

MINUTES OF THE CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SAFFRON WALDEN MEETING
held on Thursday 26 February 2015 Abbey Lane and Newport United Reformed Church

Present: Rev. John Goddard (Chair), Rosemary Timms (Secretary), Clive Brooker (Treasurer), Jackie Bartlett, Rev. Jonathan Burton, John Capper, Kathryn Fiddock, Rev Roy Fowler, Helen O'Neill, Elizabeth Tindley, Emma Turner, and Berry Wareham.

The Chairman welcomed Rosemary to her first meeting as Secretary to the Council. There had not yet been an opportunity to formally thank Margaret Snowden. Roy was asked to express the council's thanks to Margaret Snowden during the service at the URC on 15th March.

John (Goddard) then opened the meeting by reading from 1 Corinthians 13 and a brief period of silence was followed by a short prayer.

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Father David Clemens, Rev. David Tomlinson, Carol Baker and Val Bowtle.

2. Consideration of the Agenda.

No further items were added to the Agenda.

3. Minutes of last meeting.

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2014 were approved and signed.

4. Council Meeting Date for 2015.

Some provisional dates had been circulated with the draft minutes but some revision to these was subsequently proposed by the leaders. Dates agreed were:

7th May 25th June 24th September 19th November

5. Matters Arising and Review of Events.

- (a) Christmas 2014:** The Advent Service at St Mary's was very well received. Advent Sunday will be on 29th November this year. The churches presence at the late night shopping event was "A load of Rubbish" and it did offer the opportunity to engage directly with people and share the gospel. The church leaders would give some thought to what we might do this year and would welcome ideas and suggestions from the churches.
- (b) United Service January 2015:** John (Goddard) had organised the United Service on 18 January at the Baptist Church which was well attended. The date proposed for 2016, at the conclusion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, is Sunday 24th January. It was agreed to ask David Tomlinson if St Mary's would agree to host this service.
- (c) Agape Meal:** Thanks were expressed to the Society of Friends for arranging the Agape Meal this year. Proposed date for next year was Thursday 21st January 2016. Elizabeth agreed to enquire whether the Catholic Church might be willing to organise it. Venues suggested included the Parish Rooms, Baptist Church Hall or Abbey Lane.
- (d) Uttlesford Food Bank.** The food stocks had to be moved from the police station and are now temporarily being stored in the Methodist Church. It is possible that New Life Pentecostal Church may be able to offer a permanent storage space at their premises on Shire Hill and this is being explored. Alan Hawkes is the Co-ordinator and it was agreed to invite him to the next Council Meeting. It would be good to have a report from him and clarification of how referrals should be made.

6. Finance Report.

- (a) **Accounts for 2014:** Copies of the Finance Statement had been circulated by email with the agenda and were formally approved at the meeting. The income for 2014 was £1,712.01 and the balance carried forward was £108.81. Council members expressed their thanks to Clive who has been the treasurer for more than 25 years. Clive confirmed that he was willing to continue.
- (b) **Finance Report 2015:** Expenditure since last meeting:
- The URC Christmas Service collection raised £342.00 for Christian Aid.
 - The collection from the United Service on January 18th was £848.43 and was passed on to the Stort Valley Schools Trust (£424.21) and Christian Aid (£424.22).
 - The collection at the Agape Meal was a very generous £175 which was also given to Christian Aid.
 - The account details would be circulated to council members with the minutes.

7. Future Events

- (a) **Lent:** There were no joint Lent activities planned again this year although it was understood that at least two churches had organised groups during Lent. The Leaders would discuss whether to propose any joint activities next year or to signpost and issue an invitation to the events the individual churches organise. Ideas and suggestions would be welcome and this would be on the agenda for the next Council meeting.
- (b) **Easter Publicity:** Lisa Knight is expected to co-ordinate the joint advert again this year. The current bank balance will not quite cover the expected cost so churches agreed to make a one-off contribution of £15.00 each before Easter to cover the publicity costs. It was also agreed to increase the churches subscriptions in 2016 from £60 to £75.
- (c) **Walk of Witness:** Plan to assemble at the War Memorial at 10.30 a.m. and to follow the same route as last year. The local police have been advised accordingly and Ged Pearce has agreed to organise marshalls for the route again. The feedback was that we should aim to walk more slowly this year.

8. General Election Hustings

Our local MP was apparently not able to take part in a public meeting in Saffron Walden but a public meeting is to take place at St John's church in Stansted on 14th April at 7.30 p.m. Churches would publicise this.

9. Evening with Steve Murray on 22nd May.

John (Capper) shared that this event will be at the Friends School Hall and that posters and tickets would be available after Easter.

10. Café Church

This initiative is aimed at people who do not go to church but wish to engage in some kind of spiritual exploration of issues. It takes place on the second Sunday of the month at Costas in Saffron Walden. There have been two sessions so far both of which were well attended. There is an open invitation to all the churches to be involved with this.

11. News from Churches

Gold Street: They are negotiating the sale of their current premises and the purchase of the Methodist Church building. Jonathan Burton shared some of the big questions they have been exploring at recent meetings to get people thinking.

Methodists: Some organisations are continuing to hire the Methodist Church and so there is a limited amount of income from those lettings.

St Mary's: Their Holocaust Service held recently was well attended.

Roman Catholic: They are running a Lent Group and their Deanery Retreat takes place in March. The Women's World Day of Prayer is on the 6th March. All welcome to attend the event at the Friends' Meeting House at 11.00 a.m. Coffee will be served from 10.30 a.m.

URC: As part of their 350 year celebrations this year there will be a Songs of Praise service on the 26th April. This weekend someone will be coming to 'preach with a view' for the part-time post within the local team ministry.

Society of Friends: The script of the play "Can this be England", written by Friends, has been made available to a number of people which is very encouraging. There will be an exhibition in the Saffron Walden Library in October.

Baptist Church: The Searchlight Theatre Group will present "Woodbine Willie" on Saturday 21st March. Pleased to be preparing for a baptismal service in May. On a personal note John (Goddard) shared that he will be going on an ecumenical pilgrimage to Israel after Easter.

12. Any Other Business

(a) Robert Wiseman was standing down as a Baptist Church representative on the council although he will remain part of the group responsible for organising the Steve Murray event in May. Council members wished to express their thanks to Robert.

(b) **Street Pastors:** Joy Burton is keen to have some new applicants and anyone interested in going out with the street pastors as an observer would be most welcome to get in touch with her.

13. Date of Next Meeting – 7 May 2015.