



Churches Together in Fordingbridge and District
Minutes of the General Meeting
held on Thursday 10th October 2024 at 7pm
at the Salvation Army Hall, Roundhill, Fordingbridge

Present: Julian Sims (Chair),
Mike French, Dale Kratzke, Mike Shrubsole, Paul Williams,
Mary Adams, David Baifs, Sheilah Collis, Rachel Edwards, Tim Edwards,
Jeremy Houghton-Brown, David Williams

1. Opening Prayer

Paul Williams opened in prayer.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Alderholt Chapel who have decided to withdraw from Churches Together in Fordingbridge & District. Apologies were also received from Pat Bloomfield (chair of The Chosen sub-committee).

3. Report on recent years

The Chair summarised the 2021 – 2024 events (appendix 1) adding that during this time both Fordingbridge Methodist Church and Frogham Congregational Church have closed, and Fordingbridge United Reformed Church will close in the New Year.

4. Finance update

The Statement of Account 1st Aug 2020 to 31st Aug 2024 (appendix 2) was circulated. The Chair reported that donations from the 2022 Easter Play went to the Ukraine Appeal. All other income and expenditure over the past four years related to the screening of the film series The Chosen at Fordingbridge Town Hall and insurance costs. The balance on 30th Sept 2024 was £1,548.38, with £629.83 being the Holiday @ Home balance and the remainder allocated to costs associated with showing The Chosen series 2 in 2025. There are no regular CTIFD contributions from member churches currently.

5. Election of Officers

Chair – Julian Sims will continue as Chair until after the Unity Service in January 2025

Secretary – Rachel Edwards was elected as secretary

Treasurer – Julian Sims to ask the sub-committee treasurer for The Chosen if she wishes to take on this role. **Action: Julian Sims**

6. Proposed Plans for the future

Sat 16 th Nov 2024	The Chosen: a Pre-Christmas Two Films Special “The Shepherd” and “The Messengers” (Town Hall) **Christmas Special**
Fri 29 th Nov 2024	Fordingbridge Christmas Lights Switch On (Town Event)
Fri 3 rd Jan & Sun 5 th Jan 2025	The Greatest Gift Nativity Play by J. Houghton-Brown (Town Hall) Shows at 6pm on Fri 3 rd Jan & 3pm on Sun 5 th Jan 2025
18 th – 25 th Jan 25	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
Sun 19 th Jan 2025	Service of Christian Unity (St Mary’s Church, Fordingbridge)
Sat 15 th Feb 2025	The Chosen Series 2 Episode 1: Thunder (Town Hall)
Fri 7 th Mar 2025 (First Friday in March)	World Day of Prayer (Our Lady of Sorrows & St Philips Catholic Church) - Prepared by a group of Christian women from the Cook Islands “I made you wonderful” Psalm 139:14
Sat 15 th Mar 2025	The Chosen Series 2 Episode 2: I saw you (Town Hall)
Fri 18 th Apr 2025	Good Friday Walk of Witness – walking from St Mary’s / Our Lady of Sorrows for a short service outside the Town Hall and putting up the cross. Followed by The Chosen: Series 2 Episode 3: Matthew 4:24
Sat 17 th May 2025	The Chosen Series 2 Episode 4: The Perfect Opportunity (Town Hall)
29 May – 8 Jun 25	Thy Kingdom Come CTIFD prayer meetings
Sat 14 th Jun 2025	The Chosen Series 2 Episode 5: Spirit (Town Hall)
Sat 12 th July 2025	The Chosen Series 2 Episode 6: Unlawful (Town Hall)
Sat 20 th Sept 2025	The Chosen Series 2 Episode 7: Reckoning (Town Hall)
Sat 11 th Oct 2025	The Chosen Series 2 Episode 8: Beyond Mountains (Town Hall)
Sat 15 th Nov 2025	The Chosen: A Christmas Special (Town Hall)
TBD	CTIFD Youth Alpha course

7. Discussion

Closure of Fordingbridge United Reformed Church

Mike Shrubsole (URC Minister) spoke of the Fordingbridge URC’s decision to close, reporting that Sunday morning worship will continue on the 1st and 3rd Sunday each month until the Carol Service on 15th December 2024. This would be the last normal Sunday act of worship. **A celebratory thanksgiving service will be held at 3pm on Sunday 19th January 2025** to bring the life of the church to a close (the same day as the Service of Christian Unity in the morning). All building hirers and user groups have been given notice to quit by 31st December 2024. David Williams thought it a tragedy for the URC to close for Christian worship and said his prayer is that somehow a new vibrant Christian presence could be born here, noting the church’s strategic position in the town. Paul Williams (NLCC Pastor) has written to the Wessex Synod with a view to leasing the building but has not yet received a response.

