

MINUTES OF THE CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SAFFRON WALDEN MEETING
held on Thursday 17 September 2015 @ Abbey Lane URC, Saffron Walden

Present: Rev. John Goddard (Chair), Rosemary Timms (Secretary), Clive Brooker (Treasurer), Rev. Jonathan Burton, Rev. Caroline Vodden, Val Bowtle, John Capper, Elizabeth Tindley, Rev. David Tomlinson, Emma Turner and Berry Wareham.

John (Goddard) opened the meeting with a New Testament reading. John welcomed Caroline to the meeting. Caroline introduced herself and outlined her role in the local ministry team.

1. **Apologies.**

Apologies were received from Carol Baker, Father David Clemens, Kathryn Fiddock, and Helen O'Neill.

2. **Consideration of the Agenda.**

Added under Future Events: Christian Aid Street Collection (John Capper)

Added under Any Other Business: Refugee Crisis (John Goddard)

3. **Minutes of last meeting.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2015 were approved and signed.

4. **Matters Arising and Review of Events.**

(a) **VBS 2015:** Rev Jonathan Burton shared that VBS had gone really well this year the material was fresh and new. The number of children attending was 465 which is higher than previously.

- The Parents' Tent was a fantastic addition. During the week some 130 parents dropped in to chat and enjoy some refreshments. It is thought that 30% of these were connected with the churches but the remainder were not.
- The Youth Worship Event was great and 58 young people attended. The message was strong and the event concluded with a time of prayer.
- Finances: The income this year was lower than the expenditure. The shortfall of £7,000 has been covered as there was a healthy balance in hand.

Rev John Goddard asked Jonathan Burton to pass on the thanks of the churches for all their hard work organising this event.

5. **Finance Report.**

Clive Brooker confirmed that the current balance is £422.26. Val Bowtle shared that the SWAT team who organise assemblies in schools are in need of some funds for resources. They plan to hold a Coffee Morning on 7th November at the URC church. Rev David Tomlinson proposed that, as this is a Churches Together outreach team, we should allocate £50 a year towards their resources. This was agreed.

6. **Future Events**

(a) **Christmas 2015:** Agreed to place a joint advert publicising the churches events again this year. Rosemary would check that Lisa Knights is willing to co-ordinate this for us again.

Elizabeth Tindley asked churches to contact her if they would like anymore Christmas posters.

The Late Night Shopping Event will be on Friday 4th December. Rosemary to check that we will have a pitch. Then ideas were discussed. Rev Caroline Vodden and Rev John Goddard agreed to work on an activity and Rev Jonathan Burton and Rev David Tomlinson confirmed they would be available to engage with people at the event.

The Advent Service at St Mary's will be on Sunday 29th November.

- (b) **Lent 2016:** Rev David Tomlinson is organising a series of four sessions focused on different aspects and approaches to prayer. Each session to include input from a speaker and then an opportunity to pray together. Sessions to be on Thursday evenings during Lent – 25th February, 3rd March, 10th March and 17th March, at different venues as it would be an ecumenical event.
- (c) **Christian Aid Street Collection:** John Capper reminded everyone that this will take place on Saturday 17th October and volunteers are needed for this.
- (d) **United Service:** This is taking place on Sunday 24th January at St Mary's at 10.00 a.m.
- (e) **Agape Meal:** This will be on Thursday 21st January at 7.30 p.m. and is being hosted by Our Lady of Compassion.

7. News from Churches

St Mary's Church: They celebrated their Harvest Festival last week and Matt is busy with the Youth Work.

URC: As part of their 350 year celebrations the Moderator of the General Assembly is to preach this month. Their Harvest Festival is this Sunday.

Roman Catholic Church: They have a Day of Recollection and Family Picnic at St Marks, in Audley End village on the 26th September. They would like to learn more about the work of the Uttlesford Foodbank and are hoping to invite Alan Hawkes to speak to them.

Saffron Walden Community Church: Rev Jonathan Burton shared that they are pleased to be worshipping in their new premises and are considering how they would like to modify/refurbish it.

Society of Friends: John Capper shared that they have a speaker from London visiting who will be speaking about Social Action.

Salvation Army: They are celebrating their 150th anniversary this year and have a Quiz Night and their Harvest Festival this weekend.

Baptist Church: Rev John Goddard shared we have three events planned which everyone will be welcome to attend:

- **Saturday 14th November:** Premier of Menina Danca film about their work in Brasil with guest speaker and founder Matt Roper.
- **Saturday 12th December:** Searchlight Theatre Company production of "Good Old Mr Scrooge".
- **Saturday 22nd January:** Adrian Plass and Searchlight Theatre Company.

8. Any Other Business

- **Refugee Crisis:** The ministers had discussed at their recent meeting what response we might have to the current crisis. Rev David Tomlinson had spoken to the Leader of Uttlesford District Council, Howard Rolfe. Rev Jonathan Burton had attended the local debate. Uttlesford D C are setting up a database to co-ordinate offers of accommodation for refugees. They are also setting up a refugee working group.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland have a churches refugee network section and are understood to be working with local councils. – see their website: <https://ctbi.org.uk/churches-refugee-network>.

All agencies are of course waiting for the Government to announce their plans for taking refugees and confirm numbers and the process to be followed. Offering support was considered to be the appropriate response.

Rev John Goddard added that if and when refugees come to live locally churches may be able to offer their premises as drop-in and support centres for the refugees and the host families.

9. Future Dates:

Were all covered during the meeting.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Agreed to bring the meeting forward to **Thursday 12 November 2015.**

Rev John Goddard closed the meeting in prayer.