

**Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee (BEC)**  
**Minutes of the Forum held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 9th May 2017**  
**at Our Lady Help of Christians Roman Catholic Church, Luton**

**Welcome**      Revd Andrew Hollins (Chairman) welcomed everyone and introduced Stephanie Field (Secretary), Anita Nancollas (CEDO), Alan Dansey (Webmaster) and Peter Hammond (Treasurer).

Andrew thanked the people of Our Lady Help of Christians Church for hosting the Forum, with particular thanks to those who helped with the refreshments. Thanks were also expressed to Stephanie and Anita for their help in organising the Forum.

Andrew led the opening devotions, which included a prayer, singing a hymn (Come, all who look to Christ today) and a Bible reading (Acts 11:19-26).

**Annual General Meeting**

1      54 people signed the attendance list, which is held by the Secretary as a record of those present.

|                  |                      |  |
|------------------|----------------------|--|
| <b>Apologies</b> | Rev. Cass Howes      | Rev. Dr David Chapman (Methodist District Chair) |
|                  | Rev. Keith Brown     | Rev. Angus McCormick                             |
|                  | Jeff Bulled          | Millicent Mead                                   |
|                  | Rev. Peter Protheroe | Rev. Steve Toze                                  |
|                  | Fr. Bernard          | Bob Halliday                                     |
|                  | Rev. Julie Bradshaw  | Rev. Quentin Chandler                            |
|                  | Rev. Caroline Weaver | Rt. Rev. Richard Atkinson                        |
|                  | Rev. Gill Baalham    | Rt. Rev. Dr Alan Smith                           |
|                  | Rev. Jenny Spouge    | Rt. Rev. Peter Doyle                             |
|                  | Jane Godley          | Venerable Paul Hughes                            |
|                  | Deacon Jane Mills    | Margaret Pritchard Houston                       |
|                  | Rosemary Langley     |  |

2      **Approval of Minutes of Forum held 11 May 2016**

The Minutes had been circulated in advance and copies were available at the meeting. These were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3      **Matters Arising**    None

4      **Report from Chairman**

Revd Andrew Hollins gave a verbal report, printed copies of which were circulated to those present.

5      **Report from the County Ecumenical Development Officer**

Mrs. Anita Nancollas referred to various aspects of her report, which had been circulated in advance.

6      **Finance**

Copies of the 2016 Accounts had been circulated in advance of the meeting; printed copies were available to those present. Rev. Andrew Hollins presented the review of the year's activities, which would be submitted to the Charity Commission along with the accounts. This was approved.

Mr. Peter Hammond presented the accounts, approval of which was proposed by Mr. Alan Smith and seconded by Mr. Alan Dansey. The meeting approved the accounts.

Rev. Andrew Hollins thanked Peter for preparing these accounts and for all of his work for BEC.

**Honorary Treasurer**    Mr. Peter Hammond resigned as Treasurer. There were no nominations.

**Honorary Independent Examiner** – The AGM delegated this appointment to the next meeting of BEC.

7      **Appointment of Chair**

There being no other nominations, Rev. Andrew Hollins was appointed for a further year.

## 8 Any Other Business

Our registration on the Charity Commission website currently shows, incorrectly, as *Bedford* Ecumenical Committee. This needs amending to reflect that our area of benefit is the county of Bedfordshire and not just the town or borough of Bedford. In light of this, the Forum was asked for its agreement for BEC to change the charity's name to either Churches Together in Bedfordshire or Bedfordshire Churches Together, either of which would be more accessible than Bedfordshire Ecumenical Committee. The meeting was unanimous, without expressing a clear preference for either of the proposed new names, in agreeing that the Committee could progress this.

## 9 Date of the Annual Forum 2018 Tuesday 1st May 2018 (Venue to be confirmed)

### Keynote Speaker Chris Curtis (Youthscape)

Chris gave a presentation about his own, and Youthscape's, varied work with young people. He posed the questions – 'Who are you?' and 'Where are you going?' as a challenge to those present to 'leave the village and see where they are!!' If we are who we should be, we will set the whole world on fire. This led in to a lively question and answer session.

#### Q 1. What should our first step be?

A quarter of Churches do not have any young people in their Church, Youthscape encourage activism, getting them out. Youthscape is working with Churches and schools on this. A church in London has created a group bringing older people and teenagers together, which is working well. Youth work now needs to take place outside of Church.

#### Q2 What are we teaching young people now?

It is empowering to invite young people to explain things that they know about to older people.

Chris mentioned that the focus he had as a teenager was 'God loves you'. Now the hook should be 'God has a plan for your life and you can make a difference'. One example was that young people could organise refugee support.

#### Q3 How free are you and your colleagues to go into schools to talk about Christianity?

Chris said that non Church Schools have changed. The invitation used to be to lead assembly including a prayer. It is often difficult for this to happen now. There are fewer assemblies and it is not always possible to lead a prayer. Lunch clubs do not really exist. Youthscape is looking at working in a 'third space' e.g. doing an art project in a corridor and inviting young people to look at it before Easter, which was very popular. It is important for churches to work together.

Chris commented that many young people are longing to find faith, but many of them know nothing about the Gospels or even The Lord's Prayer. A young person came to Church and said, "I have just looked up the Catholic Church and I believe what it says and here I am." The longing to find the truth is real. Chris doesn't expect young people to come to Church, but they are hungry for spirituality and faith. Another example was a young man who heard singing at the Baptist Church, came in and eight months later he gave his life to Christ. Young people want to talk about stuff which is real for them.

Rev. Andrew Hollins thanked Chris for his stimulating presentation.

The Forum finished with everyone present saying The Grace.