

Thames Valley Circuit Meeting
Tuesday, 14th September 2021, at 7.45 pm
St Andrew's Church, Slough.

MINUTES

1. Welcome and opening devotions

Vicci welcomed everyone to the meeting, excited to welcome everyone face to face for the first time after a year in post. For Devotions she used Exodus 3:1-6, Moses and the burning bush. Vicci wondered if the bush had been burning for some time, God had been calling, and no-one had turned aside to listen? God calls and calls, and it is up to us to respond, and we accept that He calls and anoints specific people for specific jobs. Had someone else responded would we have had a different story - an illustration to remind us all to take time to turn aside listen and ask "is it you Lord?" Because we can, we sang together "Be still, for the Presence of the Lord".

Vicci then extended a special welcome to new attendees, and those returning.

2. Membership of meeting and apologies for absence

The membership of the meeting was agreed as recorded on the attendance list, and apologies for absence noted from Rev Anne Ellis, Mrs Liz Tottingham, Mr Dave Tottingham, Mrs Kathy Rickman, Mrs Patti Crockett, Mrs Judith Foster, Mrs Linda Harrison. Mr David Ridley was present via zoom. 30 members were present.

3. Declaration of interests

Rev Vicci Davidson and Rev Margaret Dudley declared interest under item 10 - Pension Deficit.

4. Agreement of the agenda; notification of items requested for AOB

No items were requested under AOB, and the previously circulated Agenda was agreed.

5. Minutes of last meeting (as already circulated)

The Minutes of the last meeting were accepted as correct. There were no matters arising

6. Matters arising not on the Agenda:

- **Circuit Strategy:** The team have made contact over the summer with people running "bus projects". Information gathered will filter down at a later date. From discussions the team has learnt that a bus redesigned as our proposal does not require a driver with a special licence to drive it. Vicci has spoken to the Deputy Warden of the Diaconal Order who felt that the Bus Project clearly fell under the diaconal remit.
- **Circuit Directory:** has been prepared and distributed.
- **Annual Reports to be presented to Circuit Meeting:**
 - Senior Circuit Steward – September meeting
 - Senior Church Stewards – February meeting
 - Superintendent's report – May meeting

7. Safeguarding report: nothing to add to report already circulated.

8. GDPR: The audit recently completed by all the Churches is an exercise that will be done annually, as TMCP are audited on the responses received. Vicci advised the Meeting the outcome for the Thames Valley Circuit is that compared to many we have responded well. We have two Churches we responded "to the best of our knowledge and ability". Some Circuits have not responded at all. We now know the details for the District Data Champion

9. Receive reports already circulated

The reports already circulated (Safeguarding, Local Preachers Conference, GDPR, Property) were all received and accepted.

Vicci thanked David Ridley for his years of service as Local Preachers secretary. David stands down at the end of September and the meeting was asked to consider any candidates for his replacement.

10. Finance

Sue Le Page began her report with the news that the balance of the old Youth Fund of around £400 has been identified for Circuit Youth. She then brought a number of proposals to the meeting:

- That Joy Brown becomes the 4th bank signatory alongside Sue le Page, Keith Machin and Phil Mount.
Carried unanimously
- That Joy Brown and Keith Machin become the contacts for Internet banking. Carried unanimously
- HSBC have notified that they will begin charging for all accounts from 1st November. Co-op Bank give the first 30 months free of charge and dual authority Internet Banking. Sue proposed that the Circuit bank Account be moved to the Co-op. Carried unanimously.
- District have refunded £1600 from 20/21 payment. Sue proposed that this money should stay within Circuit funds rather than redistributing to Churches and be put towards the Pensions Deficit (see following item). There was no dissent.
- Pension deficit. There was a resolution from Conference to ask all Churches to help to make up the shortfall in the Pension Fund, caused by of a change to rules around Pensions, not because of mismanagement. The Circuit budget anticipates a surplus of £25k, £10k of which could be earmarked for Lay Worker Project (see item 13), and Sue proposed £15k to the Pension Fund. It is envisaged that this would be a one-off payment to solve an immediate issue. It was pointed out that each Church also needs to prayerfully consider their position in regard to individual contributions.

Church action required

The Proposal is that the Circuit makes a voluntary donation of £15k to the Pension Fund.
Carried unanimously with 1 abstention

Vicci thanked Sue for her competent and careful work as Circuit treasurer.

11 Property

- Some will have experienced delay in getting Consents signed off, due to the unexpected departure of the District Property Officer. It has been agreed at District that where Consents are outstanding for renewal of existing tenancies the tenancy should continue. However new tenancies will have to wait.
- Woodlands Park sought permission from the meeting to re let “Sheen”.
Permission was given
- High Street sought permission for 1 Kingsway Chambers to be relet when the tenancy ends.
Permission was given.
- Burnham are making plans for major refurbishments to the kitchen area and to the drainage at the front of the building. - the fore court regular floods in bad weather. One of the groups that meet at the hall would like to install some covered sort of area as a number of their members meet outside post Covid. Burnham have about one third of the money needed for the kitchen and are completing funding applications for the remaining work. Burnham are hopeful that and churches in the circuit that have a surplus might consider a donation towards this work. **Church action required**

12 Matters from CLT

- Stationing – Profiles for both Slough and Maidenhead have been submitted to Connexion. Thanks to Glenice White particularly who, together with the Circuit staff, put a lot of hard work into producing these. Should we be successfully matched the “visit” weekend is likely to be 6th or 13th November.

- **Proposal for Lay Worker**

There was discussion around the draft Role Description circulated ahead of the meeting.

It was questioned whether the “five weeks holiday to be taken in school holidays“ would be a conflict of interest with proposed school holiday projects. Schools have around 13 weeks holiday so it would not pose a problem.

Would this person work on the bus project? The proposal for this role is for one year – the bus project is expected to come online in 2023. It is feasible that the person may be appropriate for that role too, but as there would be a gap between the end of their appointment in the role described above and the appointment of a lay worker for the bus project, it is not in the projections.

Vicci added that part of the Discernment for this Lay Worker role will be that the “right person” comes forward.

All agreed that the process to employ a Lay Worker should begin.

- Vicci informed the meeting that Colnbrook and Poyle remain an LEP as the URC did not follow the correct procedure and therefore it had never stopped being one. The Thames Valley Circuit’s own processes had been correctly followed.
- At the last Circuit Meeting it was agreed for CLT to relet the Maidenhead Manse. An arrangement has been made with Rev Dr Pete Phillips, a Methodist Minister, who has taken a lease for 11 months, at a reduced rental in exchange for services in the Circuit. He has committed to offering 9 services per quarter as well as some training in digital work.

13 Circuit Greetings

The Circuit agreed to send cards to Glenice White, and David Ridley with thanks for Glenice’s work as Senior Circuit Steward and David Ridley’s as LP Secretary.

14 Any other business – There was no other business.

The Youth Convener’s report was not received in time for the Meeting, but will be distributed with the Minutes, “sight unseen”.

15 Dates for Diaries

Wed 17 Nov 2021	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm	St Mark’s, Maidenhead
Thurs 17 Feb 2022	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm	
Tues 17 May 2022	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm	
Wed 14 Sep 2022	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm	
Thurs 17 Nov 2022	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm	

16 Closing thanks and prayer

With thanks to St Andrew’s for their hospitality, Rev Margaret closed the Meeting in Prayer at 8.45pm.