

Churches Together in Farnham Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2020

Wednesday 21st October at 7.30 p.m
held "virtually" as a live-stream You-Tube video

Minutes

Introduction

Due to restrictions on public gatherings resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2020 Annual General Meeting was held "virtually" as a live-stream You-Tube video. This was premiered at the scheduled time for the meeting, namely 7.30 p.m on Wednesday 21st October. The 21-minute long video continues to be available for later viewing. The video can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2HXyjGylg4>

The Annual Report was assembled in advance from submissions by contributors and posted on the CTF website. In the interests of brevity, the video includes a selection of activities; comprehensive coverage is provided by the report, which is reproduced below. Links for both the broadcast and the report were circulated to the CTF mailing list in advance of the meeting.

The video comprises the following contributions:

Welcome	Michael McDonnell
Introduction to schedule	Andrew Partridge
Update on Signposts – Primary Schools	Amber Delves
Update on Christian Aid	Karen Fewster
Update on Farnham ASSIST	June Trantom
Update on Farnham Foodbank	Harriet Lanyon
Update on Farnham Money Advice	David McNeight
Update on Churches Together in Farnham	Michael McDonnell

The transmission concluded with a time of prayer.

To address the interactive aspects of an AGM, such as approval of minutes, an on-line survey was distributed to the CTF mailing list on 27th October. As at 5th November, the video broadcast had received 43 views and 16 people had responded to the survey.

Attendance

The identity of individuals viewing the video was unobtainable. Those contributing to the survey were as follows:

Name	Affiliation
Revd. Alan Crawley	Badshot Lea and Hale
John Edwards	Holy Family
Yvonne Fairlamb	All Saints Tilford
Karen Fewster	Christian Aid in Farnham
Revd. Russ Grant	St.James' Rowledge
Michael Gittins	Society of Friends
Juliet Greene	Jubilee Church
Revd. Michael Hopkins	Spire Church
Andrew Marriott (CTF Treasurer)	Jubilee Church
Fr.Niven Richardson	St.Joans'
Revd. David Uffindell	St.Andrew's
Andrew Partridge (CTF Secretary)	St.Andrew's
Bob Skinner	Weybourne Community Church
Margaret Skinner	Weybourne Community Church
June Trantom	Farnham ASSIST
Ben Wills	Farnham Christian Community Trust

Election of Officers

Guy Pritchard, Farnham Vineyard Church, was proposed for the office of Chair for 2020/21, taking effect immediately after the AGM. He was elected unanimously by the respondents to the survey.

Mary Clarke regretted she felt the time had come for her to stand down from the Steering Committee. The other members – **Andrew Partridge** (Secretary), **Andrew Marriott** (Treasurer) and **John Goodman** (Webmaster) – had all agreed to continue to serve. Their appointment was approved unanimously.

Minutes of 2019 A.G.M. on 21st October 2019

The minutes were approved by respondents to the survey, with one abstention.

Finance

The accounts for the twelve months to 31st August 2020 are appended to the Annual Report and were approved by respondents to the survey, with one abstention.

Matters arising

Respondents to the survey were asked whether they felt the format for the 2020 AGM worked well. The great majority felt that under the circumstances the format was good. Two commented that they missed the fellowship of a live meeting. One said they would have preferred an interactive format such as Zoom; another was ambivalent about a Zoom option; a third appreciated being able to view the video despite not being available at the time of the meeting. A further comment was that it would be good to have more digital content online in the future. These are all useful points to bear in mind for future meetings.

The mailing inviting participation in the on-line survey expressed warm appreciation of the efforts of the outgoing Chair, Michael McDonnell. The proposal of a sincere vote of thanks to him was passed unanimously by respondents.

Update on Christian activities across Farnham:

Signposts – Primary Schools – Amber Delves

Signposts schools work has continued to support our local primary schools through assemblies, lessons, prayer and the continued relationships of our team with individual schools.

