

The Methodist Church Thames Valley Circuit Meeting Woodlands Park, 19th November 2014 at 7.45 pm

Minutes

Present Rev Andrew Baker plus 4 other ministers, 5 Circuit Stewards, and 26 other members as listed in the register of attendees. Apologies from 15 members noted there.

The meeting started with a Service of Holy Communion, led by Rev Margaret Dudley.

Agenda Agreed as distributed plus under AOB

- Circuit Annual Report 2014
- Coach trip to Daffodil Day.

Minutes of last meeting were agreed subject to the following amendments:

- Under Safeguarding: change *Social Meetings* to *Social Media*.
- Under Circuit Stewards: change Alan's churches to *Windsor, Woodlands Park*.

Matters Arising

Rev Melinda Bell has accepted our invitation to be a minister in this circuit from 1st September 2015 with responsibility for the St Andrew's /Hampshire Avenue section. Mindy will move into the Upton Road manse with husband Ted and two children who will be aged 3 and 6. She was born and brought up in California, but will come to us after ten years' ministry in the Milton Keynes circuit. Rev Andrew Baker has accepted an invitation to be the Superintendent Minister for the Strathclyde Circuit from September 2015. The Circuit Meeting acknowledged the work done by Anne Haggarty and Connie Jeffery on the invitation process – enabling its successful conclusion in the first round of stationing.

Anne Haggarty will be standing down from her position as Senior Circuit Steward next August, please pray for the search for a new Circuit Steward.

Safeguarding

Kathy Rickman reported on the Circuit Safeguarding meeting held in September. All but two congregations were represented at this discussion. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks can now be applied for online or by paper copy. See **Dates** for the next safeguarding awareness meeting for all new church officeholders. The church annual audit of safeguarding through the online property schedule and the Social Media Guidelines were discussed.

The Circuit Meeting agreed that an additional paragraph on use of social media be brought to the next Circuit Meeting to be added to our Safeguarding Policy and that members of the circuit be directed through the circuit website to the district guidelines on the use of email and social media. Ian Haggarty emphasised the importance of doing all we can to raise awareness and give information on the help that is available to anyone affected by social media bullying.

To ensure that as a church we learn from all mistakes and abuses that have happened in the past **Creating a safer space for us all** cards were handed out to be given to every family coming to any of our churches. These compliment the past case review already being undertaken.

Travelling in Hope

The work of the Missions Committee in future is to be carried out by churches interested in aspects such as Action for Children, Traidcraft, All We Can, Prison Chaplaincy, Mission Partners, Mission in Britain and MHA leading on these areas and opening up events to the whole circuit. Thanks were given for all those who had contributed to the Circuit World Mission prayer safari in October; it is planned to make this an annual event.

There will be a Circuit Week of Prayer to encourage us as a Circuit to engage in different ways to pray. Brilliant ideas will be welcome – one from the meeting was to contact Jenny Sturgeon about Prayer Labyrinths. There will be something on every night of the week of 1st – 7th February 2015 in various churches in the Circuit.

See dates below for details of the Men's 5-6 mile walk and the Circuit Christmas Peace service with the Thames Valley Voices in December.

Please encourage all to come to the Circuit Training Morning on 7th March (details on Circuit website) – last year's was very worthwhile.

In the Wednesday and Thursday of Holy Week, 1st – 2nd April 2015, Cookham Rise Methodist Church is holding an *Illuminating the Shadows* exhibition of arts and crafts on the effect of grief.

See Rev Sonia Hicks for the new Circuit *Windows on....* resources for small groups – *The Old Testament*, *The English Bible*, and *The First Christmas*.

Good News

- St Mark's Crescent: the local community is contributing to the raising of funds for the 2020 project.
- Cookham Rise: new hirers for the premises.
- St Andrew's: *Big Church*.
- Windsor: new members, an alpha course, film club, walking club and book club reaching out to the local community.
- High Street: a whole weekend of Arts, Crafts and Music on 24th – 25th January 2015.
- Hampshire Avenue: Wednesday evening bible fellowship and a new AV system.
- Eton Wick: new venture started with an *Open the Book* team
- Woodlands Park: *Open the Book* team celebrating its 7th year.
- Old Windsor: *Open the Book* team celebrating its 4th year.
- Burnham: new members and an art exhibition through *The Well*.

Finance

The audited **Circuit Accounts** for the year to 31st August 2014 showing General Fund net expenditure of £12,730 were presented and accepted unanimously. Proposer: Liz Tottingham Seconder: Ian Haggarty. The shortfall is £7000 more than budgeted largely due to the loss of rental income from the St Mark's Manse. The sale and purchase of manses resulted in an increase in the Circuit Advance Fund to £54,600 which is available for special mission projects, such as the salary of a deacon, on application. Meanwhile it will be subject to an annual administration charge. After transfers to meet our reserves policy the balance on the General Fund was £67,900 compared with the £25,000 needed to manage risk and meet unplanned expenditure.

The budget for 2015/16 will go to the Treasurers meeting on 15th January. The treasurer, Chris Wren, was thanked for his work. **Accounts Schedules** are now outstanding. Please contact Chris Wren as soon as possible if there are any problems with this as he has to forward his report to District prior to the Spring Synod.

Property

Phil Clack reminded churches that **Church Property Schedules** need to be completed and agreed by Church Councils by 20th February 2015 so that they can be approved by the Circuit Meeting on 3rd March. This is the second year of submission online. Please advise Phil when this has been completed.

Circuit Greetings

Replies have been received for greetings sent to Rev Beatrice Quaye, Felicity and Alan Kendon, and Mrs Gill Franklin, whose letter was read out. The widow of Rev Ray Sargeant died soon after him.

Letters of greeting from the Circuit are to be sent to Rev Mindy Bell, Mrs Orris Hughes and Mr John Long at present in hospital.

AOB

The Circuit Annual Report 2014 was unanimously adopted by the Circuit. This is available online and one paper copy is to be provided for each church. Anne Haggarty was thanked for collating this.

It was agreed that the annual coach trip to **Daffodil Day** at Central Hall is to be a Circuit trip.

The Acting Superintendent in the absence of Rev Andrew Baker was agreed as Rev Sonia Hicks.

Extra Dates (please also see the Circuit Website)

Saturday, 20 th December	Christmas Peace Service	6 pm Ledgers Road
Saturday, 7 th March	Circuit Training Morning	10am-12.30pm St Mark's Crescent
Saturday, 14 th March	Safer Space Awareness session	Eton Wick

The meeting closed with thanks to our hosts and the saying of the Grace together at 9.20 pm.