Fordingbridge Foodbank

David Williams (Foodbank Manager) reported that the foodbank has been operating from the URC building three times a week since 2015 and supports many people. Ringwood Foodbank pays for an advisor from Citizens Advice to attend on Wednesdays and Fridays to further support their clients. The foodbank is urgently looking for new premises in Fordingbridge but finding it difficult to find somewhere with storage space.

Tim Edwards asked what it would take for the URC closure decision to be reversed. Mike Shrubsole replied that the church needs a secretary and treasurer in order to continue but has neither.

Tim Edwards thought that communication between and from the churches could be improved. He noted that three different churches run pre-school age children's groups on Friday mornings. Mike French (Salvation Army Minister) responded that the timing is often due to the availability of venues and people and all three Friday morning children's groups are well attended. **Action: Rachel Edwards to circulate weekly timetables of events (see appendices 3 & 4) and continue to build the new website and Facebook page.** <https://together.ourchurchweb.org.uk/fordingbridge/>
<https://www.facebook.com/ChurchesTogetherInFordingbridgeDistrict>

The meeting discussed advertising this year's Christmas Services in The Ringwood and Fordingbridge News. Julian Sims suggested Avon Valley Churches pay for an advert and invoice other CTIFD churches for their share. **Action: Rachel Edwards to co-ordinate, with help from AVC & NLCC (deadline for print: 18 November 2024)**

8. Notices from Churches

- St Mary's Fordingbridge Christmas Fayre is on Sat 23rd Nov from 10:30am to 12:30pm.
- The Salvation Army Fordingbridge launch their Christmas present appeal later this month and asked for support from the churches.
- The Branch (run by NLCC) is moving from a retail space into a Café Space this Autumn and is looking to recruit a part time Branch Café Manager. They will also be open an extra day in the week (Thursdays) and working alongside a well-established Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) team in the area, so that their team of volunteers can signpost individuals and families to support they need.

9. Closing prayer

The meeting closed with a time of prayer, followed by the saying of The Grace together.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 30th January at 7pm at Fordingbridge Salvation Army Hall

APPENDIX 1
CHURCHES TOGETHER IN FORDINGBRIDGE AND DISTRICT
Report on 2021 – 2024 Events

2021

Heavily affected by Covid

Prayer Diary – Distributed by email at no cost

2022

23 January 2022 – Unity Service (Burgate)

15 April 2022 – Easter Story (in St Mary's Church due to weather) (Ukraine donations)

20 December 2022 – Christmas Story (St Mary's Church)

Prayer Diary – Distributed by email at no cost

2023

22 January 2023 – Unity Service (Burgate)

7 April 2023 – Walk of Witness

24 May 2023 – Facebook page started:

<https://www.facebook.com/ChurchesTogetherInFordingbridgeDistrict>

15 July 2023 – Astonishing Acts (outside St Mary's Church)

Prayer Diary – Distributed by email at no cost

2024

21 January 2024 – Unity Service (Burgate)

29 March 2024 – Walk of Witness

March onwards – Series 1 of The Chosen (Fordingbridge Town Hall)

18 May 2024 – Thy Kingdom Come prayer meeting (St Mary's Church)

Oct 2024 – Website updated & made live: <https://together.ourchurchweb.org.uk/fordingbridge/>

Prayer Diary – Distributed by email at no cost

APPENDIX 2
CHURCHES TOGETHER IN FORDINGBRIDGE AND DISTRICT
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT – PERIOD 1/8/2020 TO 31/09/2024

