

Churches Together in Farnham Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2019

Thursday 24th October at 7.30 pm,
at St Mark's Church, Upper Hale

Present:

Name	Affiliation
Revd Hannah Moore (Chair)	Badshot Lea and Hale
Michael McDonnell	St Joan of Arc
Fr. Niven Richardson	St Joan of Arc
Revd Russell Gant	St James, Rowledge
Karen Fewster	Christian Aid
Revd Michael Hopkins	Spire Church
Heather Richards	Spire Church
Christine Clayton	St John's, Hale
Pamela Marsham	St John's, Hale
Janet Martin	St John's, Hale
Margaret Emberson	Badshot Lea and Hale
Vicky Kidney	Badshot Lea and Hale
Angela Hall	Badshot Lea and Hale
Sylvia Burrows	Badshot Lea and Hale
Simon Alexander	Badshot Lea and Hale
Andrew Partridge (CTF Secretary)	St Andrew's
Kenton Sparks	St Andrew's
June Trantom	Farnham ASSIST
Andrew Marriott (CTF Treasurer)	Jubilee Church
Juliet Greene	Jubilee Church
Michael Gittins	Farnham Quakers
Mary Clarke (CTF Newsletter)	All Saints', Tilford
Yvonne Fairlamb	All Saints', Tilford
Revd.Sandy Clarke	St Thomas-on-the-Bourne
Ben Wills	Farnham Christian Community Trust
Amber Delves	Signposts
Bob Skinner	Weybourne Community Church
Malcolm Beach	Weybourne Community Church
Julia Palmer	The Filling Station, Farnham
Raphe Palmer	The Filling Station, Farnham

Apologies for absence

Name	Affiliation
John Marrow	St Thomas-on-the-Bourne
John Goodman (CTF Website)	40 Degreez
Stewart Dakers	Walk of Witness
Jenny Floyer	Holy Ground Community
Revd Tara Hellings	All Saints', Crondall

Minutes

Introduction

The meeting was introduced by prayer and a welcome to all attendees by the Chair, **Revd Hannah Moore**.

Election of Officers

Michael McDonnell was proposed for the office of Chair for 2019/20, taking effect straight after the AGM. He was proposed by Fr Niven Richardson, seconded by Bob Skinner, and was elected unanimously. Michael addressed the meeting, saying that he considered himself the servant of those present, and welcoming suggestions as to what CTF should be doing in the future.

It was proposed by Hannah Moore, seconded by Russ Gant, and approved unanimously, that the other members of the Steering Committee – **Andrew Partridge (Secretary); Andrew Marriott (Treasurer); Mary Clarke (Newsletter)** and **John Goodman (Website)** should continue to serve.

Minutes of AGM 18.10.18:

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

Finance:

The accounts were presented by the Treasurer and adopted by the meeting.

Update on CTF activities

Chairman's report – Hannah Moore

It has been a pleasure to be the chair of Churches Together this year. I am always heartened to see Christians of so many denominations working together for the good of the gospel and to bring the Kingdom of God nearer in Farnham. The steering committee has co-ordinated and facilitated regular combined events to see this come to fruition. The steering committee is made up of dedicated, long-standing members some of whom would like the opportunity to step down. However, before they do, they would love to see the steering committee expanded. Finding volunteers to stand on the steering committee will continue to be a challenge for the incoming chair. I want to wish the incoming Chair and the committee all the best in the year ahead.

The Christmas Day Lunch- -Anne Connolly

A wonderful lunch took place on Christmas Day for approximately 60 Farnham residents who otherwise would have spent this festive day on their own.

This year the celebration took place at a sparkling new venue, the recently refurbished **Memorial Hall** off West Street. After welcoming our guests, we helped them into the spirit of Christmas by asking them to join in a selection of traditional carols. Then they were treated to an excellent two-course meal including roast turkey with all the trimmings, Christmas pudding and wine.

