



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
held on Thursday 10 November 2016 at Abbey Lane United Reformed Church**

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

Jonathan Burton advised members that John (Goddard) had sent his apologies following the death of his father yesterday. Jonathan (Burton) had agreed to chair the meeting.

Jonathan welcomed Andrea Gasson from Stort Valley Schools Trust to the meeting. Andrea spoke briefly about the work of this Christian Charity which employs three schools' workers: Tina, Nicola and Andrea. Their mission is to offer young people the chance to learn more about the God we serve and our hope in Jesus. They could not continue without the support of individuals and churches, financially, practically and in prayer. Some 20 youngsters come to the lunch club at SWCHS and Matt Williamson, St Mary's Youth Worker, is involved with this alongside Andrea. Most of these young people do not come from the churches. Jonathan thanked Andrea for coming to this meeting..

Opening Devotions were focused on a reading from Genesis telling the story of the flood and the rainbow which represents the covenant between God and mankind. We do not put our trust in people or in leaders. We put our trust in God and our hope is in Him.

1. Apologies.

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

2. Consideration of the Agenda.

Under AOB added:

- Emergency accommodation for rough sleepers
- Prayer Walk
- VBS

3. Minutes of last meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2016 were approved and signed.

4. Matters Arising and Review of Events.

(a) ***Christian Aid Street Collection:*** John (Capper) thanked everyone from the local churches who helped and advised that the collection raised £529.23 which is more than last year. Agreed to do this again in 2017 and the date for this would be Saturday 14th October.

(b) ***Easter Walk of Witness:*** In the absence of John (Goddard) there was no further information on whether the police could help marshal this event. Asked the leaders to discuss how the clergy feel about their role at this event and to decide who would be responsible for organising this event next year.

- (c) **Carnival 2017:** Caroline shared that she and John had met with Rajeev who had offered us an opportunity to join them and create a ‘Churches Together Float’. Their previous floats have clearly proclaimed the Christian message. They expect it to cost £800 and would be looking for assistance with planning, 2 or 3 people on the float or walking alongside and a small financial contribution. The leaders had discussed this at their most recent meeting and some discussion then followed. While everyone was grateful for New Life’s invitation people did not think the churches could commit to being actively involved in the planning or on the day. Many are involved in other floats already. Suggested that John (Goddard) be asked to convey this response to Rajeev. Given that the carnival processes past the Baptist Church there was another suggestion which was that we have a united presence offering refreshments from there. Emma was asked to speak to John about this and get back to us in due course.

5. Finance Report.

Clive shared that since the last meeting he has paid the £10 charge for our stall at the Late Night Shopping Event and passed on the money raised at the Christian Aid Street collection. The current balance in hand is £608.70 with the costs of the Christmas advertisement to come off in due course.

6. Future Events

6.1 Christmas

(a) **Advent:** The traditional Advent Service at St Mary’s is on 27th November at 6.30 p.m.

(b) **Christmas 2016:** The URC will have an advent remembrance service on Sunday 4th December at 6.00 p.m. The Searchlight Theatre Company will present “Oliver with a Christmas Twist” on Monday 5th December at the Baptist Church. Tickets are available from the tourist information office.

(c) **Joint Christmas Advert:** Lisa Knight has confirmed that she will organise the advert and it was suggested that it go in the 7th December edition of the local papers.

(d) **Late Night Shopping:** On Friday 2nd December our theme will be “Expect the Unexpected”. Intend to have 25 doors to 25 pigeon holes. Behind each door will be an object and a question card to focus on the real meaning and events of Christmas. The leaders had discussed purchasing a “feather flag” banner and base which can be used at public events. This would cost around £132 and was agreed. Stephen Rapkin offered to choose a suitable design and order it ASAP. Jonathan confirmed that this year St Mary’s and the Saffron Walden Community Church were not organising carol singing at the Kings Arms on the 2nd December.

6.2 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

(a) **The Agape Meal:** This will be at 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. on Thursday 19th January at the Baptist Church.

(b) **A Prayer Breakfast:** This will be at the Baptist Church on Saturday 21st January at 8.30 a.m.

(c) **United Service:** This will be at 10.30 a.m. on Sunday 22nd January at the URC Church. It was agreed that the offering should be split between Christian Aid and Stort Valley Schools Trust.

Following some discussion it was agreed that we should offer a crèche and activities for children (0 – 16 years) to ensure that families feel this is an event they can all come to. Stephen was asked to produce and circulate flyers after Christmas.

- 6.3 Lent 2017:** Caroline shared that there are to be four sessions led by local clergy:
- Thursday 9th March at St Mary's
 - Thursday 16th March at the Salvation Army
 - Thursday 23rd March at Our Lady of Compassion
 - Thursday 30th March at the Baptist Church
- 7. News from Churches**
- URC:** They have a Winter Fair on Saturday 19th November and are hosting the WI and Rotary for carols.
- Society of Friends:** They enjoyed the Quaker History Day on 15th October and sent representatives to the recent Uttlesford Strategic Partnership Meeting.
- St Mary's:** They have a Christmas Fair on 26th November. The funeral of Sarah Hardingham takes place tomorrow.
- Roman Catholic:** The Women's World Day of Prayer will be on 3rd March at the Salvation Army Hall.
- Salvation Army:** They will hold their Christmas presents appeal for new, unwrapped toys and gifts, between 12th November and 12th December. They will serve lunch on Christmas day as usual and if there are any people who are alone and without family that would like to attend they expect to have a few spaces.
- Saffron Walden Community Church:** They are thrilled to be having their first baptismal service in their new premises on the 4th December.
- Baptist Church:** They are hosting the East Anglian Children's Hospice (EACH) Carol Service on the 13th December and the Saffron Walden Town Band will play at their evening Carol Service on the 18th December.
- 8. Any Other Business**
1. **Citizens Advice Bureau:** Caroline shared that the CAB are concerned about provision of emergency accommodation for rough sleepers and the church leaders are to discuss this. Rosemary shared that she had represented CTSW at CAB's AGM last month.
 2. **Prayer Walk:** Jonathan shared how last month's event was well attended and confirmed that he will be organising another prayer walk in due course.
 3. **VBS:** There was a deficit last year and this year which have been covered using the reserves which are now quite low. The Community Church may be able to cover any shortfall in 2017 but if expenditure exceeds income in future it may be necessary to ask parents to contribute towards the costs.
- 10. Date of Next Meetings**
- 9th February 2017
 - 6th April 2017
 - 15th June 2017
 - 14th September 2017
 - 23rd November 2017

Jonathan closed the meeting with prayer.