

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN KETTERING AND DISTRICT FULL COUNCIL

Meeting held on Tuesday 8th March 2016 at Fuller Church Rooms

- PRESENT:** Jane Calcott (Vice President in the chair), Rev John Aldwinckle, Jane Attwood, Pam Chandler, Gillian Court, Michael Cunningham, Jill Dove, Ian Hames, Adrian Horner, Neil Humphrey, Prosper Kuveya, Rev David Milner, Sylvia Pitts, Tony Roberts, Rev Samuel Silungwe, Andy Sipple, Rev Laura Staves, Rev Peter Strong, David Tinkler, Steve Toseland and Hilary Yates.
- ALSO PRESENT:** Livia Cooke (Safe Families for Children)
- APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Rev Rob Bewley, Deacon Fiona de Boltz, Rev Tony de Boltz, Major Paul Doust, Fr Andrew Dutton, Pat Edkins, Janet Glover, Malcolm Glover, Canon John Koenig, Eleanor Patrick and Rev Helen Wakefield-Carr.
- Devotions:** Jane C opened the meeting by reading Luke 22:54-62 on the events following the arrest of Jesus and with prayer. With Holy Week approaching she noted that the glance Jesus gave Peter after his three-time denial was the same glance he gave us from the cross, calling us to repentance and conversion – to sorrow and to hope.
- Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17th November 2015, as circulated at the meeting, were accepted as a correct record and signed by Jane.
- Matters Arising:** **Review of the Constitution:** It was noted that it had been decided to roll forward the constitution for up to three years, with a review to be triggered by the issue of a revised model by Churches Together in England. A new model had recently been issued and it was **AGREED** to request the Executive to undertake the review in consultation with the Ecumenical Development Officer and to report back to the AGM.
- Safe Families for Children:** Livia Cooke, Community Volunteers Coordinator for Safe Families for Children, was welcomed to the meeting. Livia began by explaining the origins of the charity in the US when a Pastor found that there was no help available for a desperate parent needing respite whose children were neither abused nor neglected. The charity had now spread to the UK with adaptations to comply with the different regulatory framework. Following a successful trial period working with Northamptonshire County Council in Northampton, the Council had now agreed to expand the charity's role to more districts, including Kettering, with referrals of families in need to begin in May or June this year. There was therefore an urgent need to recruit and train volunteers. There were three volunteer roles (i) Resource Friend: these were people prepared to support a family through the

provision of goods and services, such as gardening or DIY with limited or no contact with the family; (ii) Family Friend: Who were willing to spend an hour a week as someone for the parent(s) to talk to; and (iii) Host Family: who were prepared to look after the children for short periods, say an afternoon or a weekend. Livia noted that this role was often taken by people considering fostering. All the volunteers were part of a network surrounding the family with support also for the volunteers. All volunteers needed to complete DBS vetting, be trained and assessed before working with families. Livia appealed for the opportunity to address congregations for 3 – 5 minutes to introduce the charity. In discussion, she explained that the families referred for help all signed a consent form noting that the volunteers were Christians and that the children would take part in usual Family Friend activities, such as attending church. She would welcome invitations to talk at meetings of church groups or church services. She had a shared office in Northampton as well as at the charity's office in Nottingham. Livia can be contacted at liviacooke@safefamiliesforchildren.com or at Safe Families for Children, 21 Eldon Business Park, Eldon Road, Chilwell, NG9 6DZ or by telephone on 0115 922 7593.

Good Friday:

David T reported that the usual arrangements would apply for the Walks of Witness and Toller URC would provide the PA system for the Open Air Service. Those attending the service would be asked to ensure that a path around the crowd was kept open. Seating within the church would be available during the service for those unable to stand. Laura would preach and Fiona would introduce the service. Toller URC had agreed to provide the 600 service sheets as usual. Peter reported that the Salvation Army Band would attend, and had agreed the hymn selection. Rob would compose and lead the prayers. Copies of the Good Friday poster (previously circulated by email) and Holy Week posters were available for collection. Andy reminded churches to let him have details of Holy Week and Easter services if they wanted them posted on the website.

