

**MINUTES OF THE CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SAFFRON WALDEN MEETING
held on Thursday 7 May 2015 @ Abbey Lane URC, Saffron Walden**

Present: Rev. John Goddard (Chair), Rosemary Timms (Secretary), Clive Brooker (Treasurer), Carol Baker, Rev. Jonathan Burton, John Capper, Kathryn Fiddock, Rev Roy Fowler, Helen O'Neill, Elizabeth Tindley, Rev. David Tomlinson and Berry Wareham.

Also present was Lizzi Mills the Co-ordinator of the Saffron Walden XL Mentoring Scheme. The Chairman had invited Lizzi to give the council an update and he welcomed Lizzi to the meeting

John (Goddard) then opened the meeting by sharing something of his experiences while in the Holy Land last week. He went on to reading the words of a traditional hymn and to lead prayers for the country on this the day of the General Election.

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Father David Clemens, Emma Turner, Jackie Bartlett and Val Bowtle.

2. Consideration of the Agenda.

No further items were added to the Agenda.

3. Minutes of last meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2015 were approved and signed.

4. Matters Arising and Review of Events.

(a) **Presentation to Margaret Snowdon:** Rev Roy Fowler confirmed that a presentation had been made to Margaret, the previous secretary to the council, during a service at the URC church in March.

(b) **Good Friday Walk of Witness:** The feedback was that the pace had been better and there was a good turnout. Very grateful to Dorringtons for providing the hot cross buns afterwards. Carol asked if next year we might provide cards and eggs to hand out as has been done in the past. It was agreed to ask someone to organise this next year.

(c) **Uttlesford Food Bank:** Rev David Tomlinson handed out a helpful leaflet which was very informative. The New Life Church on Shire Hill have provided a long term location for the food store. There is now a distribution point in Great Dunmow and this has significantly increased the number of food parcels going out. Exploring the possibility of expanding further and setting up a distribution point in Takeley. Food stocks are good generally and John suggested that facebook might be an avenue to use when there are shortages. When food approaches is 'use by date' it is passed on to other agencies that can make use of it e.g. Jimmy's Night Shelter in Cambridge. People in need can be referred via the CAB or agencies wishing to make referrals can register on www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk.

(d) **Hustings Meeting:** Rev Roy Fowler shared that the local candidates, with one exception, had taken part in the meeting arranged in Stansted last month.

(e) **Agape Meal:** Elizabeth Tindley confirmed that the Catholic Church are willing to organise this event on Thursday 21st January 2016.

5. Finance Report. Clive Brooker confirmed that

- All seven churches have paid the one off additional sub of £15 agreed last time (£105)
- Two churches have also paid their annual contribution of £60 each (£120)

- Income to date is therefore £333.91.
- The annual insurance renewal premium of £68.90 has been paid.
- The bill for the Easter publicity is £185.00.
- Balance in hand is £80.01

6. Future Events

(a) Evening with Steve Murray on 22nd May.

John (Capper) asked churches to promote this actively as it will be a good event to invite friends and family to and there are costs to be covered by the ticket sales. Thanks were expressed to Emma Turner for producing all the posters and tickets etc. Council members wished Emma a very happy birthday.

(b) *Lent:* John (Goddard) shared that although there may not be support for joint study groups during Lent 2016 it might be good to publicise any events the churches do organise during Lent. One other suggestion, for a joint event, was to invite some speakers.

(b) *“Exodus and God’s transforming Presence”* is the title of the lecture this evening at the Parish Rooms being given by Graham Davies, Reader and Professor of Old Testament Studies. Everyone will be most welcome.

7. XL Mentoring Saffron Walden

Lizzi Mills, the XL Mentoring Co-ordinator, shared that 15/16 people did the mentoring training last year and eight of those went on to submit their formal applications and be DBS checked. SWCHS referred 7 year 10 students at risk of failing to reach their potential and complete their GCSEs. Lizzi met with the students and their families to explain the scheme and the commitment to meet once a week with a mentor for the next 12 to 18 months. Where appropriate Lizzi has been working with Social Services and this has been helpful. MIND are going to do some sessions with the mentors to raise awareness of mental health issues facing teenagers. Various groups have offered funding initially including The Roundtable, Rotary and SWCHS. Mentors are offered up to £25 a month to cover the costs of activities they do with their student. Going forward Lizzi would like to hear from anyone willing to act as fundraisers. Plan to hold another Information and Recruitment evening on 1st July at the Baptist Church at 8.00 p.m. Lizzi then answered some more specific questions and passed on some book marks with some prayer points. John thanked Lizzi for coming to give us an update on the scheme.

8. VBS

Rev Jonathan Burton circulated a financial statement for 2014 and budget for 2015. There are some new initiatives for this year including:

- A ‘Parent’s Tent’ to encourage parents to stay and chat after dropping off their children
- A Youth Night which Sam LaRoche will be responsible for.

Both of these events will need the support of helpers to set up and man them. Very grateful to Jenny, who takes responsibility for all the staffing and Pam, who takes on responsibility for the registration of the children. Thanks were expressed to them both and to Jonathan as there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes already for what is an incredible week.

10. News from Churches

Salvation Army: They have a ‘Walden’s Got Talent Night’ on 6th June.

Gold Street: Rev Jonathan Burton shared that they have finished their series on ‘who should we vote for’. They are conscious of the impact of the recent disaster in Nepal as they have links with Nepal through Tearfund.

Methodists: The purchase of the building by Gold Street is going through

St Mary's: They have mission partners in Kathmandu whose work has been disrupted by the earthquake. They were not injured but are returning to the UK to rethink their plans for the future.

Roman Catholic: They have a Quiz Night tomorrow evening.

URC: As part of their 350 year celebrations this year there will be a Flower Festival on 13th and 14th June. Revd Caroline Vodden has accepted the call to the URC WEBS pastorate that includes the URC at Abbey Lane. Her main responsibilities will be at Abbey Lane, and will include maintaining ecumenical relationships in Saffron Walden. Her Induction will be on 5th September.

Society of Friends: John Capper shared that on Sunday, June 14., at 3.00 p.m. Ben Copsey, the Peace Pledge Union researcher, will give a public talk on Cornelius Barritt and other conscientious objectors from our area. This has been organised by the Essex record office.

Baptist Church: John Goddard shared that he has led a series recently using the 'Animate' materials produced in the USA. They might be appropriate to use again as well as or instead of Alpha. Delighted to be having an adult baptismal service on Sunday 24th May.

11. Any Other Business

It was agreed to move the September council meeting forward one week to Thursday 17th September so that Rev Carol Vodden can attend.

12. Date of Next Meeting – 25 June 2015.

John Goddard closed the meeting in prayer.