

Thames Valley Circuit Meeting
Thursday 23rd November 2023, at 7.45 pm
St Mark's Crescent, Maidenhead
MINUTES

1. Vicci welcomed everyone to the Meeting and opened with the reading from Matthew 8:25-27, the story of Jesus calming the storm. Surrounded by the “storms” of the stress of this world, felt by so many people: young people, older people, workers, non-workers the Church offers something that speaks into the calming waters.
2. The membership of the meeting was taken as given on the attendance list.
Present: Circuit Superintendent and 3 other ordained ministers, 4 Circuit Stewards and 16 other members. 13 apologies had been received, and 2 members neither attended nor gave apologies.
3. The Agenda was agreed including three items of AOB received in advance. No others were tabled.
4. Declaration of interests – Vicci reminded the meeting that Sophie Thompson (item 10) was her daughter.
5. Minutes of last meeting of the last Meeting were approved and duly signed.
6. Matters arising not on the agenda:
Easter Offering – Hampshire Avenue church offered to host the Easter Offering service next year. The contact from the church is Charles Buckman. Pauline Poole (Circuit Admin) will be in contact with Charles when the material is released.
7. Safeguarding Report - was received and accepted.
8. EDI –Four more people have advised that they have completed the training since the last meeting. The meeting was reminded that those completing the course should notify Pauline. Also, any struggling with online training should notify Pauline as in-person training will be organised in the Spring.
9. GDPR - the paperwork for 2024 Audit will be distributed in Spring.
10. Accept reports already circulated. Safeguarding
Local Preachers
Property
CLT
Youth and Children – Elanor Davidson has stepped down as Youth Convenor. Sophie Davidson was Proposed as the new Convenor which was accepted unanimously.
11. Finance: Sue Le Page presented the Financial reports. No issues were raised, and the reports were accepted by the meeting.
12. Property: In addition to the report circulated before the meeting Joy Brown presented a Proposal in respect of the sale of Eton Wick Church: The purchase has been delayed due to the Council's refusal of Change of Use proposals until a further three months had failed to receive an offer for community use. The intended purchaser has already purchased materials needed for the proposed business and asks the Circuit for permission to store the goods in the Church building, at her own expense and risk. Sue Trout asked for reassurance that the nature of the goods has been verified, John Statham pointed out that we stand to lose the sale if we refuse. The Proposal was accepted unanimously.

Old Windsor: Sue Le Page advised we need to instruct our Solicitor in respect of allowing the purchaser to dig exploratory holes to ensure the likely risk of further subsidence and make good outside the building. The Proposal was accepted unanimously.

Vicci advised Property Stewards that although the Consents Procedure has been simplified it is necessary to check that all pages of the Returns are completed including the checklist which is not required to be seen centrally, but which we are required to be compliant with.

13. Social Media Policy – The documents as circulated were accepted as Circuit Guidelines.
14. Matters from CLT – there were no additions, and no questions to the Report circulated.
15. The Work of God in the Thames Valley – Circuit Strategy. Vicci spoke into the Report “Build more Lifeboats”. The Meeting then split into small groups to discuss “What are the tethered Lifeboats in your Church”; “What are the Lifeboats you send out” and “What are your dreams and Visions”

There were lively and constructive conversations.

Action point all Churches: Could you let Pauline have identified boats so they can be added to the visual?

16. Admin needs across the Circuit: Vicci clarified before discussion started that this does not refer to the Circuit Administrator role. Ledgers Road church brought to the meeting that they are struggling to get the administration functions done, with less active people among the congregation and it was accepted that they are not the only ones. Vicci feels that now is the time to begin discussions around paid “Operation Manager” type roles around the Circuit, what that could look like, how it could be funded and how it could free up others for mission.
17. Some areas: Property; property bookings, GDPR; Treasury reports.
18. The Circuit must decide whether it is important enough for the health of the Circuit and Churches to invest in this option.
19. Some Sections are already having those conversations, there was a suggestion that, once Church Council approval was received funds could be sought from District and the Circuit. The contribution from the Circuit could be about £6k per year for 3 years, if we went ahead with a “trial” in one of the sections.
20. Sue Le Page was asked if the Circuit has budget for that. If the role was accepted as – missional there is £10k in the Mission Fund. The Meeting was asked whether there was an identified project.
21. Prayer will be vital to secure funding for this. It would ultimately mean upping the level of giving around the membership.
22. If this was accepted as mission it would be possible to draw down money from TMCP – apart from that which is earmarked for the Bus Project.
23. After this discussion, and in order to enable things to move forward before the next Circuit Meeting in February, The Meeting was asked to vote whether “In Principle we are prepared to employ an Operations Manager with a cost of up to £6k from the Circuit.” The vote was carried with 1 abstention and 1 “no”.
24. Circuit Greetings – following the recent death of David Tottingham a card will be sent to Liz and the family expressing sadness and gratitude for the contribution Dave has made to the Circuit over many years.
25. Any other business
 - The Meeting considered a Proposal from Di Phipps asking to revise the dates of the Preaching Plan as noted on the Agenda. The current arrangements of 4 quarters dated in line with the rest of the Connexion will not change although the staff team

have agreed to explore the possibility of remaining in line with a September start, but making the plan four months at a time instead of three. Churches were reminded to notify Pauline ahead of Planning of any specific requirements coming up.

- A formal request from Jane Short at Windsor to hold the next Circuit Meeting there was agreed.
- Alison Mount spoke about the Live Nativity at Windsor Church on Saturday 9th December.

26. Date of next meeting: 28th February 2024 Windsor

27. Vicci thanked all for their participation in a lively meeting. Deacon Margaret closed the meeting in Prayer at 10:00pm.