

**The Methodist Church Thames Valley Circuit Meeting
St Andrew's – Wednesday, 25nd September 2013 at 7.45 pm**

Minutes

Present: Rev Andrew Baker plus 5 other ministers, 3 Circuit Stewards, and 30 other members as listed in the register of attendees. Apologies from 11 members noted there.

Agenda as distributed plus:

- under item 6: Circuit Auditors, Circuit Archivist.
- under item 9: Use of emails.

Minutes of last meeting were agreed. Proposer: Phil Mount; Seconder Joyce Brown

Safeguarding: Kathy Rickman presented the safeguarding report as sent out with the agenda, and asked Churches to check that all office holders had attended the Creating Safer Space awareness raising session, and encourage new office holders especially to meet the condition of taking up post by applying to attend the session on 5th October or in March. The revised Circuit safeguarding policy was accepted with the following amendments: review date to be September 2014 and under Procedures for Disclosure and Barring Checks, paragraph 4, the phrase *relevant person according to each church's safeguarding policy* to replace *relevant Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator*.

Proposer Kathy Rickman, Seconder Anne Haggarty.

Appointments: Rev Malcolm R White is now authorised to minister within the Methodist Church, in effect as a Methodist presbyter. The following appointments were made unanimously by this Circuit Meeting:

- Dave Totttingham, accreditation as a Methodist Local Preacher.
- Elsa Daniel, a steward at Ledgers Road Methodist Church as Circuit Steward.
- Rev Andy Packer as Circuit Representative to the Slough Faith Partnership.
- Phil Mount as Deputy Circuit Treasurer to deputise in Chris Wren's absence.
- Ian Haggarty as Circuit Archivist.
- Bridgen Watkins & Wainwright as Circuit Auditors.

Letters of thanks were to be sent to Peter Hardiment for doing a good job over many years as Circuit Archivist and Daphne Hogg as Circuit MHA representative – please pray for someone in your church to take on this coordinating role.

Allocation of Circuit Stewards to Church Councils (New Steward to be allocated after initial 6 months)

Burnham – Liz, Colnbrook & Poyle – Anne, Cookham Rise – Liz, Eton Wick – Connie, Hampshire Avenue – Alan, High Street – Anne, Ledgers Road – Connie, Old Windsor – Chris, St Andrew's English – Anne, St Andrew's Asian – Liz, St Mark's – Connie, Windsor – Alan, Woodlands Park – Alan.

Circuit Property Secretary's Report as sent out on Monday, 23rd September, was accepted. It is the role of the members of Circuit Meeting to disseminate this back to their churches and ensure property schedules are completed in good time before their agreement in the February Circuit Meeting. Anyone having problems with the new online filing system should speak to a member of staff or Phil Clack. Property consents for new projects, letting to new tenants and lettings to existing tenants every two years, need to be input into the consents system and brought to Circuit early – six months before if possible. Tribute was made to the sheer amount of work by Phil Clack.

Stewards are reminded about the **October headcount** with an online grid accessed via the Methodist Church website – Ministers and Office Holders – Statistics for Mission.

Ledgers Road House. The Church application for a certificate for multiple occupancy is at present held up as the house is not registered separately from the church with the land registry – other churches with houses please note.

Bank signatories. The following were authorised to act as bank signatories for the Circuit current account and Central Finance Board account with immediate effect: Mrs C Jeffery in her role as Circuit Steward and Mr P Mount in his role as Deputy Treasurer.

Circuit Loan to Ledgers Road. Rev Sonia Hicks spoke on behalf of the Church to request a loan to cover the project overspend as detailed in the report sent out on Monday, 23rd September. Chris Wren circulated a commentary on this request to treat as a loan the £25,000 originally paid by the Circuit to cover bills until a promised grant was received. Initial indications are that the Circuit is around breakeven for the year and such a loan would reduce the Building Reserve to zero and the general reserve by £5000. The pattern of the 2011/12 Ledgers Road accounts shows between £5000 and say £10,000 available to service all the loans and the Church is already committed to repaying Chapel Aid £5000 plus interest at 2.5% per annum per year. At this rate it would take about 8 years to clear the circuit loans. Members spoke of their compassion for the situation and the members at Ledgers Road and asked the Church Council to come back to Circuit should the repayment plan run into trouble.

Members voted unanimously to approve retrospectively the £25,000 cash flow loan to Ledgers Road, and with two abstentions, that the original £12,500 Circuit Loan should be interest free and the further £25,000 at 2.5% pa from 1st September 2013 with annual rate review. Repayments at the rate of a minimum £5,000 pa are being set against the interest bearing loan first, with the first payment to be made before 1st August 2014.

Gift Aid on Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) is available on individual cash donations of £20 or less not already gift aided. Individuals should not be challenged on their giving pattern however. Church treasurers should ensure they have adequate collection records – Chris Wren has a template to help.

