



MINUTES OF THE MEETING

held on Thursday 8 February 2018 at Abbey Lane United Reformed Church

Present: Rev. Jonathan Burton (Chair), Rosemary Timms (Secretary), John Capper (Treasurer), Capt. Carol Baker, Rev. Caroline Vodden, Rev. John Goddard, Suzan Bouton, Val Bowtle, Kathryn Fiddock, Ted Jackson, Helen O'Neill, Elizabeth Tindley, Emma Turner and Stephen Rapkin.

Opening devotions were led by Jonathan focusing on some of God's characteristics using the lyrics of a song and then opened the meeting with a prayer.

1. Apologies: were received from Rev David Tomlinson, Father David Clemens, and David Oelman.

John Capper introduced Ted Jackson who was attending his first meeting and is an additional representative from the Society of Friends.

Carol Baker shared the news that she will be moving to pastures new in July and someone else will be appointed to lead the Salvation Army in Saffron Walden. The members expressed their gratitude to Carol for all she has done in her eight years here and wished her God's blessing in her new ministry wherever that will be.

2. Consideration of the Agenda.

Stephen Rapkin asked for the Churches Together Logo, and John Capper asked for Christian Aid Week to be added to Any Other Business.

3. Minutes of last meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2017 were approved and were signed.

4. Matter Arising and Review of Events

Appreciation was expressed to those responsible for the events during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity last month.

- The Agape Meal at the URC had been well attended and it was lovely to have the Scouts helping at this event. The format was informal as in previous years. Next year it was due to be hosted by St Mary's on the 24th January.
- The lunchtime prayer session was supported by a dozen or so which is about the same number who had attended the breakfast prayer session in 2017.
- The United Service had been hosted by the Baptist Church and the Covenant had been signed during the service. The collection had been banked in the Churches Together bank account and John Capper confirmed that he had been able to forward £403.50 to VBS and £403.50 to Christian Aid. The donation to Christian Aid was matched by funding from the Government. Next year the date for the United Service is 20th January and St Mary's is due to host that service and the Agape Meal. If they would like a different venue for the Agape Meal then no doubt this can be arranged.

5. Finance

John Capper had circulated the Finance Statement for the two Churches Together accounts. Meeting was grateful to Ged Pearce for carrying out the independent examination of those accounts this year.

£5,815.57 was raised for Christian Aid in 2017 and the balance in the other account at the year end was £164.18 (one church has yet to pay their subscription of £75.00)

6. Future Events

(a) Women's World Day of Prayer (2nd March): The URC will be hosting this service which starts at 11.00 a.m. and coffee will be served from 10.30 a.m.

(b) Lent 2018: There are to be series of talks on Wednesday evenings, focusing on the four gospels approach to the Cross. These will be on February 21st and 28th and March 7th and 14th. Fliers are available and were distributed at the United Service.

(c) Good Friday Walk of Witness (30th March): Agreed that this would be in the same format as last year and John Goddard confirmed that he was willing to organise it again for us. Stephen Rapkin offered to be a Steward again and Ged Pearce would also be helping again this year. It would be appreciated if St Mary's would provide the rough wooden cross for this please. John Goddard would prepare a poster. Easter Service details would hopefully be coordinated again by Lisa Knight.

(d) Try Praying Initiative: Jonathan shared that the leaders discussed this and they had agreed to discuss this with their churches. The scheme encourages churches to give out copies of the 'Try Praying' booklet. When people have read it they would be encouraged to pass that booklet on to someone else who they feel might appreciate it. Jonathan asked for feedback from each church on whether they were getting involved with this.

- URC: the decision has not been made yet but Stephen and Caroline shared that the church have some concerns about the materials. They may decide to focus on prayer but to do something a little different.
- Society of Friends: The proposal to encourage prayer was warmly supported but they also had some reservations about the materials so may approach this slightly differently.
- St Mary's: David had said at the leaders meeting that they will have the materials available, and may display the posters/banner but are not necessarily planning to implement it in the fullest way suggested.
- Baptist Church: John shared that the Trustees are supportive of the scheme and that this was briefly shared with members at a Church Meeting.
- S W Community Church: Jonathan shared that they planned to use the material in the period between Easter and Pentecost. Street Pastors and VBS are also considering using the materials.

John Capper asked whether the initiative would be publicised in the local press and Jonathan said he would give this some thought and co-ordinate this if it was decided to do that.

(e) Late Night Shopping: Saffron Walden Town Council have started planning for this year's event and have emailed us to advise us that it has been proposed to move it from a Friday evening to a Sunday afternoon. (between 3.00 and 6.00 p.m. with the lights being switched on at 4.15 p.m.) They say their intention is to make the event more family friendly and they have invited all interested parties to share their thoughts on this proposal.

The event has always been a very busy and well supported occasion. Moving it to Sunday 2nd December would mean it would be taking place on the 1st Sunday in Advent. It was agreed that the priority for the Churches was the Joint Advent Service at St Mary's on that day which is also a family orientated community event. Jonathan agreed to draft a response and Rosemary would circulate that to the representatives and leaders.

7. News from Churches

- *URC*: Posters for their 'Come & Sing: Stainer's Crucifixion' event at 2.00 p.m. on Good Friday were available for folk to take away and display. All welcome. They also have a 'Prayer and Pancakes' event on Tuesday at Stansted.
- *St Mary's*: Building work is now continuing inside the church.
- *Our Lady of Compassion*: They have an Alpha type group starting soon and are continuing with the Sunday evening prayer service.
- *Society of Friends*: They recent Death Café had been well received and they may arrange one again sometime in the future. Like some of the other churches they sell white poppies to remember those non-combatants who died during war time. They may approach the British Legion to ask whether a white poppy wreath could be placed at the war memorial on Remembrance Day.
- *Baptist Church*: Tonight the Searchlight Theatre Company will be performing their 'Would you Adam and Eve It' production. Ticket sales are going well but an invitation was extended to all and tickets will be available on the door.
- *Saffron Walden Community Church*: Jonathan shared that they have a guest preacher focusing on 'Personal Outreach' this Sunday. A recent 'cell groups' training event had gone well.
- *Salvation Army*: They would be continuing their group meeting on Thursday evenings during Lent, looking at the film 'Casablanca'.

8. Any Other Business

- Churches Together Logo: Stephen wished to encourage everyone responsible for publicising Churches Together events to include our logo on posters and fliers.
- John Capper would like churches' Christian Aid Week material orders so that he can place an order in the next few days.

9. Future Dates

VBS Sunday – 25th February
Christian Aid Week – 13th to 19th May

10. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 19th April.

Jonathan closed the meeting with prayer.