Kettfest 1 -3 July 2016:

Jane C reported that she had met with one of the organisers for this year's Kettfest to discuss ways in which churches could increase their participation. Publicity material for the Festival was due to be printed and so decisions were urgent. Ideas included

- a prayer walk similar to that held for the Olympic Torch relay, with prayers on ribbons tied to railings (subject to Borough Council approval)
- a Bible story for children with parts in different churches in the town centre
- each church presenting an historical fact for use in publicity
- a large fabric 'thought for the day' for people to write on in churches
- simultaneous prayer in all churches and other places of worship
- performances on the frontages of Fuller and Toller Churches

In discussion it was suggested that

- (i) the Ecumenical Affairs Group organise a Prayer Walk for 1st July, and the possibility of others, for example Rockingham Road Baptists and All Saints organising one for the north of the town, be explored;
- (ii) the Fuller Heritage Room be open during the Festival
- (iii) Fuller Baptists and Toller URC be approached about the possibility of arranging the fabric prayer strips in those churches

Inter-Faith Forum Update:

A report had been circulated with the agenda noting that agreement in principle to establish an Interfaith Forum had been given by representatives of the local Jewish, Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu and Baha'i communities, with a positive response also expected from the Muslims. It was **AGREED** that

- (i) a meeting be convened to be attended by one representative of each of the faiths to make recommendations on the constitution of the Forum and its operation
- (ii) subject to availability, our representative be our President, Fiona
- (iii) the Kettering Council Executive member with responsibility for communities, Cllr Thurland, be asked to chair the meeting at the Council Offices
- (iv) we offer to clerk the meeting
- (v) a report be submitted to the next meeting on the recommendations that result.

Christmas Day Lunch: Feedback and Enhancement:

Adrian paid tribute to the work of Central Methodist Church in hosting the lunch over many years. He reported that 65 guests had attended Eden Centre for the meal on Christmas day, with an additional 35 helpers also having been fed. Volunteers had come from members of local churches plus a number from the wider Kettering community including several carers who came with their 'clients'. Significant donations were received from local businesses and others. Open Door Church was happy to host the event again this year.

Adrian noted that there would be some people who were unable to attend the venue, because of frailty or disability, and, with the support of the churches, they would like to offer to deliver the meals to them in their homes in foil containers. This would need volunteers to make the deliveries and spend some time with the people served. Churches would also be asked to nominate people to receive the deliveries as well as finding deliverers. This proposal was supported at the meeting.

East Kettering Liaison Forum:

A report had been circulated with the agenda noting that there was a vacancy on the Forum following the resignation of our long standing

representative. It was reported that a nomination may be forthcoming from a member of Christ the King Church and it was **AGREED** that the appointment of the new representative be delegated to the Secretary in consultation with the chair if a nomination is received from a member church.

Christian Aid update:

David M reported that the totals raised through Christian Aid Week 2015 had been

Church collections £1,065

House to house £8,050

Other fund raising by churches £1,336

Since Christian Aid Week to end of year there had been the following receipts

Soup and mosquito drive £242

Christmas appeal one church almost £800

Another £30

Carol singing £154

This year's Quiz Aid was to be held on Friday, 13 May before the start of Christian Aid Week that would run from 15 – 21 May.

Permission had been received to undertake a collection at Kettering Tesco Extra on Thursday 26 May, and a poster had gone to all church reps asking for volunteers to collect there for 1 hour.

There would again be Carol singing at Toller URC on Saturday 8 December and more volunteer singers were needed (especially sopranos as there had been only one last year).

David asked for people to do their utmost to raise awareness of Christian Aid in their church and encourage people to volunteer as collectors.

He noted that good audio-visual and other materials have been sent to each church representative and he recommended their use.

Refugee Crisis Update:

A message from John Conway, the Head of Housing at Kettering Borough Council, was circulated at the meeting with a letter from Northamptonshire County Council to Borough and District Chief Executives. John had noted that since he had informed the churches that the Borough Council was willing to accept up to 10 refugees from Syria under the Government's Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, the County Council had decided that it was unable to meet the costs that would fall to it for schooling, social care and other services. The County Council had also noted that it had the highest number of unaccompanied children seeking asylum. In discussion it was **AGREED** that a letter be sent to the County Council expressing disappointment at the decision not to participate in the resettlement scheme.

