

MINUTES OF THE CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SAFFRON WALDEN MEETING
held on Thursday 22 November 2012
Saffron Walden Quaker Meeting House, High Street, Saffron Walden, Essex.

Present: Jonathan Burton (Chair), Clive Brooker (Treasurer), Margaret Snowdon (Secretary), Val Bowtle, John Capper, Father David Clemens, Kathryn Fiddock, Jim Gascoigne, Jane Martin, Melanie Mathieson, Helen O'Neill, David Tomlinson, Emma Turner, Robert Wiseman, Berry Wareham, Jean Wheeler.

The Chairman explained that Church Leaders were planning a half day retreat to consider the way forward for Churches Together. He asked members present as part of devotions to consider as members of Churches and Christians "What are we here for"? then ended in prayer.

1. Apologies. Apologies received from Carol Baker, Andy Finn, David Keeble, Meg Nettle, Elizabeth Tindley

2. Consideration of the Agenda. VBS and prayers for schools.

3. Minutes of last meeting. Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2012 were approved and signed with one correction.

4. Matters Arising

(a) Street Pastors.

There are now four Churches supporting street pastors. A Management Committee is formed and a public launch planned to obtain volunteers. Further updates will follow.

(b) Christmas Late Night Shopping 7 December 2012

The pitch is booked. Val Bowtle and Margaret Snowdon will organise this event. It is planned to hand out Christmas "baubles" which have a Christian story inside. A vote was taken with all in agreement with one against that up to £150 be used in purchasing these "baubles".

ACTION: VB/MAS

(c) Christmas Publicity

Lisa Knight has again organised local newspaper publicity and posters are available now.

(d) Christian Aid Representative

John Capper will be the Christian Aid Representative. Relevant paperwork was given to John with thanks from the meeting for taking this on.

5. Pentecost Praise

Feedback from the Church Leader's meeting proposed that a Pentecost Party "Trick n Laughs" be arranged to be held on Friday 17 May 2013. This is a low key, outreach entertainment hosted by two of the UK's top Christian entertainers at a cost of £650.00. Information had been previously circulated to members and after discussion and a vote with all in favour with two abstentions, it was agreed to go ahead with this idea. A planning committee is needed and Jonathan agreed to chair this group. Anyone interested in being on this committee, please e mail Jonathan direct.

ACTION: JB/ALL

6. Finance Report.

To date finances are: Current Account: £340.84. Pentecost Praise: £424.40. All subs are paid but we shall be £50.00 less next year due to resignation of New Life Church. After discussion it was agreed to increase the annual subscription to £60.00 per Church. An explanatory letter will be sent to all Church Treasurers.

ACTION: CB/MAS

Collection monies from the United Service in January 2013 will be split between Pentecost Praise and Christian Aid. Gift envelopes will be available.

7. Agape Meal – 17 January 2013 at the Baptist Church. 7.30 p.m. for 7.45 p.m. It will be useful to know numbers planning to attend. Please liaise with Melanie.

ACTION: ALL

8. Monthly Prayer Rota.

The secretary will draw up the rota and circulate to all.

ACTION: MAS

9. Youth Worker Report.

In the absence of Andy Finn the secretary read his report. "At the last CTSW meeting I mentioned that we were in discussion with Scripture Union over new ideas about ways of running the group and had fears of how that may affect us. The core team from X:Site in Saffron Wealden wrote an e mail to Scripture Union and as a result they are happy for us to keep running for the next year on the same costs and agreement that we have at present. There is going to be a national exploration of X:Site to be held in January and would value prayers for this event. Meanwhile we had another X:Site two weeks ago and 22 children attended. It is great to see so many children, some who do not attend local churches, come away from the event wanting more".

9a. Prayers for Schools

It was suggested that as well as prayers being said for all Churches, it might be appropriate to include all schools in the area, particularly as church teams go into schools regularly to hold assembly. After discussion this was agreed and a schools list will be added to the monthly prayer list.

ACTION: VB/MAS

9b VBS

Jonathan explained that he was looking into the question of being able to run VBS on a sustainable basis. Churches do donate towards costs but he is looking for regular committed donations from both Churches and also for increased support from parents. If from 2013 the pattern of giving does not alter then one possibility is that VBS will no longer run. Costs to run VBS are £19,000 and this year there was a shortfall of £5,500. To this end Jonathan has arranged an open meeting at Gold Street Chapel on 26 March 2013 at 8 p.m.

10. News from the Churches.

St Mary's: Team JC growing slowly. A silent prayer quiet day was enjoyed by 30 people recently. Christmas Fair 1 December. Carol service 2 December 6.30 p.m. – various readers from other Churches participating.

Gold Street: Two task groups have been formed: one to look at treatment of children and young people and the other to find how to use people's gifts in church.

Baptist Church: Their youth leader Liz has given birth to a baby girl. They have also had a baptism. There is to be a reading of a Dickens' Christmas Carol on 8 December – tickets £5.00. Sunday 9 December is a creative church at 10.30 a.m. They support street pastors.

Roman Catholic: Repairs to the Church roof are completed through various social events run to help with costs. Dickens' evening advertised in Newsletter Christmas posters available.

Methodist Church: Carol service 9 December 10.30 a.m. followed by coffee and mince pies. Knit and Natter Monday 17 December 2/4p.m - café worship for Christmas with the Castle Puppets, carols and refreshments. The Covenant Service Sunday 6 January 2013 at 10.30 a.m. Joint service with URC – all welcome.

United Reformed Church: Revd. Jim Gascoigne now in position. Disabled pews now completed. Crib service 18 December 4 p.m.

Friends: Two of out of three "Walden Inspired" meetings held – very successful. Last meeting 9 December.

11. United Service

The Covenant of Churches Together will be signed at the United Service 20 January 2013 at St Mary's 10 a.m.

The meeting ended with all joining in the Grace

Dates 2012

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| Advent services | 2 December |
| Late night shopping | 7 December |
| Minister's lunch | 12 December |

Dates 2013

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| Agape Meal | 17 January |
| United Service St Mary's | 20 January |
| Church Leaders retreat half day St Marks | 24 January |
| Church Leaders Prayer Meeting | 7 February |
| Lent Groups | 17 February – 17 March |
| Council Meeting | 28 February |
| Women's World Day of Prayer | 1 March |
| Council Leaders Business meeting | 14 March |
| Holy Week commencing | 24 March |
| VBS open public meeting 8 p.m. Gold Street | 26 March |
| Church Leaders Prayer Meeting | 18 April |
| Council Meeting | 25 April |
| Church Leaders Business Meeting | 9 May |
| Christian Aid Week | 12-18 May |
| VBS Sunday | 12 May |
| Pentecost Party | 17 May |
| Pentecost Sunday | No united event |
| Church Leaders Prayer Meeting | 6 June |
| Council Meeting | 13 June |
| Church Leaders Business Meeting | 11 July |
| Church Leaders Business Meeting | 5 September |
| Council Meeting | 26 September |
| Church Leaders Prayer Meeting | 17 October |
| Church Leaders Business Meeting | 7 November |
| Remembrance Sunday | 10 November |
| United Nations Service | tba |
| Council Meeting | 21 November |
| Advent Service | 1 December |
| Minister's Lunch | tba |