

Churches Together in Farnham Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2018

Wednesday 18th October at 7:30 p.m
at the St Mark's Church, Upper Hale

Present:

Name	Affiliation
Revd Michael Hopkins (Chair)	Spire Church
Andrew Partridge (Secretary)	St Andrew's
Andrew Marriott (Treasurer)	Jubilee Church
Mary Clarke (CTF Steering C'ttee)	All Saints', Tilford
John Goodman (CTF Steering C'ttee)	CTF
Roy Beard	Spire Church
Dora Murdoch	Spire Church
Michael McDonnell	St Joan's
Revd John Marrow	St Andrew's
Margaret Emberson	Badshot Lea and Hale
Margaret Skinner	Weybourne Community Church
Bob Skinner	Weybourne Community Church
Christine Clayton	St John's, Hale
Mary Haines	St Andrew's
Richard Haines	St Andrew's
Yvonne Bryant	St Thomas-on-the-Bourne
Revd Hannah Moore	Badshot Lea and Hale
Heather Richards	Spire Church
Juliet Greene	Jubilee Church
Jayne Pearce	Farnham Vineyard
Revd Russell Gant	St James, Rowledge
Jenny Floyer	Holy Ground Community
Revd John Edwards	Holy Family Church, Heath End
Ann Edwards	Holy Family Church
Revd Dr Jill Thornton	Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Chaplaincy Team

Apologies for absence

Name	Affiliation
Michael Gittins	Society of Friends
Revd Conrad Hicks	Spire Church
Stewart Dakers	Walk of Witness
Amber Delves	Signposts
Revd Tara Hellings	All Saints', Crondall
June Trantom	ASSIST
Revd David Uffindell	St Andrew's
Revds Alan and Lesley Crawley	Badshot Lea and Hale
Rose Williamson	Farnham Foodbank
Karen Fewster	Christian Aid

Minutes

Election of Officers

The **Revd Hannah Moore** was proposed by the Steering Committee as Chair for the term 2018/19, and was elected unanimously.

The other Steering Committee members (Secretary – **Andrew Partridge**; Treasurer – **Andy Marriott**; Website – **John Goodman**; Newsletter – **Mary Clarke**) were prepared to continue and were elected unanimously. A call was made for additional people to inject new ideas into Churches Together by joining the steering committee.

Jeremy Ricketts has stood down from his post as Town Council Link; a vote of thanks was passed.

It was noted that, according to the schedule agreed, it is the turn of the Roman Catholic Church to offer a nomination of chair 2019-2020.

Minutes of AGM 22.11.2017

The minutes were adopted and signed by the Chair. There were no matters arising.

Finance

Andy Marriott presented the accounts, which were adopted by the meeting. The General Fund stood at £348.93 at 31st August 2018, and the Christmas Lunch fund at £308.57. The residue of collections made in memory of Desmond Parsons was donated to Signposts in support of their work in local schools. It was noted that subscriptions would be requested from member churches each year, with any surplus funds being donated to appropriate local Christian charities.

Update on CTF activities

Chairman's report - Revd Michael Hopkins

This year has in large part been one of consolidation. The committee has met to facilitate regular activities, and to re-group and deal with administrative matters, such as adjusting our systems to deal with data protection. Now that our regular working feels on a more secure and comfortable footing, I hope that I am handing on to the next chair the opportunity to lead some development of churches working together.

The Christmas Day Lunch - Michael McDonnell

The Christmas Day Lunch in 2017 was enjoyed by 55 Farnham residents who would otherwise have spent the day on their own. Roast Turkey and all the trimmings, Christmas Pudding, a small gift and free transport if required, were the order of the day. It is extraordinary how generous people are with their time on Christmas Day and the coordinators of the lunch are eternally grateful to the volunteer helpers - many of whom are not church goers, who give their time with such warmth and generosity. We were blessed, to have a wonderful chef - David Beal - and are most grateful to him for his amazing happy cooking. We were blessed also to have generous help from FCCT, printing colourful posters and menus. A treat for the guests was a visit by the Mayor of Farnham, Mike Hodge accompanied by Julia Potts as Mayoral consort and Deputy Mayor of Waverley, Denise Le Gal and her family - their visit delighting guests and helpers. Most generous support was received from: Morgan's Butchers who donated the turkeys and other meats, The Dempster Trust, Farnham Hedgehogs, Care Farnham, The Bourne Show and Hale Carnival, Hale opportunities Group for delicious mince pies, Bells Piece for beautiful table decorations and to Sainsbury's and Waitrose.