Our guests were looked after from the moment they arrived until their departure (with some tasty treats!) – all volunteers were committed to make this a wonderful occasion for them. Good humour and companionship was very much in evidence. We were delighted to welcome important visitors on the day – the **Mayor of Farnham**, David Attfield accompanied by Anne Attfield; and the **Mayor of Waverley**, Denise Le Gal. As well as joining in the carol singing, they spent time socialising with our guests and our volunteers, spreading good will and festive cheer.

This annual celebration is made possible by the generosity and good will so readily available in our local community. Cash donations were made by **Bourne Show, Hale Carnival** and individuals. **Morgan's Butchers** again donated the turkeys and other meats. **Sainsbury's** and **Waitrose** also supported us. We are most grateful for this generous support. And to make the day happen, we are as always reliant on the time and energy of the many volunteers who offered their time on the day chauffeuring, cooking and washing up. Many many thanks for the hard work put in by all, and especially to **Lou Snape** who took over as chef for the first time, managing the challenges of the newly installed high-tech kitchen. The Lunch was coordinated by **Churches Together in Farnham**. For guests and volunteers alike, the day is now a happy memory.

Christmas Crib – Michael McDonnell

At Christmas (2018) the Nativity scene in Farnham Library was created by pupils attending **St Peter's C of E Primary School Wrecclesham**. It was an artistic and reverent creation and much praised by visitors to the Library. The scene was set up at the beginning of December and was in place until after Christmas.

This year the link person between the Library and the School will be Amber Delves who, at FCCT is involved with Signposts and Cohesion – FCCT interchurch projects - seeking to work in partnership between schools and churches in Farnham. When the Nativity scene is installed at the beginning of December this year – by a different school - we suggest that visitors to the Library 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 will send a picture of the crib and a press release to the Farnham Herald – as another Christian statement in a public place.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – Andrew Partridge

Unity Service - On Sunday 20th January, around 60 Christians from churches across Farnham gathered for the annual Service of Christian Unity which was held this year at the church of **St.Thomas-on-the-Bourne**. The service was led by the vicar of St Thomas, **Revd John Morris**, with assistance from **Bob and Margaret Skinner** from Weybourne Community Church, **Beth Davenport** from the Spire Church, **Revd Hannah Moore** of Badshot Lea and Hale, and **Michael McDonnell** from the Catholic Church of St.Joan of Arc. The service material originated from the churches of Indonesia and the theme of the service, and of Revd Morris's address, was Justice. During the service, congregation members were asked to write cards with a simple intention to contribute to justice in our world; these were then gathered up to see if ideas for collective initiatives might emerge in addition to the individual pledges. A collection was taken for the work of the **Wycliffe Bible Translators**, and the service was followed by an opportunity for networking between members of different churches over a fine array of refreshments.

Daily Prayers

This year the aim was to invite Christians from all churches to attend, where possible, normal weekday events in various of our member churches. Accordingly we joined **St.Joan's** for Mass on Friday 18th, **St.Andrew's** for Morning Prayer on Monday, **St.George's, Badshot Lea** on Tuesday, and the **Spire**

Church for 'Pause for Thought' on Friday 25th. On other days, special gatherings were organised: a meeting at the **Quaker Meeting House** on Sat 19th, and prayers at **Farnham Vineyard** and **St.Thomas-on-The Bourne** on Wednesday and Thursday respectively. The formula worked well and we were particularly glad of the participation of the Quakers this time round, and the opportunity it gave us to experience their form of meeting before the Lord.

Monthly Unity Prayers – Bob Skinner

The CTF prayer group continues to meet each month for fellowship, sharing and prayer. We commence our informal meeting with refreshments followed by a short devotional led by one of the group. We continue with a time of sharing and open prayer for the work and witness of local churches and Christian groups in the area. It is encouraging to meet and pray with people from different churches from across the local area. Newcomers are always welcome to come. The meetings are held at 11am on the third Tuesday of the month for about an hour, meeting in the Foyer room at **St.Joan of Arc Church**, Tilford Rd.

