



MINUTES OF THE MEETING
held on Thursday 6 April 2017 at Abbey Lane United Reformed Church

Present: Rev. Jonathan Burton (Chair), Rosemary Timms (Secretary), Rev. David Tomlinson, Val Bowtle, Helen O'Neill, David Oelman, Kathryn Fiddock, Elizabeth Tindley, Emma Turner and Suzan Bouton.

Jonathan welcomed David Oelman, from the Society of Friends and Suzan Bouton to their first meeting. In future Suzan would be representing Our Lady of Compassions in place of Berry Wareham.

Those present were invited to sign a birthday card for Rev John Goddard who had chaired this group for the last two years and would be 50 on the 18th April.

Opening devotions focused on the theme of our vision as individuals, as Churches and as Churches Together. Jonathan then opened the meeting with a prayer.

Apologies: were received from Father David Clemens, Kelvin Pipe, Rev. John Goddard, John Capper (Treasurer), Capt. Carol Baker, Rev. Caroline Vodden, Berry Wareham and Stephen Rapkin.

1. **Consideration of the Agenda.**

Added under AOB an enquiry about whether any refugees have been settled locally and how we might support them if they have.

2. **Minutes of last meeting.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2017 were approved and were signed.

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

3.1 ***Lent Evenings:*** These had been very well attended which was encouraging. The feedback was that they were very good and challenging. It was agreed that it was a good thing to do something together during Lent. Leaders would be asked to plan something for Lent in 2018.

3.2 ***Churches Together Leaflets:*** Jonathan tabled a revised version of the leaflet. Some of the photos appeared to have been cropped and Jonathan would see if they could be improved. In the first instance Rosemary and Emma offered to produce copies for the churches and for the Tourist Information Office. Going forward it was suggested we try and have them included in the 'Welcome Pack' that the Saffron Walden Initiative have developed. These packs are then available to people moving into the town from the local estate agents. David Oelman would make enquiries about how we can achieve this.

4. **Finance**

We are grateful to John for taking over as Treasurer. John had confirmed that the account was now operational with himself and Rosemary as authorised signatories.

John had produced a financial statement for 2016 which had been circulated. The collection at the United Service in 2016 was £844.32 and was split equally between Christian Aid and VBS. It was agreed that the account statement should be amended to include this.

5. Future Events

- 5.1 ***Easter Events and Walk of Witness:*** Rev John Goddard would be organising the walk this year and John was keen to hear from anyone willing to act as a marshall/steward. It was understood that so far only Stephen Rapkin had offered assistance.
- 5.2 ***Christian Ad Week:*** The usual house to house collection is planned for 14th to 20th May.
- 5.3 ***Pentecost Prayer Plans:*** On Pentecost Sunday, 4th June at the Community Church there is a prayer event from 4.30 p.m. until 6.00 p.m. It is linked in with Justin Welby's international event and the theme (title) is "Thy Kingdom Come". Please publicise as all are welcome.
- 5.4 ***Town Carnival Procession:*** We understand that New Life Church are entering a float and many church based groups will also have floats taking part in this. There has been a suggestion that refreshments are served from the front of the Baptist Church.
- 5.5 ***VBS:*** Jonathan shared that they are still hoping to get more volunteers particularly to offer one-to-one support to specific children. It will be at the High School this year which may mean that there are more applications and that more helpers will be needed.

6. Friendship arrangement with Bethlehem

The mayor has approached the church leaders about his proposal to establish a friendship arrangement with Bethlehem. Nothing specific was discussed but the leaders felt that Churches Together might like to respond positively to this idea. The mayor is expected to propose this at the next meeting of the Town Council.

7. News from Churches

- ***URC:*** On Good Friday at 2.00 p.m. people are invited to come and sing 'Stainer's Crucifixion'. On 15th July there will be a Flower Festival and History Exhibition focused on Martin Luther and the anniversary of the Reformation.
- ***Salvation Army:*** Their Real Easter - Holiday Club' for children ran from 3rd to 7th April.
- ***Society of Friends:*** They have a busy programme of events.
- ***St Mary's:*** Their building work continues and an alarm has been fitted on the roof to deter metal thieves.
- ***Our Lady of Compassion:*** . They have a busy programme of church events over Easter.
- ***Saffron Walden Community Church:*** They have a 'Messy Church' event at 2.00 p.m. on Good Friday. They have new signage outside, a new sound system and the next stage of their building redevelopment is to prepare tender documents.
- ***Baptist Church:*** They have a Maundy Thursday meal. In recognition of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation John Goddard had invited Dr Ian Randall to come in the Autumn. This would be publicised nearer the time.

8. Any Other Business

- 8.1 David Oleman shared that the Society of Friends have a real concern for refugees and are keen to partner with organisations supporting any who have been settled locally. They are already supporting a project in Stansted. Members were not aware of any being settled in Saffron Walden. Rev David Tomlinson spoke about the work of "Hope into Action" and the conference he attended recently.

9. Date of Next Meetings

- 15th June 2017
- 14th September 2017
- 23rd November 2017

Jonathan closed the meeting with prayer.