This year's Christmas lunch will be held in the newly-refurbished Memorial Hall. Arrangements to appoint a chef are well underway.

Revd Gant congratulated the team on their achievement.

The Christmas Crib in Farnham Library - Michael McDonnell

At Christmas 2017 the Nativity scene in Farnham Library was created by Year 2 pupils at Rowledge Primary School. It was an amazing scene and much praised by visitors to the Library. All the children in the class played a part in its design and creation. The crib was set up at the beginning of December and was in place until after Christmas.

In 2018 the link person between the Library and the School will be Amber Delves who at FCCT is involved with Signposts and Cohesion, seeking to work in partnership between the schools and churches in Farnham. When this year's crib is installed, we suggest that visitors to the Library - if they like the crib, make known their thoughts to Library staff - because it is important we give positive feedback to the Library. The Nativity scene in Farnham Library is a Christian statement in a public place - marking our joy at the birth of Jesus. We hope to send a picture of the crib and a press release to the Farnham Herald - as another Christian statement in a public place.

Unity Service and Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - Andrew Partridge

The Unity Service was held on 21st January in St Andrew's Church and led by Revd David Uffindell. The theme was 'That All may be Free' and the central part of the service involved the congregation dividing into four groups to discuss and pray together on four topics relating to freedom or the lack of it: (a) welcoming the stranger; alienation and hospitality; (b) resisting modern slavery; (c) upholding human dignity; enslavement via technology; (d) Overcoming violence; reconciliation and hope. Despite the cold weather there was a good turnout for a valuable time of fellowship in prayer.

This year the daily Prayers for Christian Unity during the week rotated around a selection of town centre churches, as follows: Farnham Baptist Church; St Joan's Catholic Church; St Thomas-on-the-Bourne; Farnham United Reformed Church; St Andrew's, Farnham; Farnham Vineyard and Farnham Pentecostal church. The format was successful and will be repeated next year, extending the circuit to include churches beyond Farnham town centre.

Monthly Unity Prayers - Bob Skinner

These are normally held on the third Tuesday of the month from 11am in the Foyer room at St Joan of Arc Church, Tilford Rd. The CTF prayer group continues to meet monthly for an hour of fellowship, sharing and prayer. After initial refreshments, we normally commence our informal meeting with a short spiritual reflection led by one of the group on a Bible passage, hymn or a poem; we then have an open time of sharing and prayer for the needs, ministry and witness of local churches and Christians in the area.

We are encouraged by the number of different churches from across the town that are represented at the meetings each month. Newcomers are always welcome to come along to join us.

Good Friday Walk of Witness - Stuart Dakers

Over two hundred people of all ages plus a few animals silently walked Farnham's Via Dolorosa on Good Friday to bear witness to our redemption culminating in prayers at St Andrews led by Rev David Uffindell.

Thursday Thought - Jenny Floyer

It has been a privilege for another year to coordinate Thursday Thought (previously Friday Focus) contributions, currently from eighteen individual churches, or clusters of churches, plus Christian Aid. Larger churches have been allocated three slots a year while smaller fellowships have two. I think this last year only one week remained unfilled as no one in that church was available to submit an article. I am grateful for all you folks who have been faithful contributors over the years, either writing yourselves or inviting someone from your church or fellowship to do so.

Especial thanks to newer incumbents who have launched in and sent in an article for their week. It would be interesting to know what interest and impact these Thursday Thoughts have on the people in Farnham. The Editor is still allowing us to send in these, which is a great answer to prayer, for which we thank God.

Council Prayers - Michael Hall

I have continued to organise the prayers for the Farnham Town Council Meetings for this session, and the response from the Clergy/Leaders has been very encouraging, with more getting involved this time.

The feedback from the council has been good and the general feeling seems to be that since this was started, there has continued to be an improvement in the atmosphere at these meetings, with things running much more smoothly than they did before.

I believe this is an important ministry and I hope the opportunity for us to provide this will continue into future sessions.

Although I was first asked to organise this during my time as Chair of C.T.F, I have continued to do this since, and am happy to continue as long as the Steering Committee wish me to.

