



MINUTES OF THE MEETING
held on Thursday 15 September 2016 at Abbey Lane United Reformed Church

Present: Rev. John Goddard (Chair), Rosemary Timms (Secretary), Clive Brooker (Treasurer), Rev. Jonathan Burton, John Capper, Rev Caroline Vodden, Val Bowtle, Helen O'Neill, Stephen Rapkin, Elizabeth Tindley, Emma Turner and Berry Wareham.

John (Goddard) welcomed Stephen Rapkin to his first meeting. Stephen shared that he is a representative of the URC and is a member and elder of the URC.

John (Goddard) opened the meeting by introducing the material produced by Churches Together for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January 2017. The theme is 'Reconciliation' and John read from 2 Corinthians 5.

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Father David Clemens, Kelvin Pipe, Rev, David Tomlinson, Carol Baker and Kathryn Fiddock.

2. Consideration of the Agenda.

The following items were added:

1. Christian Aid street collection on 15 October (Future Events)
2. Stort Valley Schools Trust (AOB)

3. Minutes of last meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2016 were approved and signed.

4. Matters Arising and Review of Events.

- (a) **VBS 2016:** Jonathan shared that this had been a very successful event and was perhaps one of the best. There was an encouraging response at the midweek Youth Event which they are hoping to be able to follow up. Jonathan asked if we could pray about the future given the uncertainty surrounding the school's plans to sell off some land for development. They have said the site we use will still be available so we are booked in for 2017. However, there may be some difficult access issues to overcome.
- (b) **Easter Walk of Witness:** John confirmed that he would contact Inspector Mike Coldridge, to share our concerns about road safety for this event.
- (c) **Carnival 2017:** New Life Church intend to enter a float as they have in the past and Rajiv has asked if Churches Together would like to join them and make this a United Church float. John and Caroline would speak to Rajeev to thank him for offering the churches this opportunity and perhaps explore it as an option.

5. Finance Report.

Clive shared that since the last meeting all of the churches have paid the £75 annual subscription. The current balance in hand is £618.70.

7. **Future Events**

(a) **Christmas 2016:**

The Late Night Shopping will take place on Friday 2nd December and members agreed we should book our usual stall position for this event. Caroline confirmed she had some ideas for this and would share this with the other clergy at their meeting later this week.

Jonathan shared that last year St Mary's and the Saffron Walden Community Church had organised Carol Singing at one of the local pubs that evening. This had not been in anyway negative and they may well do something similar again this year.

The traditional Advent Service at St Mary's will take place and is in hand.

Elizabeth asked if each church would please confirm how many Christmas Posters they would like this year.

Waitrose wish to support local groups who organise Christmas events for the elderly, homeless and vulnerable in our community. Application forms for financial support are available in store.

(b) **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity:**

The United Service will be at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday 22nd January and the offering is normally split between Christian Aid and a more local cause. Agreed to decide what we should support at the next meeting. (A suggestion was put forward of Christian Aid and the Stort Valley Schools Trust – see 9.1 below).

The Baptist Church would be hosting the Agape Meal on Thursday 19th January.

John would also be organising a Prayer Breakfast – more details to come next month.

(c) **Lent 2017:**

Rev. David Tomlinson had some thoughts regarding a series of evening events again. This would be discussed by the clergy and details would be available nearer the time.

(d) **Christian Aid Street Collection:**

John Capper reminded churches that this is due to take place on Saturday 15th October and to encourage folk to offer to help with this please.

8. **News from Churches**

URC: They will be celebrating Harvest Festival this weekend and had installed new lighting in the church.

Society of Friends: They have a Quaker History Day on 15th October. They have appointed someone to specifically focus on the refugee issue as they are keen to support refugees in some way.

St Mary's: Rev. Lydia Smith is moving on to a new position and so her name should be removed from our membership list. Her farewell celebrations take place this weekend. David Sheppard is starting ministerial training.

Roman Catholic: They have a retreat on Saturday entitled 'Mercy and Forgiveness'. They are beginning a new series of Communion and Confirmation classes.

Saffron Walden Community Church: Jonathan Burton shared that they have now launched the monthly 'Walden Well-Being Walk-in' on Thursdays for those with mental health issues. They

have grown recently and are now running a series on 'caring for one another' linked to their home groups.

Baptist Church: The weekly MIND breakfast club continues on Tuesday mornings. This Sunday the church will be enjoying a Family Day at St Marks college. The Harvest Sunday celebration will be on Sunday 25th September and will be a Parade Service to which the Mayor has been invited. A Barn dance has been organised for 15th October and the Searchlight Theatre Company will perform 'Oliver with a Christmas Twist' on Monday 5th December.

Salvation Army: News was shared of the wedding last weekend of Ashley Hall and Rowan Townsend. Kelvin Pipe is not here today because he has not been well.

9. Any Other Business

1. **Stort Valley Schools Trust:** Jonathan Burton shared news from a recent meeting he attended as our representative. They would very much appreciate the opportunity to come to our next meeting. This was welcomed and John Capper wondered if we might like to support them with half the offering at the United Service in January.
2. **Refugee Support:** John Goddard shared that there is a scheme which enables churches to sponsor refugees and he has details of this if any church would like them. It would be a significant commitment but the opportunity is there.

10. **Date of Next Meetings** – **10th November 2016**
 – **9th February 2017**

Intend to have a timetable for 2017 for the next meeting.

John (Goddard) closed the meeting with prayer.