Good Friday Walk of Witness – Stewart Dakers

Thanks to the commitment of John Edwards of **Holy Family Church**, volunteers from **St.Andrew's** and **Farnham Pentecostal Church**, and the many congregations, the event continues to be a vivid reminder to ourselves and the town that the day is a solemn celebration of a unique and awful moment of connection between God and humanity.

Thursday Thought

A warm vote of thanks was made to **Jenny Floyer**, who is stepping down after coordinating this weekly piece in the Farnham Herald sourced from churches across Farnham and beyond. It was pointed out that the nominated points of contact for each church do not need to provide the piece themselves each time, but are encouraged to delegate the task around their communities to widen the circle of contributors. **Yvonne Fairlamb** from All Saints', Tilford, has kindly volunteered to take on the coordination task, and was warmly welcomed into the role.

Website and e-news – Mary Clarke and John Goodman

The monthly CTF E-News continues to keep us up to date with all that is going on in our churches and associate organisations. Following the Chair's letter, the Notices section features projects, issues, activities and appeals throughout our Christian community. Then the Diary section lists a huge variety of coming events – anything with a Christian connection.

The CTF E-News prepared by **Mary Clarke** and mailed to all our clergy, CTF representatives, church offices, associate groups, and a number of individuals who have requested it – and is displayed on church noticeboards around the area. Thus it is a valuable source of communication and offers free publicity to us all. So please let us know about your special events, needs and projects so we can be sure to include them.

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

Mary Clarke warmly thanked all who provided contributions to website and newsletter, and encouraged all present to keep the contributions coming.

Update on Christian activities across Farnham

Christian Aid – Karen Fewster

As a group, **Farnham and District Christian Aid** represent 12 churches across Farnham and villages and our aim is to both raise funds for Christian Aid and also to raise awareness of the work carried out by Christian Aid across the world. 2019 has been a very successful year on the fund raising front in Farnham and we collected £22,785 which is up on last year's total of £20K. Each church also has its own programme of fundraising with concerts, big breakfasts, a picture raffle and cake sales and we come together as a group for street collections, carol singing and other group activities.

The total raised in 2019 came as a surprise because last year's total was well down on the previous year and it is increasingly difficult to find volunteers to collect door to door. Two-thirds of the money collected still comes from activities in Christian Aid Week including door-to-door collections.

There are challenges in that we failed again this year to get permission from Sainsbury's to collect outside their supermarkets and we are no longer welcome in Lion and Lamb Yard. However on the plus side we collected outside Tesco's in Aldershot and provided a tea tent for 'Music in the Meadows'. Both proved very successful and we will build on this experience in 2020.

St James' Church hosted a thought provoking and informative exhibition provided by Christian Aid entitled 'Uprooted', which told of the plight of internally displaced people in various countries with photographs. It received many visitors across Christian Aid Week including children from Rowledge Primary School. I hope that we will host another similar exhibition in one of our churches in 2020.

As you know, Christian Aid works across the world, through local partners in each country, helping vulnerable communities deal with the fallout from natural disaster, conflict or drought. In early October, I

was privileged to accompany Christian Aid on a visit to Ethiopia to see first-hand the projects Christian Aid is involved with, in the remote South Omo region of the country. Local partners Action for Development and Women's Support Association are working with local communities building water schemes to provide a source of water in drought periods, improving storage of feed for livestock in preparation for the dry season and channelling water from springs high in the mountains to the valley. This spring water is clean and safe to drink unlike the water collected from ditches and rivers! Women in communities are being empowered by forming self-help groups and working together to earn a living by small scale trading of goods and services.

My visit to these remote communities was a humbling experience. It opened my eyes to the very real effects of climate change – failed and erratic rains are now a regular occurrence and the dry season is longer and hotter- and its impact on the people's lives. Just one consequence of lack of water is the children have to walk further to find water so have no time to go to school. They may walk 4-5 kms to find water (and back with a heavy container on their backs. It also made me realise that a little money (by our standards) goes a very long way in Christian Aid's hands.

