



MINUTES OF THE MEETING

held on Thursday 11 April 2019 at Abbey Lane United Reformed Church

1. Present: Rev. Caroline Vodden, Rosemary Timms (Secretary), Rev. John Goddard, John Capper, Capt. Katrina Thurlow, Rev. Jonathan Burton, Val Bowtle, Ted Jackson, Jean Mead, Kathryn Fiddock, Helen O'Neill, Elizabeth Tindley and Emma Turner.

Opening devotions were led by Caroline focusing on Lent and a contemporary reflection based on a passage from Matthew.

2. Apologies: were received from Rev. David Tomlinson, Father David Clemens, Margaret Hurst and Suzan Bouton.

2. Consideration of the Agenda.

An additional items was added to AOB – Christian Aid 'Big Shift Campaign' to combat climate change. HSBC, one of the biggest banks in the world, is fuelling climate change by investing in fossil fuels.

3. Minutes of last meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th February 2019 were approved and were signed.

4. Matter Arising and Review of Events

- **VBS Update:** This year we celebrate the 50th year of VBS, but sadly this will be the last year of VBS in its current form and a press release has been circulated with the details. Jonathan shared that the Committee will meet in September to discuss what if anything we might consider going forward. Jonathan was asked to pass on to the VBS Committee the sincere thanks and appreciation of the local churches.
- **World Day of Prayer:** Elizabeth shared that although this was in the afternoon this year it had been well supported and thanks were expressed to Katrina for her leading. Next year it will be written by women from Zimbabwe and will be on the 6th March, at St Mary's. It will be in the morning and coffee will be served afterwards.
- **Lent Meetings:** Feedback was shared and it was clear that the format and theme had been well received. Thanks expressed to those who had lead the five sessions.

5. Local Issues

- **Town Twinning Revival:** There has been some local interest in the town in re-establishing the link with Bad Wildungen. Caroline offered to have a conversation with our Mayor on behalf of the local churches.
- **Council Elections in May:** Caroline had been asked whether we might organise a hustings meeting. It was agreed that it would not be appropriate for the forthcoming local elections but that it would be useful to do this when a General Election is announced. John Goddard and John Capper would liase as and when the need arises.

6. Future Dates

- **Christian Aid Week:** This year the house to house collection will be from 12th to 18th May:
- **World Day of Prayer Coffee Morning:** Saturday 8th June, 10.30 am – 12.30 pm at Friends Meeting House.
- **Pentecost – Thy Kingdom Come:** This prayer event on 9th June is being organised by St Mary's and will run from 2.00 p.m. 'til 4.00 p.m.
- **More in Common on the Common on 22nd June:** This year there is to be a community picnic to celebrate between 12 noon and 4.00 p.m. Families are invited to bring a picnic and there will be a community singing section, an opportunity to hang a friendship leaf on a community tree and representatives from local community groups and faith groups are invited to have a presence and be involved in a community information section. We understand that there will be live music (from Joanna Eden and others) and children's activities. Felt it would be good if local churches and/or Churches Together could have a presence but many of the church leaders had other commitments on that day. Agreed to advertise this event and encourage people to offer to get involved in some way.

6. Easter 2019.

- **Walk of Witness on 19th April:** Posters were available for this and would be re-circulated. John Goddard would be organising it in the same format as in recent years: assembling in the URC Car park at 10.30 a.m. and processing from there along the usual route to St Mary's. John would also be organising stewards. Katrina offered to co-ordinate the carrying of the cross which St Mary's normally provide.

7. Finance

John confirmed that the balance is £111.38 and that church subscriptions of £75 would be coming in over the next few weeks.

8. News from Churches

- **URC:** The church building work is almost complete and the church will be in use again for 'Stainer's Crucifixion' on Good Friday and the Easter services. They have a Spring Fair in May.
- **St Mary's:** On Easter Sunday they will be saying goodbye to Rev Jenny Tomlinson who has been appointed as Archdeacon of Birmingham. They will also be saying goodbye to Rev David Tomlinson who will be taking a Sabbatical until the end of August.
- **Society of Friends:** Ted shared that last Saturday they had taken part in a session on facilitating difficult conversations. Their yearly meeting in London has the theme 'Power and Privilege'.
- **Baptist Church:** Church members Liz and Sergio Vilela are serving with BMS World Mission in Beira in Mozambique. The Disasters Emergency Committee have an appeal for aid for Mozambique. Liz and Sergio were on holiday in Brazil when the cyclone hit but are returning there this week to help the local community recover. On Thursday 23rd May they will be showing the film 'I Daniel Blake' and posters were available.
- **Saffron Walden Community Church:** They will be in the Town Hall after Easter and have been running a series of four marriage enrichment sessions. They will be holding a Messy Church event on Good Friday.
- **Catholic Church:** Elizabeth shared news of Suzan Bouton who is convalescing following surgery.

8. Any Other Business

- **Christian Aid** are hoping that churches and individuals will write to HSBC to express concern about the billions of dollars which HSBC continues to provide for the extraction and burning of fossil fuels globally. A template letter had been read out at the beginning of the meeting

and the meeting agreed that they would like to support this campaign. Caroline agreed to produce the letter and set up an opportunity to deliver the letter to HSBC on behalf of the SWCT Council.

- ***Eco Church Audit:*** Caroline shared that St Mary's have just completed this and this is something that could be on our agenda going forward.

No other items were raised.

9. Dates of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be Thursday 13th June 2019.

Caroline closed the meeting with prayer.