We usually have three annual tours at Christmas, Easter and summer, as our main focus. In this, we usually reach approximately 3,500 children.

Last Christmas, we visited 15 local schools and by designing an assembly that could be delivered to larger cohorts, we were able to visit all the 3,800 children within 32 assemblies. The theme was 'The Royal Visitor' and the feedback we received was encouraging, including phrases such as, fun, well planned, engaging, entertaining, and 'better than ever'.

The project is overseen by a team of five children's workers who are seconded by their churches into the project and we are grateful to the churches for this commitment and support. This was achieved through the hard work of our 25 volunteers drawn from 9 churches in Farnham and the surrounding area. Their energy and commitment is commendable, particularly during the 3 tour weeks that are demanding.

In early Spring we ran a pilot emotional health lesson-working with year 6 children on resilience. Working with a local school we identified other areas that could be explored and were hoping to offer these lessons more widely following the pilot. Due to the nature of this work, it is currently on hold until we can physically visit schools again.

Unfortunately, the Easter Tour was cancelled due to the COVID lockdown and then Amber Delves' (Signposts coordinator) role was furloughed while we worked out the best way forward for the project.

By Summer, the schools were requesting support with their Year-6 transition to secondary school, so Amber was un-furloughed and worked within the restrictions to produce an hour long video for the schools. Twelve local youth and children's workers were involved. The material was positively received by the schools that were able to show it to their Year 6s and by others who shared it with individual children.

The team is currently writing a script and developing resources to film a Christmas video entitled "Joy: The Story of Christmas" - that we are hoping to release late November.

Please do pray for this whole production process and for wisdom in how we can best support our schools at this time.

Christian Aid – Karen Fewster

What a difference a year makes! No red envelopes, no street collections, no cake stalls and no Big Brekkies. The result: money raised a fraction of previous years!

St Thomas' lent recitals were curtailed by the lockdown but those which went ahead were well received.

One or two churches managed to raise money with on-line events and quizzes during Christian Aid Week, but understandably our donations from Christian Aid Week were a long way short of £15k raised in 2019. For the most part, we were unable to function at all as a fundraising group. This was mirrored across the country and Christian Aid Week's total was somewhere around £3 million.

The highlight of Christian Aid Week for me was an uplifting on-line service to start the week in Farnham. My thanks goes especially to Michael Hopkins from the Spire Church, who rallied ministers and churches from across Farnham to join in. My thanks also to Russ Gant from St. James' for piecing the video clips together. The result was a beautiful service with a message about the work of CA in countries who have no running water to wash hands as COVID spreads across the world.

On a wider note, Christian Aid went through a major restructure, just as COVID hit, with several hundred people being made redundant and other placed on furlough.

The organisation has been restructured, with more home workers and many roles now filled by volunteers. The number of people in need of help globally however continues to mushroom.

Please pray for Christian Aid as it tries to build a world with justice at its heart.

Pray too for the wonderful team of church reps who work so hard to raise money.

And finally please pray for our global brothers and sisters and a kinder fairer world.

Thank you!

Farnham ASSIST– June Trantom

What a year 2020 has turned out to be for all of us. It has been a challenge to continue our support for our clients in the middle of the COVID pandemic and keep both them and the volunteers safe. Our normal programme of events, activities and outings have sadly had to be suspended since mid-March and there are no personal visitors to the office, but we have a wonderful team who have maintained regular telephone contact with everyone for a social chat and ensure they are alright and a group which responds to requests for shopping, collecting prescriptions and hearing aid batteries. The office continues to be the centre for coordinating our response and embracing new referrals for help. In total we are supporting 230 older people living alone across our town.

We readily joined forces with the Farnham and Villages Coronavirus Support Group and I continue to meet via Zoom with the other members of the group, which includes representatives from the NHS, Surrey CC, Waverley Borough Council and Farnham Town Council, as well as other voluntary groups and church leaders, so that our work is responsive to the needs of the community.