Opening Balance @ 1 st August		1,176.33
(Holiday @ Home Balance £629.83)		
INCOME		
Easter Play donations (net)	598.90	
The Chosen donations for 2024	797.70	
The Chosen grants for 2025	850.00	
The Chosen refreshments donations	<u>298.10</u>	
		<u>2,544.70</u>
EXPENDITURE		
Donation to Ukraine appeal	598.90	
The Chosen Town Hall Hire	535.50	
The Chosen Refreshments	202.28	
The Chosen Publicity	262.20	
The Chosen Miscellaneous costs	13.29	
Insurance 2021	133.66	
Insurance 2022	136.43	
Insurance 2023	143.66	
Insurance 2024	<u>146.73</u>	
		<u>2,172.65</u>
<u>Surplus for period</u>		372.05
<u>Bank and Cash Balance at 30th September 2024</u>		<u>1,548.38</u>

APPENDIX 3 – MAIN TIMETABLE (SEE ALSO APPENDIX 4 FOR CHILDREN’S GROUPS)

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Mon	Forest Edge Café @ Alderholt Reading Rooms		Makaton Awareness @ Salvation Army
Tue	Forest Edge Café @ Alderholt Reading Rooms AVCM Friendship Group @Ship Inn (1 st & 3 rd Tues)	NLCC Game On (Board Games) @ The Branch Mothers’ Union @ Hyde	SEN Parent Support @Salvation Army (1 st Tues) AVCM Miscarriage Support @Avonway (Wk3)
Wed	Forest Edge Café @ Alderholt Reading Rooms NLCC Community Coffee @ The Branch		Needlecraft Group @St James (2 nd & 4 th Wed) 7pm NLCC Prayer at The Branch (1 st Wed)
Thurs		Tea Stop @ URC	
Fri		Avonway Friends on Fridays – Free lunch, Fairshare Bus, Advice on housing & benefits Fairtrade Coffee Morning at St. Boniface + CAMEO @ Woodgreen Village Hall (Come And Meet Each Other) (all on last Fri of month)	AVCM Storytelling (3 rd Fri)
Sat			6pm Our Lady of Sorrows Saturday Vigil
Sun	8am St James Holy Communion 8.15am AVC Holy Communion 9am onwards – various services	Craft @ URC 3pm - once a month	5pm St James, Alderholt - Evensong (wk4) 6pm Sal. Army REFRESH worship (wk1) 6pm Salvation Army Sunday Service 6pm St Mary’s FB Six O’Clock Service (wk1) 6pm St Mary’s FB Sung Evensong (wk4)
Hols			

Avon Valley Churches & Avon Valley Community Matters
New Life Community Church, Fordingbridge
Our Lady of Sorrows, Fordingbridge

SERVICES
* CHILDREN
Fordingbridge United Reformed Church

Salvation Army Fordingbridge
St James’ Church, Alderholt
Western Downlands Churches

APPENDIX 4 - CHILDREN'S TIMETABLE

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Mon	* Tea & Play Toddler Group @ Salvation Army	* Music Hangout @ Salvation Army * Messy Church @ Hyde (2 nd Mon) * Brownies @ St James Church	
Tue	* Wild Things at Breamore Primary School		* Beavers @ St James' Church
Wed			
Thurs		* Rainbows @ St James Church * Youth Space (Years 5&6) @ Salvation Army * Youth Space (Years 7&8) @ Salvation Army	* Cubs @ St James' Church
Fri	* NLCC Little Buds New Parent @ The Branch * Tea & Play Toddler Group @ Salvation Army * Superstars Playgroup @ St Mary's Church Hall		* Guides @ St James' Church
Sat		* AVCM Building Together @St Mary's Church Hall LEGO Brick building, construction toys (3 rd Sat bi-monthly)	
Sun	* 9.30am Family Church @ Salvation Army * 10am Allsorts @ St Mary's Fordingbridge (wk1) * 10am Messy Church in Alderholt Village Hall with St James Church (wk 3) * 11am Tea & Play Toddler Group for Men @ Salvation Army		* 7pm NLCC Youth @ The Branch (3 rd Sun)
Hols	* NLCC Breakfast Club & Craft @ The Branch * August Summer Holiday Club @ Sally Army	* AVCM Picnics, Craft &Activities @St Mary's	