

MINUTES OF THE CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SAFFRON WALDEN MEETING
held on Thursday 25 April 2013
Abbey Lane and Newport United Reformed Church, Saffron Walden

Present: Jonathan Burton (Chair), M. Snowdon (Secretary), Val Bowtle, John Capper, Kathryn Fiddock, Jim Gascoigne, Jane Martin, Helen O'Neill, Elizabeth Tindley, Emma Turner, John West and Jean Wheeler.

The meeting opened with devotions.

1. **Apologies.** Apologies received from Carol Baker, Jackie Bartlett, Clive Brooker, Andy Finn, Father David, David Keeble, Melanie Mathieson, Meg Nettle and David Tomlinson ,

2. **Consideration of the Agenda.** No items.

3. **Minutes of last meeting.** Minutes of the meeting held on 28 .02.13 were approved and signed.

4. **Matters Arising**

(a) **Walk of Witness Good Friday.** The Police were unable to attend this year due to lack of man power but luckily Baptist Church members, at short notice, managed to find enough stewards to cope. Members commented that they thought the stewards did a marvellous job and thanks were extended to them. Emma will pass on our thanks. **ACTION: ET**

There is a risk element in participating in the Walk of Witness and Police protection is needed.

To be discussed further at the Ministers' meeting.

ACTION: MM

General discussion ensued when it was wondered did we irritate the general public rather than give Witness? There were not many people around - would it be better to start the walk one hour later? (It was pointed out that a later timing would not work as St Mary's three hour service commences at 12 noon). Why does the Walk have to stop at The Common? - the only people there were the walkers! However, participants had enjoyed walking as a Churches Together group.

(b) **Street Pastors.** Recruitment is completed, although DBS checks still have to be done, with 20 people involved. Training starts Saturday 27 April. The finances look healthy so far with a grant of £2,300 from Stansted Airport Community Fund, £300 from the Town Council and donations from participating churches and individuals. Uttlesford District Council is providing some training free of charge (police, drug and alcohol awareness).

(c) **Christian Aid.** Christian Aid week is 12-18 May and support and prayers welcomed. Everything else is all in hand.

5. **Finance Report.**

Costs pertaining to Pentecost to date amount to £155.00. The Easter advert in the Walden Local was £185.00. One subscription of £60 has been received from the Methodist Church and others will follow in due course.
Balance: Pentecost: £209.40 Main Account: £152.70.

6. **Pentecost. Tricks N Laughs - Friday 17 May – 7.30 – 10 p.m. - Friends School Assembly Hall**
Professional Christian entertainers will host this event, which will include promotional material for Compassion, an international Christian charity working in the area of child development and sponsorship. Tickets are available from the TIC and local churches. Drinks will be on sale. More volunteers needed to help on the evening. Jonathan expressed his thanks to the committee which has worked towards this event.

7. **VBS. VBS Sunday 5 May 2013.**

This is a key year. We are struggling with finances and key volunteers, particularly tent leaders. We need support from the churches to increase, otherwise this may be the last year of VBS.

There are a number of options:

- (i) attempt to carry on as we are
- (ii) a slimmed down version of VBS
- (iii) something radically different – review our objectives and how else we can meet them
- (v) stop VBS altogether.

There will be no decision until Autumn. A Public meeting is being called on 10 September at 8pm at Gold St. for further prayer, sharing and discussion. For now we need to concentrate on VBS 2013.

8. Youth Worker Report. No report available.

9. News from the Churches

Roman Catholic: A Bible Group has been started and Father David runs a discussion group. A party of elderly persons are being taken to Walsingham in the summer. The Church Newsletter is asking for volunteers for the S.A. shop.

Friends: Mid-week meetings on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month continue. An “all age” meeting is scheduled for 19 May 2013.

Methodist Church: Relations with the URC continue to be strengthened. Very appreciative of warm welcome always received. Gradually gathering the necessary permissions re the proposed closure. The final decision is made at the Methodist District Synod to be held this coming Saturday (26.04.13). On Sunday 27 April Tricia Troughton is leading their 148th Anniversary Service. Visitors are welcome.

United Reformed Church: As reported above, ties are being strengthened between the URC and the Methodist Church. Iona days at Newport are continuing although the evening services with the C of E at Newport are not continuing due to the benefice there growing. The monthly discussion group on varying issues continues to develop. A Training Day at Westminster College, Cambridge is on 29 May 2013 for all Elders and Stewards and any other interested parties of the Church. Afternoon café services are planned for the summer months. Jim Gascoigne will continue as Interim Minister until the end of the year.

Baptist Church: A third Creative Sunday to be held this Sunday involving various arts and crafts the ethos being “Fruits of the Spirit – Joy”. On 12 May a dedication of Chloe daughter of Liz and Sergio. Induction Service for the new Minister, John Goddard, to be held on 6 July 2013.

St Mary’s: Following the successful lecture on the St James’ Bible held a couple of year ago, an annual lecture on a topical subject is planned. The first on is at 7.30 p.m. Friday 14 June 2013, when Dr Christine Broughan, Director of the Age Research Centre at Coventry University, will promote a view of longevity as an asset of older people’s potential to contributes to the economic and social lives of their communities. It is hoped this will be of interest to a wide public.

Gold Street: Working hard with engaging with the young people in the Church. Monthly Spring lectures on Friday: the Scottish Covenanters, Athanasius, Science and Religion. Monthly Sunday evenings – Christianity and Contemporary Culture: should women be Bishops.? what do I say to Jehovah’s Witnesses? why should I believe in the Bible? has the Church a future? Hell. Homosexuality.

Salvation Army. It is anticipated that the Charity shop will open within the next month – for small items only – not furniture. The unit will be at 4 Hill Street. A food bank is being held at Tesco – not sure if temporary or permanent. Carol now has a new Corps Assistant.

Congratulations were extended to John Capper for an Award received for 50 years’ service to the Scout Movement.

10. Date of Next Meeting – 13 June 2013

The meeting ended with prayer.

Future Dates for 2012/13

Church Leaders Business Meeting	9 May
Christian Aid Week	12-18 May
VBS Sunday	5 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 2013
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	
Council Meeting	21 November
Advent Service	1 December
Minister’s Lunch	11 December