My main news is about staffing. We have had a staff vacancy for a Fundraising and Marketing Coordinator since April as our lovely Susie moved on to a full-time position and, as we have not been able to hold fundraising events and in order to cut costs, we have not replaced her. In addition, our Lunch Coordinator, having been furloughed, was sadly made redundant with no lunches able to take place for the foreseeable future. This has left just my position as Manager. I decided at the start of this year that, after six years, my time leading Assist was coming to an end and I announced my retirement in January. I will be leaving at the end of this year. The recruitment process is currently underway and I hope to announce my successor shortly. I have loved my time at Farnham Assist and would like to thank you all for your wonderful support during my six years as Manager. I know you will continue to support our work and make the new Manager very welcome.

FCCT – Ben Wills

FCCT has seen much change in the last year, we have been sad to see three long standing and dedicated Trustees step down, with thanks to Sean Gubb, Helen Edson & John Edwards, as well as Rose Williamson stepping down from leading the Farnham Foodbank. However we have also seen three new Trustees take up the post with Mike Hitchings, Alan Earwaker & John Horncastle now serving alongside Andrew Marriott & Juliet Greene on the board.

Farnham Foodbank appointed Harriet Lanyon to take on leading the project in January 2020, who has done an amazing job in steering the team through the current challenges, while Frontline Farnham Money Advice appointed its first paid project leader in August 2020, David McNeight, who is taking the project from strength to strength. Other projects continue to thrive albeit challenges at this time in our nation. Friends Together Bereavement support, the Farnham Filling Station, PALS Family Support and Farnham Schools Work all continue to have dedicated and passionate teams delivering much needed hope, love & support to our communities at this time.

FCCT is also continuing to support churches to gather to pray for our town with joint initiatives such as Thy Kingdom Come in Farnham Online, Love in Action Online Prayer Events and the Rethink Farnham project

which looks set to bring more outreach and mission opportunities into 2021. We continue to look for further opportunities to partner with all churches in Farnham, to support them in this time if possible and to share in bringing the love of Christ to Farnham. We also are looking for more trustees to support the work of FCCT in the town. Many blessings to you all and we look forward to seeing you in person in 2021.

Farnham Foodbank – Harriet Lanyon

Starting in mid-March we saw a dramatic increase in the number of people coming to the Foodbank for support, many of them for the first time. At the peak, the number of people we served was more than three times higher than usual and we were supporting about 70 families and 50 individuals. By the end of August, demand for food parcels was 50% above normal and, while we are currently at more normal levels, it is hard to predict what may happen if the gloomy economic forecasts prove accurate.

There were plenty of challenges to overcome in the early weeks of the pandemic. First we lost several valuable volunteers, who had to step down due to the government's shielding advice. Fortunately, we have had some wonderful new volunteers who stepped up to help. The efforts of all our volunteers – longstanding or newly recruited – have been amazing and we are so appreciative of all they do.

Then we saw a sharp rise in requests for home deliveries, as families and individuals began self-isolating, while we were still running our distribution centres.

To ensure that we could maintain social distancing and keep both volunteers and clients safe, we concluded that the only option was temporary closure of the distribution centres, moving to doing home deliveries only. That was the case since the beginning of April until mid-September, when we opened our two distribution centres again. Clients now come to collect their food parcels, though we do deliver on Fridays to those who are unable to come to the centre.

We have also had fantastic support from local residents and businesses, both via food donations and financially.

As part of the Trussell Trust national network of food banks, we were able to benefit from a partnership between the Trussell Trust and Tesco. This resulted in us receiving generous weekly food donations for several weeks from Tesco, which ensured we could meet the local needs.

The pandemic is far from over and we do not yet know how demand for emergency food will be affected as government support measures are scaled back and countries try to prevent a second wave. However, at the Foodbank, we are working hard to ensure that, whatever the future, brings we will be ready.

Although Harvest is still in full swing, we are starting to prepare for Christmas. We would be incredibly grateful for donations of: Christmas puddings, boxes of chocolates, chocolate selection packs and savoury snacks.