Matters from Conference. Anne Haggarty reported

1. Substitutes at Circuit Meetings and Church Councils – The Charity Commissioners have tightened up the rules on substitutes. If you are a substitute, you can attend, and speak, but you cannot vote.
2. From the youth members of Conference – please don't plan events for young during exam times! There is a great need for safe space, without any pressure, for young people to meet & talk over their concerns.
3. There are conversations at District and Connexion about how best to offer various programmes of learning, discipleship and training.
4. New way for Mission – Anne Haggarty referred to the “**One Mission Statement**” summary from Connexion (*see Appendix 1 below*) Please share it with your church communities for prayerful consideration.
5. Work out what God is calling us to do, focus on what we can do, and pray for resources to do it.
6. Two comments from Archbishop of Canterbury – “The Holy Spirit puts up with denominations” and “We were called not to be useful, but revolutionary”.

Circuit Prayer Diary. Please continue to keep contributions short and appropriate for your date, thank you.

Archives It is a legal requirement to archive material which is no longer needed by the church. Standing Order 015 lists explicitly: *All minute books, account books, baptismal and burial registers, and any other records relating to ... local church affairs which are deemed worthy of permanent preservation.* NB Only items no longer needed for current reference in the conduct of business should be given to the Circuit Archivist.

Use of email. Please take the time to check and only send if it is the sort of message you would like to receive. See http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf_social_media_guidelines_part2_0710.pdf

Vision for the Circuit The summer Circuit Open Air services attracted attendances of over 20, 100 and 70/80 and will be held again.

Being a Learning Church – a training morning will be planned for the spring to bring together people in the circuit doing similar jobs e.g. projectionists, stewards

Resources are now available from Sonia or Andrew to borrow and use for groups; 6 sessions each on *Windows into Christian Spirituality, Windows into Church History, and Windows into the New Testament.*

What do we mean when we say ‘forgiveness in 21st century Britain? See Andrew’s blog on the Circuit website where comments are invited on *Speaking Christian* by Marcus J. Borg.

Circuit Greetings be sent to Tim and Hannah on their coming wedding, Rev John Newton and Pam who have now moved to Devon, and Dr Mike Bruton on his marriage and move to Oxford. Letters to be sent to Tony Day and his daughter Susan on the death of Margot, member and treasurer at Colnbrook and Poyle; and to John Salthouse, the Circuit website technician, at present in hospital.

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

Sat 5 th October	Creating Safer Space Foundation Module	10 - 1 at Eton Wick
Wed 20 th November	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm at Cookham Rise
Tues 26 November	Advent Voices	8pm at St Andrew’s
Thu 27 th February 2014	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm at High Street
Sun 4 th May	Easter Offering Service	St Mark’s
Sat 17 th May	Local Preachers Study Day	
Wed 21 st May	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm at Old Windsor

The meeting closed with the saying of the Grace together at 9.35 pm.

APPENDIX 1 ONE MISSION STATEMENT **(from the Report of the Methodist Missionary Society Working Party)**

A world transformed by God's love; a confident Church motivated to share God's love; a people celebrating being part of a worldwide family.

Participation in God's mission and the proclamation of God's kingdom are at the heart of Jesus' message and continue to be empowered by the Holy Spirit's activity in the Church and in the world.

Every Methodist is called to share in this mission, working together in cooperation, partnership and collaboration wherever they are.

Sharing God's mission embraces and unites social action and evangelical proclamation as good news for all people in every aspect of their being. It is through that mission that God will enable holiness, transforming lives, communities, nations and the world.

God's mission is expressed both locally and globally and the Methodist Church in Britain celebrates being in partnership with the worldwide community of Methodist, United and Uniting Churches.

Mission at home and overseas is all one mission.

The Purposes for Mission in the Methodist Church in Britain in the twenty-first century include:

To invite and call all people to discipleship, evangelism and service by:

Proclaiming and affirming our conviction of God's love in Christ, for us and for all the world.

Fulfilling the call of God to be a good neighbour to all.

Creating opportunities to serve God in ways that support community development and challenge unjust structures and systems.

Encouraging fresh ways of being church.

To equip and resource people for mission by:

Building confidence in British Methodists as disciples of Jesus so that we rediscover a passion for mission and evangelism.

Encouraging a new generation to tell its faith story by focusing on explicit and intentional voicing of the Gospel.

Engaging in education and training for mission in every church, circuit, district and wherever the connexion meets together, drawing on local and global resources.

Encouraging and supporting British Methodists to live on a world map and to be disciples in a worldwide Church.

To encourage and participate in networks of Church to Church relationships by:

Engaging with Churches across the world in a spirit of partnership, collaboration and mutuality; giving and receiving inspiration, challenges and resources.

Sharing experiences, insights and best practice of mission with partners at home and overseas so that we all learn from each other.

Fostering ecumenical links in mission, including the World Methodist Council.

Contributing to and shaping a common response to global mission with our Methodist, United and Uniting partners.

Facilitating encounters between people across denominational, national and cultural boundaries that enrich the Church at every level.