

The Methodist Church Thames Valley Circuit Meeting
7.45 pm Wednesday 14th September 2016 at Hampshire Avenue

Minutes

Note: CA stands for Church Action needed.

Present Rev John Hellyer, Chair of the South-East District, to chair the first part of the meeting, Rev Sonia Hicks plus 2 other Circuit Ministers, 4 Circuit Stewards, and 31 other members as listed in the register of attendees. Apologies from 10 members noted there.

Agenda Agreed as distributed with the addition of an item from the Local Preachers' Meeting under AOB.

Extension of Ministers' Appointments

The Circuit Invitation Committee recommendations and reasoned statements had been circulated to members on 23rd August 2016 with a request that anyone intending to oppose any of these recommendations or move an amendment thereto, notify the chair of this meeting in writing at least 24 hours before the meeting. As no such notice had been received the following re-invitations were affirmed and gratitude expressed for the offers to extend their ministry in our Circuit.

Rev Sonia Hicks – invited for a further three years as Circuit Superintendent from 1st September 2017.

Rev Gary Homewood – invited for a further two years as a Circuit Presbyter from 1st September 2017.

Rev Margaret Dudley – invited for a further five years as a Circuit Presbyter from 1st September 2017.

Deacon Andy Packer – invited for a further three years as a Circuit Deacon from 1st September 2017.

The Circuit Stewards were thanked for all their work on the consultation process. Mrs Mary Hall expressed thanks on behalf of the St Andrew's congregation for Deacon Andy Packer's guidance during the sabbatical of their minister.

(Rev John Hellyer then left the meeting, handing the Chair to Rev Sonia Hicks.)

Minutes of last meeting were agreed and signed.

Matters arising

Report on annual inspection of certificates held in the Circuit Safe - to be attached to the minutes.

- Appointment of fifth Circuit Representative to Synod – unanimous vote for David Ridley.
- Circuit projector and screen – Kathy Rickman was encouraged to purchase this and the CLT to plan storage and administration.

Property

Schedules for completion are now online. Please contact Joyce Brown with any queries.

Churches are reminded to check their gutters, remembering safety at heights guidelines. There had been recent advisory notices on safeguarding our buildings to raise awareness rather than frighten. Bids can be made for more security measures if needed – contact Joyce.

Consent was given for High Street to re-let small office in Kingsway Chambers. Consent was also given to High Street to renegotiate early on a shop tenancy where the tenant has requested this, and to re-let subject to the High Street Church Council approving reasonable terms.

Safeguarding

The next Creating Safer Space Foundation course will be held on 24th September at Windsor. Church Councils are asked to work alongside church safeguarding officers to ensure that all new appointees, including pastoral visitors, plus anyone else interested, attend one of these sessions.

The question has been raised as to whether every Church Council member needs a DBS check. Church Councils should refer to the guidelines of the Methodist Church Recruiting Safely policy, which states that at least three members of the Church Council should have a DBS check.

A Circuit database has been created with names and date of last DBS check so that there is a record of those within the Circuit who have a certificate and so that reminders for 5 year anniversary renewals can be issued.

The Work of God in this Circuit.

“Welcome” is the Circuit theme this year, starting with the Prayer Safari on “Hospitality”, and including a linked preaching theme in the New Year.

A statistic from Synod was that less than 0.25% of the UK population are refugees. It was agreed to ask for a speaker from Slough Refugee Support for our next Circuit Meeting. In response to a question on the use of church premises for refugees, it was reported that the Methodist Church has agreed that manses that are surplus to circuit needs can be used to house refugees at below market value.

Churches were reminded that the Work of God should be an early item on Church Council agendas too. Each church then reported on their work for God. This included

- An ecumenical 7am “Wake up Wednesday” breakfast,
- Promoting a meeting on the prospect of the village losing the doctors’ surgery,
- Closer ties with the local Anglican church,
- Café style services,
- Children’s holiday film club,
- Zimbabwean fellowship with song and food,
- A forthcoming Peace Symposium and
- The first baptism for three years in one small church.

At future meetings one section would be asked to present on this theme using their choice of media.

AOB

Provision of gluten free bread for Holy Communion. The Local Preachers’ Meeting asked that Church Councils consider requesting communion stewards to use gluten free bread for all. This is available in supermarkets and the Genius brand was one recommended.

TMCP bequest statements are now ready – log in needed.

Extra Dates Please see the Circuit Website. Ian Haggarty is co-ordinating the next plan dates.

The meeting closed with thanks to our hosts and the saying of the Grace together at 9.35 pm.