Thank you to all those who have supported the Foodbank during this very challenging period. Your contribution has directly helped the growing number of people in our area who find themselves, for whatever reason, in crisis and unable to afford food. The Foodbank is there not simply to provide food, but also as part of a wider network of support agencies working to put people back on their feet. We could not play the important role we play without your support!

Farnham Money Advice

Farnham Money Advice is a local branch of a national Christian charity, Frontline Money Advice, which aims to help those in financial difficulties plan a way forward. It is expected that the demand for support will increase as the furlough scheme ends. David McNeight took over as Project Manager in early September. His initial aims are to grow the team of volunteer advisers and to build a network with local charities and council bodies to give as wide a reach as possible to potential clients.

Open the Book – Margaret Emberson, Yvonne Fairlamb and Kathy Cook

We, the "Open the Book" team from Badshot Lea and Hale, are a group of eight people, from different churches in this parish, who visit schools, regularly, to tell Bible stories. We use costumes, props and drama. "Open the Book" is a national scheme, sponsored by the Bible Society. Last year saw the 20th anniversary of the scheme.

We have been visiting local schools for over five years. Last October, as part of the 20th anniversary celebrations, Hannah Moore lead two wonderful services at St.Mark's church for Folly Hill School and at St.George's church for Badshot Lea School. We invited the whole of each school to each church, along with staff, parents and siblings. We retold the story of Jesus in the Temple, sang songs and said prayers. Very special occasions.

We are told by staff and parents that the children always look forward to our visits and repeat the stories when we have left.

We have had a few changes in the team. Vickie has left for family reasons, Carol is having a 'rest', and Hannah has moved to her new parish in Elstead.

I would like to say a big THANK YOU to Vickie, Carol and Hannah for the enthusiasm, commitment, insight

and fun that each has brought to the Open the Book team. We wish them all well. Maxine has joined us and brings fresh ideas and skills to the team.

In March this year, COVID meant that all schools closed because of national lockdown. We have not visited any school since then. We have contacted each school - Badshot Lea, Folly Hill, and Tootsies Nursery, to let them know that all the children, their parents and the staff, are all in our thoughts and prayers. We look forward to the time when we can visit each school again.

Yvonne Fairlamb adds: We began a similar "Open the Book" scheme at Tilford this year, but the timing was rather unfortunate. We had a late start at the beginning of the year, with an initial intention for one session a month, possibly building on that. But because of COVID we only managed three! At time of writing we are tentatively beginning again with an outdoor session on 29th September, and will see how that goes.

Kathy Cook, from Farnham Baptist Church, reported at the end of 2019: The "Open the Book" team at FBC has had another enjoyable year, going into Potters Gate C-of-E Primary School and St. Andrew's C-of-E Infant School in central Farnham. We have been going on a Tuesday every two weeks in term time, which works out about six times a term. On a Tuesday morning, we meet at FBC at 8:30 a.m to have a time of prayer, collect our costumes and props and then walk to Potters Gate for a run through before acting out the story for the children at 9:15 a.m. It is then on to St Andrew's to do it all over again at 10:15 a.m. Finally it is back to FBC to plan the story for the next time.

The story starts with an introduction from the Open the Book Handbook. This is followed by the team acting out the story as told in The Lion Story Teller Bible. Sometimes it is just the team that is involved, but it is extra special when we can involve some or, on occasion, all of the children to help us! They particularly liked the hooters and party poppers at the Rich Man's Party!

We still feel very privileged to be invited into these two schools and to be able to tell Bible stories and sing Christian songs to around 500 children as well as the staff. They all make us very welcome to the extent that this year we have been invited to their end of term musical and their Christmas presentations.

Friends Together Bereavement Support – Yvonne Bryant

The Friends Together Bereavement Group continued to meet in the Spire Café, both for our afternoon and evening meetings until 'lockdown' in March due to the COVID. In November 2019, because of changing numbers attending the meetings and the need for the evening group to meet weekly, we changed the afternoon and evening meetings around. The evening meeting was changed to every week from 7-8:30 p.m; the afternoon meeting to alternate Mondays from 3-4:30 p.m. Numbers were small but very much appreciated by those who attended.