There are still two meetings to be covered, on Thursday 11 April 2019 and Thursday 9 May 2019, and so if there are any Clergy/ Leaders who haven't so far been involved, and would like to be, and are free on either of these dates, please contact me at hmichaeljill@aol.com for details of just what is involved.

Michael McDonnell thanked Michael Hall for maintaining this ministry.

Website and e-news

John Goodman has maintained and developed the Churches Together website through the past year, providing notification of coming events and reports of past ones, job opportunities, links to individual churches, and lots more. The CTF Directory of clergy and church office details is now made available via the website.

Mary Clarke continues to compile and circulate news items from our local Christian community, and a schedule of upcoming events across our area, on a monthly basis. If you would like to receive this publication, please speak to Mary or email her via the Churches Together website.

Future events requiring decision

Christian Unity Service 2019

A volunteer to host the service next year was requested. As none were forthcoming, the Steering Committee agreed to continue the search.

2019 AGM

It was agreed that the date would be set by the Steering Committee to suit the 2019/20 Chair designate when he or she had been identified.

The possibility was raised of holding the AGM in the afternoon rather than evening, for easier access by those preferring not to drive after dark. It was pointed out that this would prevent those in work from attending. There was not, therefore, a consensus to change the time of the meeting at this stage.

Update on Christian activities across Farnham

Christian Aid - Karen Fewster (0797 7561567)

2018 has been a difficult year! Christian Aid Week in May was overshadowed by controversy in the charity sector which dented people's trust in charities as a whole. The door to door envelope collection in the Farnham area reflected this. As a result there was a 25% drop in donations during Christian Aid Week. The total raised across the whole year was just below £18,700, well down on 2017. Sadly any fall in donations is most keenly felt where the money is needed most, in the places where people desperately need help.

Everyone is now familiar with the Christian Aid events, which take place in Farnham; from the Lent recitals at St Thomas' to the early morning Farnham station bucket collection. But who does the money help?

Christian Aid works through local partners on the ground, helping communities in their own countries, as well as refugees. They also offer emergency relief when disaster strikes. Christian Aid is present in more than 35 countries on a long term basis and currently also provides emergency relief in the following eight crisis areas:

Churches Together in Farnham – AGM – 18th October 2018

- The harvest was just days away when the typhoon Mangkhut struck the Philippines. The crops were badly damaged or destroyed. Mud slides caused devastation. Approximately 65,000 families are in evacuation centres and need food and clean water.
- There are almost 1 million Rohingya people still in camps on the border with Bangladesh.
- Continuing Boko Haram activity means that 2 million Nigerians have been displaced and need food, water, shelter.
- As the Syrian conflict enters its seventh year, half the population has had to flee its homes and an estimated 5.2 million people are refugees.
- South Sudan is in the grip of a humanitarian disaster with 50% of the people in need of food and security, while 3 million have been displaced.
- Kerala floods and landslides have left homes destroyed. 200,000 people will not be able to return home for at least 6 months. Many have lost everything.
- Two months of persistent rain in India, Nepal and Bangladesh have left many dead and 40 million people affected by the floods, with homes and livelihoods lost.
- Indonesian earthquake/tsunami. 1.5 million people affected.

One of the consequences of disaster and conflict is that 40 million people have been internally displaced. Christian Aid is campaigning for justice and security for these forgotten people.

These are just some of the reasons why a dedicated team of volunteers from our churches, deliver envelopes, bake cakes and organise concerts in support of Christian Aid in Farnham and the surrounding villages.

Farnham ASSIST - June Trantom

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the churches in Farnham for their wonderful support of Farnham Assist. We really appreciate all our wonderful volunteers, 124 in total, many of whom come from local churches across the town; and the use of venues for church services such as Silver Service and Songs of Praise, and for activities for our clients such as Beetle Drives and afternoon teas. There has also been continued financial support through fundraising events and gifts throughout the year. In the face of financial pressures on everyone this has been a real blessing as it gives us the security to plan for the future and sustain our work with the older members of our community. We feel truly blessed. In addition to being blessed financially we have also added to our teams with new volunteers being welcomed across all our teams to run the many aspects of our work – our weekend lunches, computer tuition, drivers to provide door-to-door transport, befrienders who visit the housebound, the praise and worship team, knit-and-natter and support with our many outings and special events. This year has been tremendous fun for all, but we couldn't do it without your support.