With our fund raising, Christian Aid can help more communities build resilience against drought but this alone is not enough. We, in the developed world must also accept our responsibility for these changes in our climate and must address the causes of climate change before it's too late.

If you would like to know more about Christian Aid's work in Ethiopia I would be happy to come and talk to your church or organisation about the various projects I visited including one addressing gender inequality. Contact details: **Karen Fewster 0797 756 1567** or **karenfew@gmail.com**

Farnham ASSIST - *June Trantom*

Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to share with you our ongoing work at Farnham Assist and also to say how much we appreciate all the support we receive throughout the year from all the churches in Farnham. Farnham Assist has always been a partnership with the churches since its creation back in 2002 and thanks to you we have a strong team of volunteers who in many different ways reach out to the older members of our community offering friendship, a listening ear, transport to our events and support. Our **Praise and Worship Team** continues to lead monthly services in care homes across the town and the Gostrey Day Centre, now in the Memorial Hall, plus our regular **Silver Service** at The Spire Church and seasonal celebrations through the year. We have just launched our new hymn book that contains a wider selection of songs as we seek to keep the content of our services relevant and fresh. This is an important aspect of our work as a Christian organisation giving residents and staff the opportunity in their day to pause to worship together, pray and reflect on God's word.

Our work can only be sustained if we have the finance to cover the bills and we have continued to be blessed with generous donors from individuals, trust funds, community groups in the town and through support for our fundraising events. We do receive a small grant each year from Waverley Borough Council as we work to fulfil their priorities identified in their Health and Well-Being Strategy. We receive referrals for our services from GPs, social workers, Age UK, health professionals based at both Frimley Park Hospital and the Royal Surrey, as well as family members who don't live locally, but are concerned for older relatives living alone. On average we are supporting 350 individuals at any one time. The level of support will vary from attending activities and outings to a regular visit from one of our **befriending team** who commit to visit the housebound. The technological age can seem bewildering for those didn't grow up with iPads and wifi so our **One-to-One Computer Tuition** continues to attract new clients and we now promote our support with mobile phones too.

One of the areas we are exploring currently, as a new development for 2020, is linking with clubs and groups that promote physical health, so that we can help those who are not currently accessing any form of exercise get to the activities on offer. If you are associated with such a group then please do contact us.

I am often asked how do I become member and join in with what you do? It's simple: just give us a call on **01252 717710** and we will do the rest. Each year we publish an Events Diary that lists in date order the whole programme for the year. If you would like a copy or can pass one on to someone who would benefit from what we do please contact us. June expressed her heartfelt thanks to all volunteer supporters at the meeting. She was now in her 6th year as coordinator of ASSIST. The biggest change she had noted over that time was the increasing reliance of the town and borough councils on the volunteer and faith sectors for work in this area.

Farnham Foodbank – *Rose Williamson*

The autumn term is a busy one at foodbank as we process donations and plan for Christmas. 19 of the local schools and multiple churches have kindly chosen to support us this Harvest time. Three tonnes of food have already come through the doors, all of which will be distributed to clients before the term is out. The demands on foodbank are not letting up. So far this year, we have seen a 20% increase in the number of referrals that we have received. The food donated has enabled us to meet that demand and will assist us through the eventful winter period.

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**. We kindly ask for these donations to be with us by the end of November as this allows us

time to process and distribute the items.

Although we have been well blessed with food supplies, we have found it more challenging to raise sufficient funds to support our work. As we head towards 2020 and beyond, we will be needing to seek an increase in financial giving.

Rose Williamson, our project manager of the last 8 years, will be moving on at the end of the year. The internal interview process is underway and we hope to be able to announce the name of the new manager shortly. We are truly grateful for your continued support as it is only through donations (food and monetary) and the time of volunteers that we are able to continue with our work.

