

The Methodist Church Thames Valley Circuit Meeting 7.45 pm Wednesday 8th March 2017 at Cookham Rise

Minutes

Note: CA stands for Church Action needed.

Present Rev Sonia Hicks plus 3 other Circuit Ministers, 5 Circuit Stewards, 34 other members and 3 observers as listed in the register of attendees. Apologies from 7 members noted there.

Mr Philip Evans, Christian Aid Regional Co-ordinator for Buckinghamshire and Mrs Zainab Koroma, Regional Co-ordinator for Berkshire, spoke in advance of Christian Aid Week 14th – 20th May: “Act, Pray, Give.” See Christian Aid Website for further details.

Agenda agreed as distributed with the addition of an item from the Circuit Invitation Committee and items about Bible Month and Active Mission.

Minutes of last meeting were agreed and signed.

Staines & Feltham Circuit update

A report dated 27.02.2017 has now been received and will be sent out with the minutes to all members of the Circuit Meeting. This shows Ashford Common as a fifth church requesting to join our Circuit by 2019/2020. The next step is for our working party to meet with representatives from the other circuit for further discussion.

Circuit Invitations Committee

Request for curtailment. The committee has accepted the request from Rev Gary Homewood for the curtailment of his appointment in the Thames Valley Circuit from 31st August 2017. Churches in the section are asked to check that his contact details have been removed from everything sent out. No farewell cards should be sent at this stage, and all are asked to continue to hold the family in their prayers. **CA**

There will be no replacement through stationing before September 2018. A retired Anglican priest has offered a few hours on an expenses-only basis. The Circuit Meeting agreed unanimously to the possible appointment of an active supernumerary or a lay worker.

Conversation on the work of God

On behalf of Cookham Rise, Keith Le Page welcomed the Circuit Meeting. He spoke about changes made and proposed on the church's journey to the use of the premises as a centre of community. The monthly coffee mornings and lunches, as well as the community allotment, bring together both the church and the unchurched.

On behalf of Burnham, Philip Ely spoke of

- Table tennis on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month with an hour for adults only starting at 12.30 pm followed by an hour for families
- Open the Book
- Mums and Toddlers
- Lent Risers
- An Alpha Course starting on a weekday morning which has attracted parents from the Mums and

Toddlers and adults with non-English backgrounds. (He recommends having the whole church watching this together.)

Ruth James invited others, particularly from the Slough Churches, to share Ledgers Road's vision to take "Alive in Slough" out to the community by volunteering at Wexham Park hospital for helping with welcoming, gardening, administration, or helping patients to eat meals. These all require an interview, DBS check, and induction day training. Alternative outreach includes supporting the Salvation Army drop-in service, the food bank or the Men's breakfast.

Local Preachers' Meeting

David Ridley reported that Elijah Kommu has moved from On Note to On Trial, giving us four Local Preachers on trial who would welcome feedback given in a warm and loving way. **CA.** The superintendent of the Staines & Feltham Circuit is supporting our trainees.

Safeguarding

In the Annual Review of the Circuit Safeguarding Policy, the Circuit Meeting agreed the following changes:

- In the section *"The Thames Valley Circuit recognises the serious issue of the abuse ..."* replace *"institutional abuse or neglect."* at the end of the sentence with *"institutional abuse or neglect and other emerging forms of abuse."*
- Under *Procedure for Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS)*, replace *"Declaration X"* by *"Self-declaration for New Applicants and Self-declaration for Renewals"*.

Churches are reminded that they should review the Church safeguarding policy each year even if there have been no changes.

21 people have signed up so far for the Creating Safer Space Refresher Course on 11th March, 21 for 24th June and 11 for 7th October. A few churches have not yet replied. **CA.**

A question has been raised about the possibility of attending such courses in neighbouring circuits. Our District is advertising for a Safeguarding Officer (details on email from Ian Haggarty).

Kathy Rickman thanked our trainers Andy, Glenice, Mike and Jenny and also Jenny for her work on administration, and the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinators.

Budget and Assessments 2017/18

This shows a net circuit expenditure of £273,631 with the total assessment decreasing from £262,360 to £249,242 with the balance taken from reserves. This shared between the churches as per the schedule provided. These were agreed with 3 votes against.

In the current year there is likely to be a surplus rather than the deficit budgeted, and our Circuit Policy is not to hold large reserves at Circuit Level. The assessment reduction will allow churches to build up their reserve if needed or fund a special project. **CA.** The budget includes estimates for four quinquennial inspections.

Circuit support for Slough Refugee Support.

After discussion and reassurance on the financial viability of this organisation, the proposal to make a total donation of £12,000 as detailed with the agenda was agreed unanimously. Rev Mindy Bell issued a mission challenge to all to provide practical support, perhaps through organising a party, and will liaise with Philip Ely.

Property

The Circuit Property Report, as already circulated, was presented by Joyce Brown and agreed by the meeting. This is an exceptions report and there are no major issues for churches or circuit. She thanked all who collected the information and those who had inputted it to the online system. Paper copies of the checklist and report for the manses and the detailed exceptions report for the churches were given to the Circuit Secretary. The reports for two churches have not yet been lodged electronically. **CA.**

High Street have heard no more, following the request from a tenant to renew early

Annual Circuit Appointments 2017/18

Daphne Hogg has stood down as MHA and LWPT co-ordinator, and was thanked for her long service. Mrs Dianna Phipps, Church Secretary at High Street, was agreed as the new Circuit Meeting Secretary. Names to replace the other members of the CLT who have served 6 years will be brought to the May Circuit Meeting.

Subject to the above, the list of Circuit Appointments was agreed as on the schedules sent out with the agenda.

Circuit Greetings

Rev Malcolm and Mrs Veronica White sent deep thanks for the gift of theatre tokens. Letters were asked to be sent to Bertha Hodge and Rosemary Willis.

Bible Month

The Circuit Meeting embraced the idea of focusing on one book of the Bible for a month, and having Preachers and small group leaders focus on the book of James this June. Deacon Andy Packer has attended a training day and has further details.

AOB

Extra Dates Please see the Circuit Website, and publicise these. **CA**

Saturday, 8 th April	Circuit Training Morning	9.30 am	Ashford Common
Sunday, 30 th April	Circuit Easter Offering Service	5 pm	Eton Wick

The meeting closed with thanks to our hosts and the saying of the Grace together at 9.40 pm.