St Jude's update: Jane C reported that premises had yet to be found to re-establish the homeless drop-in service, although the former premises in Northampton Road that they had been required to vacate were still unused. The FoodBank was continuing to operate from Praise Community Church on Tuesdays and Wednesdays 9 am to 12 noon and on Thursday evenings, with storage at Desborough URC. Jane reported that in 2015, 541 adults and 499 children had been served, many on more than one occasion as delays in processing benefit claims left people without enough money for food over extended periods. 20 tonnes of supplies had been received and 16 – 17 tonnes distributed. She reported that the biggest need currently was for cash donations so that vouchers could be purchased to enable those served to buy fresh food and to meet running costs. Regular contributions would be particularly welcome, and the charity's bank details were available from the Treasurer, Tony Stone.

Bible Sharing for Lent: Peter reported that the Lent sessions at All Saints had been going well, with attendance at each of the three evenings held so far having been between 11 and 20 from 8 churches, and with a different leader at each. Laura was to lead the fourth event the following Thursday with the last to be held on 17 March.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity feedback: The good attendance at the service was noted and that it had been well received by those present. Thanks were expressed to the organisers and to those responsible for the refreshments afterwards. It was **AGREED** to consult Fiona before deciding on a venue for next year.

Kettering AlterNativity 26 November 2016: Jane C noted that the charities participating last year had been asked if they wanted the event to be staged again and for their ideas for its improvement. The feedback had been positive, despite the disappointing totals raised and some useful suggestions had been made which would be adopted, including having a Father Christmas and a craft area for children. The help needed from churches in publicising the event was emphasised and it was agreed to produce a short item for inclusion in church magazines etc.

Communications: A report containing the annual review of communications had been circulated with the agenda. It was noted that the number of visitors to the website looking for Christmas Service details had increased significantly, while the number of churches submitting details had declined. The success of the Facebook group was highlighted and encouragement given to those who had yet to join to apply.

Appointment to Homelessness Forum: It was reported that the Borough Council had requested a nomination to join a new Homelessness Forum. It was noted that Jane C had served on the Homelessness Prevention Partnership prior to its dissolution and it

was **AGREED** to appoint her to the new body.

- Hustings for the EU Referendum:** It was reported that the Ecumenical Affairs Group had requested consideration of the organisation of a hustings for the referendum once the lead campaign groups for each outcome had been designated. In discussion it was recognised that the issue was of great significance and that role of Chair in any hustings was crucial. The organisation of a hustings was **AGREED** subject to suitable arrangements being possible.
- ‘Advent Calendar’:** Laura noted that Wellingborough organised an ‘advent calendar’ in which a different location was chosen each evening in December for a performance or an exhibition etc. and suggested that it was something worth exploring, if not for 2016 then for 2017.
- Accommodation Concern:** Laura noted that Accommodation Concern had originated from Churches Together 20 years ago and retained its Christian ethos. The charity was experiencing funding worries and she asked for prayers.
- Feeding the Hungry:** Adrian noted the work being done by the ‘soup kitchen’ at Ss Peter & Paul on Thursdays and by The Hub at Open Door Church on Mondays where around 30 people were fed each week. He suggested that as public funding for projects declined because of reducing budgets, the usage of these services was likely to increase and it may be necessary to seek more volunteers to assist to meet the demand.
- Street Kids:** Adrian reported that at the request of the police, a new facility for children aged 13 – 17 years had been opened at Open Door Church on Friday evenings from 7:30 – 9:30 pm. Attendance was now around 75 at each session and there was a need for more volunteers who were used to street kids to help out. Volunteers were asked to contact the Open Door office at odk.admin@googlemail.com or on (01536) 484800.
- Release International:** Adrian reported that Open Door Church would be hosting an open evening at Fiona’s suggestion for the charity (that seeks to serve the persecuted church around the world) on 13 April featuring a Christian Sri Lankan judge and the experience of persecution in that country.
- Sunday Trading:** Ian noted that the House of Commons was to vote on the possible extension of Sunday trading hours the next day, and asked for prayers.
- Close:** The meeting closed at 8.50 pm with prayer led by Prosper.

Signed..... Date.....