

# Churches Together in Newport Pagnell

## Forum

### Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 12 June 2014

**Present:** Betty Course, Les Driver, Rev Michael Godfrey, Mary Howard, David Icke, Beth Mackay (Secretary), Geoff Morris, Linda Morris, Kimonie Nicholls, Sam Potts, Gerald Ramsay, Rev Deacon Klaus Reidel, Rev Canon John Robertson, Chris Row, Linda Row, Nita Tolley, Paul Tolley (Treasurer), Bill Watson, Chris Watson, Neville Watson, Paulona Wong

#### 1. **Opening prayers**

The meeting opened with a Bible reading, reflection and prayers led by Klaus Reidel.

#### 2. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Keith Bedford, Father James Evans, Lisa Huckle, Pat Hudson, Rev Jenny Mills, