

# **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN FARNHAM 2012 AGM**

## **APPENDIX - containing Reports and Accounts**

### **CTF Chair**

As last year there is not a lot to report from the Chair as Churches Together in Farnham has continued as an 'Umbrella' for events organised by individual or groups of Churches together. The regular events continued this past year, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, with the Unity Service hosted by St Andrew's and very ably organised by Rev Andrew Tuck, and the Good Friday Walk of Witness, again very well organised by Stewart Dakers and well attended. We also remembered to print the hymn sheets this year which was a great help.

The one extra event, was the Easter Sunday afternoon Celebration in Gostrey Meadow, organised by ourselves here at the Pentecostal Church and also involving members of Weybourne Baptist Church, with support and encouragement from several other churches, including Vineyard, with the very generous offer of the use of Church House if it rained, and also great encouragement and co-operation from Farnham Town Council. As it was, it remained dry, and the sun even appeared at times. The feedback we received was encouraging and although we made a few mistakes we learnt a lot from it and will apply what we have learnt in future. We also had good coverage from the Herald and in The Wey, the Guildford Diocese Magazine.

We intend to make this an annual event and the planning for next year is starting this month. Because of our fairly limited resources, the event, apart from a couple of hopefully humorous sketches, was solely a musical one, but we would like to develop it into a more 'Family Friendly' occasion with things for all ages to do and get involved in. So if you have any ideas or skills and want to get involved, then please let us know as soon as possible. We want this to be a real Churches Together witness in the town.

Apart from these things, as you have already heard, our main focus for most of this year, has been on Sunday's Golden Jubilee Celebration, into which has gone a lot of hard work especially by Mary Clark, Michael McDonnell, Stewart Dakers and Richard Wimbush. We do hope you will encourage members of your own congregations to come along, let's see if we can fill St Joan's next Sunday afternoon.

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***Pastor Michael Hall***

## **CTF Secretary**

I feel we are making a bit of history tonight as we hold our annual meeting 50 years almost to the day, after the foundation of Churches Together in Farnham under its the original title of Farnham Christian Council. The Revd Desmond Parsons who will take part in our Golden Jubilee celebration on Sunday was the first secretary and the late George Baxter, headmaster of Farnham Grammar School, was the first Chairman.

So not surprisingly it is our celebration on Sunday that has dominated the past few months. A small team has worked incredibly hard to prepare for the Golden Jubilee Service and exhibition, so kindly hosted for us by Father Niven Richardson and St Joan's Church.

We ask you to share in our prayers that the afternoon will live up to expectations. With one former member flying from her home in New Zealand and others travelling across the country to be with us, as well as Sir Ray Tindle and the borough and town Mayors all accepting invitations, we are earnestly hoping that our own congregations will turn out in force to fill the church. Please encourage people in your church to come along - it is always the personal word of invitation that counts most.

The Golden Jubilee has not diverted CTF from our regular activities. The United Service, brilliantly hosted by St Andrew's Church, was well supported. Once again we were able to prepare a 'What to do in Lent' booklet featuring the very varied range of study, worship and other open-to-all activities laid on by our different churches. I won't say more about the Christmas and Good Friday events as you will be hearing separate reports about those. Richard Wimbush has done a fantastic job, keeping our website up to date and sending all our members monthly E-News Bulletins. These are essential reading if we want to keep up with events.

Finally - an urgent appeal to join the Steering Committee. We are now down to Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. That is the bare minimum to keep going. If CTF is to progress into its second half century, we MUST have fresh blood - and potential candidates who will be ready to take over from your present officers when the time comes.

*Mary Clarke*

## **Friday Focus**

Friday Focus has had its ups and downs over the past year but when speaking to the Herald it is difficult to complain and it is easier to be grateful for the opportunity they are giving us to write a contribution from Churches Together.

A big thank you to all those who have willingly jumped in to fill the gaps.

*Gwen Mansfield*

## **CTF Website**

There is not much to say. The website has been kept up to date with the little information received from churches as well as the CTF events.

As was suggested at the AGM last year, a monthly e-news has been sent out giving important notices and links to articles on the site. Do people wish this to continue?

*Richard Wimbush*

## **CTF Christmas Crib**

Last Christmas the Nativity scene in Farnham Library was created by pupils at William Corbett School. This year it will be created by pupils at another Farnham primary school, but I am unable to announce the name of that school at this stage.

The crib will be set up at the beginning of December and will be in place until after Christmas. It's important that visitors to the Library – if they like the crib - make known their thoughts to staff at the Library. It's important we give them positive feedback. The Nativity scene in Farnham Library is a Christian statement in a public place and is therefore of importance to us all. I hope to send a picture of the crib and a press release to the Farnham Herald – as another Christian statement in a public place.

I have been the link person for this initiative for over ten years. If anyone else here or other church would like to take over from me, they would be very welcome to do so and I would be grateful if they spoke to me after this meeting. Thank you very much.

***Michael McDonnell***

## **CTF Christmas Day Lunch**

Last Christmas once again, the Christmas Day lunch for people who would otherwise be spending the day on their own was over subscribed - by both guest applications and by volunteers offering to help. Around 80 Farnham people were guests at the Lunch and transport was provided for around 50 of these guests.

It's extraordinary how generous people are with their time on Christmas Day and the coordinators of the lunch are – yes - eternally grateful to the volunteers - many of whom are not church goers. We were blessed, once again, to have an amazing wonderful chef – Chris Smith – we are most grateful to him. An additional treat for the guests was a visit by the Mayor and Mayoress of Waverley - Councillor Richard and Mrs Evelyn Gates and it wasn't just a flying visit – they really engaged with everyone.