FCCT – Ben Wills

2019 has been a quieter year for FCCT. With the busy-ness of the **2018 Rethink Week** of events, which saw churches in Farnham collaborate with the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics (OCCA) to bring a huge selection of missional events to the town, UCA and Weydon School, it was decided to take a break on big collaborative events for short period. The **Love in Action** event this summer saw some 150 people gather at Farnham Maltings to pray for our town and the projects that impact it. It was also decided that, due to the dwindling numbers at the events, a new focus maybe needed and that we would hold one large prayer event each year in the summer, and missional or training events in the Autumn/Winter of Spring.

This said, we have just hosted an event in collaboration with **CWR** and **Kintsugi HOPE** to open up conversations around topics that many find difficult, such as trusting in God when life is painful, dealing with anxiety and depression, learning to look after ourselves, developing our character, and living with thankful hearts even in tough seasons. It examined the strength in letting go of our need to be in control, as well as looking at how we can stop comparing ourselves to others and instead live authentically and honestly as we grow into the people God has created us to be. Then on Wednesday 13th November, we are joining with Michael Harvey from 'Back to Church Sunday' at St James Church Rowledge, to explore how to let God be the one who opens the doors, while we focus on the invitation this Christmas. Finally, looking to move into a small series of Rethink events around Easter 2020 once again in collaboration with OCCA.

There have also been a number of staffing changes this year with **Ben Wills** was appointed as Head of Operations of trust in January, **Mike Hitchins** (from Bethel Church) and **Alan Earwaker** (from Vineyard, Farnham Money Advice and Deputy Mayor) joining the team as trustees in September. We also wish to thank two wonderful people who have served FCCT superbly: **John Edwards** who stepped down as a trustee after 15 years in September, and **Rose Williamson** who is leaving the Foodbank as Project Leader in December after 8 years.

Signposts in Primary schools – Amber Delves

The Signposts team now visits 17 schools across the town for Christmas and Easter presentations, and carries out a Transition Tour in the summer for children about to move on to secondary school. Schools have indicated a need for emotional health support for children at this stage, and the team are in discussion with CAMHS (the NHS mental health service for children and adolescents) and child psychologists. Currently volunteers from 9 local churches participate in the Signposts team. Signposts coordinator **Amber Delves** would like to boost this number, and establish a Signposts Ambassador in each church in the area.

Cohesion in Secondary schools – from Ben Wills

Cohesion, our secondary schools work, have started a group for anyone involved in engaging the Youth in our town called '**Refresh**', meeting monthly to share ideas, testimonies and encouragement. The point of contact for this is **John Marrow** of St Andrew's.

A Christian Union has recently been started at Weydon School, with support from Cohesion; attendance was 17 at the most recent meeting.

Friends Together Bereavement support – Yvonne Bryant

Friends Together Bereavement Support continue to meet at the Spire Cafe and have started to hold their regular meeting in the evening each week, see younger people or working people attracted to the group. The challenge here continues to be the volunteer pool and regular numbers of guests, but the team are trusting that God brings who needs to come and are seeing some wonderful conversations and opportunities to show God's love.

Farnham Money Advice – from Ben Wills

Farnham Money Advice saw **Terry Heath** step down as the Project Leader due to poor health and **Alan Earwaker** step up to lead the team. They have moved their drop-in clinics to Fridays at the Vineyard Centre with Foodbank and are seeing fruit from this collaboration. The challenge here is getting the word out and letting people know they are there, and a safe, accredited and qualified place to turn when debt, budgeting or money advice is needed.

Open the Book

This initiative involves the enactment of Bible Stories in costume in schools, using material from the Bible Society. A team of 8 currently provides fortnightly presentations at Folly Hill and Badshot Lea schools. This initiative has been running for 5 years. A new team will start an 'Open the Book' programme at Tilford School in November.