We have just undertaken an annual review of our activities and as we move forward we plan to widen the geographical boundary of our work extending into the neighbouring villages and forging stronger links with the many sheltered housing communities locally. The Events Diary for 2019 will be published in January so look out for news of our activities on offer throughout next year.

Farnham Foodbank - Rose Williamson

Farnham Foodbank has now been operating for 8 years. Since opening we have seen many changes and fed more people than we ever thought we would need to. We continue to work closely with agencies across the town and are grateful to the schools and churches for supporting us at Harvest.

Planning for our Christmas hamper project is well underway; Approximately 100 low income families will receive one of our hampers. This year we will also be running a Santa's Grotto, free of charge for foodbank clients. We are looking for volunteers to assist with the Grotto, please contact Rose if you would like to know more.

Filling the hampers with food and Santa's sacks with presents is going to be quite costly and will require a huge amount of food. We are stepping out in faith and trusting that God will provide.

We are unable to accept toy donations but would be grateful for any financial assistance to support such projects. For those wishing to donate food, we currently require the following items: **Chocolate selection packs, Christmas cakes, Christmas puddings, Chocolates, Instant custard and Instant mash.**

(All Christmas donations are needed by the end of November. We request that all donations are in date and unopened – thank you).

We praise God for helping us meet the basic need of those who are hungry and for enabling us to show people His love and kindness at a time when they feel broken and overwhelmed.

Farnham Christian Community Trust - (verbal report by Revd John Edwards)

FCCT is now some 17 years old. It continues to be the conduit of financial support for the Signposts and Cohesion work in schools, and provides administrative and logistic support for ecumenical projects such as the forthcoming 'Rethink Farnham' campaign, aimed at reaching out to the town with the Christian message in a multitude of events over the week 19-25 November.

Currently the costs of FCCT's core activities are only approx. 45% covered. Funding for the schools work will run out in March 2019; a new funding campaign to continue the schools work will be required in the next financial year. A plea was made for financial support from individuals and churches.

Signposts - Amber Delves (*amber@signpostsfarnham.org*)

Signposts is the primary schools wing of Farnham schools work, working ecumenically across the majority of the schools in Farnham and its surrounding area to deliver lessons, assemblies, prayer spaces and support relevant inter-church projects.

The focus of Signposts is the delivery of three 'tours'; two major tours at Christmas and Easter and the third in the summer where we work in partnership with Cohesion to support the year 6 children in managing their transition to secondary school. The assemblies are delivered in sessions of 45-60 minutes, to approximately 100 children at a time. Each tour has added new schools to our programme and the response is so favourable that seven of the seventeen schools booked in within 24 hours.

The assemblies are delivered in an engaging and interactive way, with drama, song, puppets, games and activities. The Christmas tour 2017 focussed on aspects of peace. It explored how Jesus came into this world so people can be at peace with each other and with God. The Easter tour 2018, entitled 'A surprising Swap' explored the Christian belief that Jesus died and rose again to bring forgiveness, life and hope. The summer Transition Tour for year six children, included concepts such as 'you are unique' and 'God is always with you', as well as some of the more expected issues they face.

This year has seen growth in team, delivery and opportunities. The team has expanded to 29 individuals, mainly volunteers, seconded children's workers and a few church leaders. The number of churches involved has grown to 11 and this has enabled us to go into more schools. We are currently offering the Christmas 2018 tour to 17 schools, which will reach over 4,000 children.

A steering committee made up of clergy, trustees and teachers oversee a core team. The core team consists of seconded children's workers from six churches and the project is managed by a co-ordinator: Amber Delves.

During the 'Peace tour' last year, many children shared stories of anxiety and worries. As a team we carried out a study into whether this was something the schools wanted support with. We received positive feedback from all the schools we approached so are now exploring working in the area of promoting children's emotional health. We have been working with children's workers, teachers and health care professionals to devise a programme of assemblies and workshops that we will be piloting in the New Year. There is a potential to follow this up with older children and explore other areas with younger children depending on how the pilot goes.

One challenging area this year has been finance. We have known generous and amazing provision from some churches and many kind individuals. However, we are very keen to expand the funding base and put it on a more stable footing. We would like to encourage many individuals to make regular, small donations.