But now another perspective. There has never been a problem attracting volunteers to help on the day or help set up – but finding volunteer drivers has not been easy. However the small steering committee – five people – has not changed for a number of years and it's important new people come through to ensure the Christmas Day Lunch continues. At one time the coordinating was passed on each year - from one church to another and the present steering group formed when no one church came forward. However the present steering group cannot go on for ever and so I am making a special appeal. Consider coming to a steering group meeting with a view to being a part of the steering group next year. It is essential people come forward if the lunch is to continue – you will be made most welcome and shown what we do – you may well have better ideas than we do . I will be happy to take names after this meeting.

***Michael McDonnell***

## **CTF Golden Jubilee Service on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October**

You have all had information about this – going back to March and including a draft for the order of service. The Golden Jubilee service steering committee, chaired by Pastor Michael Hall and Father Niven, priest at St Joan of Arc, which is hosting the event, has aimed to make the service truly ecumenical. Every church within Churches Together in Farnham was invited to take part and every church **is** taking part – either taking a part in the service or bearing a symbol in the procession of symbols. Every church is taking part.

The service is a service of thanks giving – giving thanks for 50 years of growing closer together in prayer and shared work in the community. We have invited local dignitaries, former chairmen and officers of Churches Together in Farnham, clergy both retired and who have moved away, who were involved with CTF in the past, Headteachers and others. Amongst those who have accepted are the Mayors and Mayoresses of Waverley and Farnham and Sir Ray Tindle.

The service will include a comment on how we began, by Rev Desmond Parsons founder secretary of Farnham Christian Council, which later became Churches Together in Farnham, and a comment from a newcomer to ecumenism – Tim Visser of Farnham Pentecostal Church. The service will be followed by a bring and share tea – please don't forget – in St Joan's Centre hall – food can be left in the hall prior to the service. As we enjoy the shared tea we will be able to also enjoy an exhibition of memorabilia of the 50 years of our history. There you have it – we hope you can all come – and bring with you members of your church.

Jesus said – I quote from John 13. “It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognise you as my disciples.

*Michael McDonnell*

## **Farnham and District Christian Aid**

It has been another challenging year for Christian Aid in Farnham because of the continuing pressure on donations in the current economic climate, and because of the retirement of some long-serving church reps, not all of whom have been replaced. Drafting volunteers for the house-to-house collection also continues to be a difficult task within churches, and there are competing needs to support many other local good causes.

But, over £19,500 was raised in Christian Aid Week by the house-to-house collection and other events. Given the challenging environment this is especially impressive, because it is not much less than has been donated in recent years. Beyond Christian Aid Week itself, there has been good support for the Lent concerts at St Thomas-on-the-Bourne, for special appeals for the famine in East Africa and at Christmas and in Lent. By extending the time spent carol singing at Sainsbury's Water Lane we raised £500 in one day, and the raffle for an original painting raised over £800. In addition there were coffee mornings, a concert at St Andrew's, a Christingle collection and a quiz. The year's accounts will be presented in full at the **annual meeting on 31 October 2012**.

So it is clear that Christian Aid continues to be very well supported in many churches in and around Farnham, and this is very much appreciated by the Christian Aid south east team, who are always ready to help with ideas and resources, and of course by the partner organisations working with the poor and marginalised in nearly 50 countries around the world.

Looking forward to 2013, at the forthcoming annual meeting I will be handing over my role to Karen Fewster and a small new committee. It has been a privilege to work with such a committed and enthusiastic group of volunteers over the last eight years, and to have made friends in churches across the town and beyond. I am confident that Farnham and District Christian Aid will continue to go from strength to strength.

The annual meeting on 31 October at 8pm at the URC in South Street is open to all, and will include updates on Christian Aid's latest campaigns as well as the more formal business.

This year's **carol singing** at Sainsbury's Water Lane store will be on **Saturday 15 December** from 10:30pm to 4pm, and pairs of churches will be asked to cover the collection in one-hour time slots.

**Christian Aid Week 2013 is from 12 to 18 May .**

*Sadie Blankley - Chair - Farnham and District Christian Aid*

## **Bible Society Report**

I am pleased to tell you that Churches Together in Farnham's former close link with the Bible Society has been re-established. Our contact is Ruth Hughes, who lives in Fleet. I can report on her behalf that the Society held a successful sponsored walk in Farnham a few weeks ago, starting from the Baptist Church. Walkers came from several different churches and were generously supported.

Ruth writes: 'After gift aid and with totals still to be finalised we are looking towards £700 raised. We had a glorious morning for the walk and everyone enjoyed the scenery.

'We have two planned events in Farnham in the near future. The first one will be carol singing in the Lion and Lamb on Saturday 15th December. The second planned event will be in February 2013 - more details will be circulated later.'

***Presented by the Secretary of Churches Together in Farnham on behalf of Ruth Hughes***

## **Farnham Jubilee Debt Campaign Group**

At last year's AGM I announced that I was standing down from Farnham Jubilee Debt Campaign Group, which has subsequently disbanded.

The funds of £ 133.05 which were held by CTF have been sent to JDC Head Office to help with the great job they do in raising awareness of global financial injustices.

In November it is hoped that there will be a meeting of faith leaders at Westminster to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the setting up of the Jubilee movement. A jubilee : document has been signed by 250 faith leaders.

The UK hosts the G8 summit next June, and discussions are going ahead to see if a broad spectrum of groups working on global justice issues can be brought together under some sort of MakePovertyHistory 2 banner.

***Ann Scrase***