Since March we have been able to offer, on a weekly basis, a Zoom meeting every Monday evening. Just recently we have acquired two new members. For anyone else requiring our services, we have offered a phone call from one of the team to keep in contact on a weekly basis. This is working well.

Once again Care Farnham gave us a donation to enable us to continue with our work.

We now need more people to help with our work. If you are interested, please phone 07999 368128 to discuss. Many thanks!

Update on Churches Together in Farnham activities:

Chairman's report – Michael McDonnell

2020 has been a year like no other - and no relief in sight as the virus comes back. People's suffering is truly massive as they struggle, not knowing what to do. The NHS struggles to cope with COVID and with other demands for its care - each one the need of an individual. The pandemic reminds us that we are dependent on one another, we are all vulnerable. Our response to restrictions affects others - for good or ill. We do whatever we can to help our neighbour and are thankful for small mercies. The unique beauty and unique splendour of autumn colours, reminds us of God and the wonder of His creation and of His unending love for us all.

It has been a privilege and honour to be Chairman of Churches Together in Farnham. May I thank everyone for their great help and encouragement, especially members of the Steering committee - Mary Clarke (Newsletter), Andrew Partridge (Secretary), John Goodman (Webmaster) and Andrew Marriot (Treasurer).

Thank you all, for your blessings on me - and on my successor.

Christmas Lunch – Stewart Dakers

Great fun as usual, with sixty guests and around forty volunteers, who gave lifts, served food, took coats, sang carols, played hosts, washed up and COOKED lunch, with special thanks to Meg and Kath; and to Kwei who has been a kitchen stalwart for years. It practically runs itself with a small team of organisers; a small but very important innovation this year was to have two hosts at each table, which ensured that

conversation and companionship were not hampered by hardness of hearing. At the time of going to press it is unclear whether we can do a “deliveroo” dinner this year to the homes of guests; certainly the way things are going, a sit down lunch in the memorial hall seems very unlikely.

Christmas Crib – Michael McDonnell

A Nativity Scene was displayed in Farnham Library during December 2019 and early January 2020, with great help from Amber Delves. Pupils from Potters Gate School created panels, each telling a part of the Christmas story, each a simple sketch in black against a brightly coloured background. Mounted on a black background, the display was powerful and enchanting. I am planning a Nativity Scene display in the Library again this Christmas – arrangements have to be finalised.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2020 – Michael McDonnell

The annual service was held at the Spire Church, led by Revd. Michael Hopkins. The theme was “Unusual Kindness”, which St Paul and fellow travellers experienced when they were shipwrecked on the island of Malta. If only we were as kind to migrants landing on our shores.

The daily prayer meetings were poorly attended - so poorly that your Steering committee felt there was little point continuing with them and therefore recommend they be discontinued from 2021.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021 – Michael McDonnell

The annual service is due to be hosted by St Joan's. It was suggested at last year's AGM that it be held a week later than usual, to allow more space, following the hectic Christmas and New Year period. In fact because of current uncertainties, St Joan's would like to leave arrangements pending- please watch this space.

Monthly Unity Prayers – Bob Skinner

Up to February this year, the monthly CTF prayer meeting continued to be held each month at St. Joan's Church, Tilford Road, where we gathered for fellowship, sharing and prayer. One or two new people attended our meetings on occasion, which was encouraging.

With the arrival of COVID in March, I decided it was not wise for us to meet in person, and the planned meeting was cancelled. Within days, the country was put into lockdown, and people were told to stay at home apart from necessary journeys.

In April, I contacted regular members of the group and proposed that we meet together virtually for our prayer meeting via Zoom, the video conferencing program. This idea met with a generally favourable response, and despite one or two individual hiccups (technology needs to be tamed, doesn't it?), a good number of us have continued meeting each month at the same time as usual.