We have an appreciated prayer supporter network of 68 people who pray weekly for the schools work and a smaller gathering of people who pray together on the second Wednesday of every month.

Cohesion (secondary schools work)

It was reported that pupils at Heath End school are intending to start a Christian Union.

Friends Together - Yvonne Bryant

Friends Together has continued to provide bereavement support on a weekly basis, meeting at 40 Degreez on a Monday afternoon from 3 – 4:30. Numbers have varied but remain small; however people who have attended have said how much they appreciate that we are there. The monthly evening meetings were transferred to 40 Degreez earlier this year, again numbers have been small but we continue to think that there is a need in Farnham for a group like ours.

Our funds this year have come from Care Farnham who have been extremely positive about our work.

We do not provide counselling but offer a friendly atmosphere over a cup of tea and a biscuit, and just chat! Surprisingly meetings can bring a lot of laughter as the subjects discussed vary depending on who is attending.

At a meeting two weeks ago the volunteers discussed the future of the group because the number of people attending had dropped. Also the work on the East Street development has commenced making 40 Degreez somewhat isolated. The key to the future success of the project is finding an agreeable, smaller venue with readily accessible parking.

Farnham Money Advice - Terry Heath

The team continues meeting Clients each Tuesday between 1 to 4pm at the Vineyard Centre. Reliability of Clients is rather spasmodic, which in general reflects their lifestyle.

So far this year, we have had the following Client interaction:

New Clients:	20
Return Clients	11
Clients did not Show:	9

Following the first nine months of 2018, it is recognised that the team are very capable of taking on more clients. Although speaking to other Frontline offices, it is recognised that the take-up is quite slow, the team are going to look to increasing the Client base by approaching Doctors Surgeries, School support workers, the Local Council, Social Workers and any other support workers who deal with debt issues in an attempt to increase our work load.

'Open the Book' at Hale - Margaret Emberson

"Good Morning, everyone." "Good Morning, Open the Book." This is the enthusiastic greeting we receive when we regularly visit two local infant schools throughout the school year.

We are a team of eight, from various churches in the parish, who meet every alternate week to prepare and practise, ready to present well loved stories from the Bible to all the children at Folly Hill School and Badshot Lea schools. We are now into our fifth year.

Last September (2017) we were invited into Tootsies Day Nursery to Open the Book. This has been a wonderful challenge! The children are younger, the space we use is much smaller, and we have to adapt, slightly, the introductions and conclusions. We call our visits there Bible Story Time, as the Open the Book material is written for children of primary school age. We read the stories from the Bob Hartman Bible and the children listen and watch intently.

As a team, we are invited to the schools end of term assemblies, nativity plays, and other occasions throughout the school year. We have also become good friends! We meet for coffee, lunches and days at the seaside to visit team members who have moved away.

Two further schools - Hale, and William Cobbett, would like visits from the Open the Book team. More volunteers are needed!

It was noted that Farnham Baptist Church also run an Open the Book programme for Potters Gate school in central Farnham.

Concluding remarks

John Marrow announced that he had a shed full of resources for youth work as a legacy from his time as a Church Army youth worker.

Mary Clarke proposed a vote of thanks to the outgoing Chair, Michael Hopkins, which was endorsed by enthusiastic applause.

It was suggested that a report from the 'Filling Station' be included in future meetings.

Guest presentation:

Chaplaincy at Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice - Revd Dr Jill Thornton, Chaplaincy Team Leader

Dr Thornton, an ordained minister in the United Reformed Church, outlined her personal experience of death in her family and how she had been drawn to hospice chaplaincy work. She described the scope and scale of activities at the Phyllis Tuckwell hospice. There are three paid chaplains, Dr Thornton herself, Sue Latty (a former nurse) and Bryony Wildblood (interfaith minister); there are also five volunteer chaplains. A prime aim is to support patients with a faith, and help make or maintain links with local churches. However, the chaplains are available for anyone, and Dr Thornton gave three illuminating case studies of the sort of help she had been able to give.

She stressed her desire to develop links with local churches and to work in partnership with them.

After thanking Dr Thornton warmly for her presentation, the outgoing Chair closed the meeting in prayer.

Andrew Partridge (Secretary)