Farnham Filling Station – *Raphe Palmer*

This is the Farnham Filling Station's (FFS) first report to the Churches Together Farnham meeting and so it is good to give some background. FFS is part of The Filling Station network which is an international non-denominational Christian Charity which started in the UK. Its main purpose is to provide a 'non-Church' space where Christians can meet to be filled with the Holy Spirit, hence its name! The fruit has been to strengthen the faith of attendees and so to build up the churches where they belong. It is inevitably evangelistic but does not seek to act as or replace church.

There are currently 91 meetings taking place each month in Britain, with some 4,900 people attending. The first meeting was at Box, Wiltshire in March 2006 and the second in 2009. New meetings have started recently in Aviemore, Scotland; Rotherham, South Yorkshire; Bardney, Lincolnshire and Aldridge, West Midlands. It now has a global presence with meetings in Bulgaria, France, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA.

Farnham Filling Station was one of the earliest Filling Stations to be established and first met in February 2011. It has met monthly ever since (with breaks for holiday periods) and provides the 'non-Church' space for those seeking to worship and learn more about God, to experience His power in our lives and to be ministered to by the Holy Spirit. We have had a wide range of external speakers who have brought different, but always interesting and challenging perspectives. The host team currently consists of **Malcolm & Michelle Beach, Mary & Richard Haines, Raphe and Julia Palmer** and **Jane & Martin Quicke** with input greatly appreciated from **John Cleden** on keyboard and others who generously contributed cakes, biscuits and other refreshments! FFS meets on the third Friday of every month at 7.30pm in the Garden Room at Farnham Museum.

Points of discussion

Arrangements for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2020 and 2021:

Revd. Michael Hopkins offered to host the Unity Service for 2020 at the **Spire Church**. The offer was gratefully accepted. The service will be at 4 pm on **Sun 19th January 2020**, followed by refreshments courtesy of the Spire Church.

Fr. Niven Richardson offered to host the 2021 service at **St Joan's**. This offer was also gratefully accepted.

The awkward timing of the Week of Prayer – mid January, often necessitating arrangements to be made just before Christmas – was noted. Pentecost was a possible alternative – but the week of prayer would then clash with the 'Thy Kingdom Come' initiative. Fr. Niven proposed a simpler solution – to hold the Week of Prayer one week later in January, to allow more time for planning in the New Year. It was agreed to adopt this idea for 2021.

Expansion of CTF Mailing List, and of CTF Steering Committee.

The recent Data Protection Act had resulted in the CTF Directory being pruned to contain contact details only for those people and offices which were publicly available (eg ministers and church offices). Most CTF 'Representatives' had therefore been removed. A request for inclusion would satisfy the requirements of the Act and so could be implemented immediately. Anyone wishing to be added to the Directory, or to the mailing list for the CTF Newsletter, was invited to contact Mary Clarke.

Volunteers to join the CTF Steering Committee were sought. **Yvonne Fairlamb** indicated she would consider joining; but, after the meeting, concluded that it would not be practicable for her to take this on.

Update on Spire and Pilgrim projects – *Revd Michael Hopkins*

Michael updated the meeting on the responsibilities that he and **Revd. Philip Simpkins** shared for other URC and Methodist churches in the area, in addition to the Spire Church. The Spire Church initiative, combining the Farnham Methodist and Farnham United Reformed churches, started in Sept 2018 and since then combined services have been held on alternate weeks in the URC and Methodist church buildings.

The Pilgrim project is a major refurbishment of the complex of buildings on the URC site. It involves a new arrangement of halls and rooms all on one floor, with new entrance on the north side of the sanctuary. The aim is to increase the accessibility and suitability of these spaces to community groups (the current facilities are already used by 34 groups). A planning decision for the scheme is anticipated in December.

The meeting closed with The Grace, and was followed by refreshments kindly served by volunteers from Badshot Lea and Hale.

Andrew Partridge (Secretary)