". The Smaller Churches Group meets regularly to support each other, hold healing services, an away day and *Singing the Faith*. In Maidenhead, Gary is accompanying the two complimentary centres each building their own vision. The teenagers from Windsor and Slough meet together once a month. All our congregations are reaching out from our churches into our communities and the Circuit staff are working as a team.

**Sabbatical pastoral cover** for Rev Gary Homewood this June, July and August:

- High Street – Rev A Baker,
- St Mark's – Rev S Hicks

**Fairtrade** Sue Trout encouraged churches for Fairtrade fortnight and to check they are using Fairtrade items.

**Circuit Greetings** to be sent to Meg Few on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, Carol & Daisy Palmer on their Diamond wedding, Rev Linda Hillier in appreciation of her work, Peter Morris recovering from major surgery, the local Anglican deaneries on the appointment of a new Archbishop of Canterbury, the local Roman Catholic pastoral areas as a new Pope is chosen and our local Synagogue. Letters to be sent to the partner of Kieron Shaw, the family of Arthur Morgan, Don Peake's family on his recent deterioration, Joyce Brown on her brother's death and Joy Seller on her sister's.

**Dates for Diaries** please see also diary of forthcoming events on website:

Thu 21 <sup>st</sup> Mar	Circuit Healing Service	7.30 pm at Burnham
Sun 12 <sup>th</sup> May	Circuit Easter Offering Service	5 pm at Windsor (tea at 4 pm)
Wed 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm at Hampshire Ave.
Wed 25 <sup>th</sup> September	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm at St Andrew's
Wed 20 <sup>th</sup> November	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm at Cookham Rise
Thu 27 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2014	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm at High St
Wed 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2014	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm at Old Windsor

The meeting closed with thanks to our hosts and the Blessing at 9.35 pm.