Yes, the meetings have been different, but I believe people have enjoyed the opportunity to maintain fellowship across the churches and to have the opportunity to join in prayer together, even though we are separated physically. This pattern will continue into the new year, and we will keep things under review.

From October 2020, the time of our meeting will change to 2:00 p.m each month, still on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Anyone is welcome to attend the prayer meeting – a Zoom link will be sent to all who request it. My email address is BobSkinn@aol.com.

Good Friday Walk of Witness

The Walk of Witness was not held this year owing to COVID-related restrictions on large gatherings, but it is hoped to reinstate the walk for 2021.

Thursday Thought – Yvonne Fairlamb

I'd like to begin with huge thanks to all the Thursday Thought contributors, who have remained committed to this ministry in these very difficult times.

Thanks also to the Farnham Herald, for continuing to provide a regular space for us, having their own challenges to face during the months of lockdown.

Particular thanks from me goes to Jenny Floyer, who handed over the coordinator role in excellent shape with a completed rota for 2020.

So between you all, my work this year has been really easy!

We look forward to welcoming John Illsley, on behalf of Haslemere Methodist Church, as a new contributor in the coming year.

E-newsletter – Mary Clarke

The CTF E-News continues to be our regular organ of communication with member churches, associates and other friends.

It is sent out monthly to CTF church leaders, CTF representatives, church administrators and offices, editors

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of church publications, leaders of associate organisations, the Churches Together in Surrey co-ordinator, and a number of other friends who have requested it. If anyone else would like to receive the CTF E-News directly, please send us your email address. We would be delighted to add you to the list of recipients. In addition, the E-News is publicly available to read or download from the CTF website.

As well as the monthly letter from our chairman, the E-News includes items of information and other notices, though sadly not the extensive list of activities and future events that it used to contain before the advent of the COVID pandemic.

The mailing list of E-New recipients is now held by the Secretary as well as by myself, to ensure continuity of despatch.

Website – John Goodman

Our web site is at - <https://churchestogether.org/farnham> - It provides a wealth of information about Christian activities in the town, including our churches and the many local, or locally-based, organisations which serve our communities. Quick Links are provided leading to member churches and many local organisations.

As well as providing easy access to the regular "Churches Together in Farnham" E-Newsletter, links give access to the latest "Churches Together in England" and "Surrey Faith Links" newsletters.

In normal times, the web site allows churches and others to advertise events and activities of interest to other congregations and the wider community. This year, of course, we have focussed more on support groups responding to the evolving COVID story, but are still able to report on activities continuing on-line.

The web site has proved particularly useful to newcomers to the area, revealing the wide range of local Christian activities. If your group would like to use our pages, simply get in touch and we will try to help - web-pages@ct-farnham.org.uk -

Finance – Andrew Marriott

For the 2019/2020 accounts presented by the Treasurer for adoption by the meeting, see next page.

Andrew Partridge (Secretary)



Churches Together in Farnham

Accounts for 2019-2020

Income and Expenditure Account 1 September 2019 - 31 August 2020

2018-2019	GENERAL FUND	Income	Expenditure	Net	Balance
348.93	General Fund at 1st Sept 2019:				£344.33
85.00	Subscriptions	190.00			
228.20	Donations - Unity Service	-			
-228.20	Donation to Wycliffe Bible Translators			-	
-	Administration			-	
-89.60	Public Liability Insurance		-89.60		
-4.60	Total Income less Expenditure:	£190.00	-£89.60	£100.40	
344.33	General Fund at 31st August 2020:				£444.73
	SPECIAL FUNDS				
158.57	Christmas Lunch Fund	450.00	-417.63		£190.94
502.90	Bank Account Total:				£635.67

Notes

Subscription requested in 2019/20: £10 (2018/19: £10)
 No collection was taken at the Unity service in Jan 2020

Mr. Andy Marriott
 (Treasurer)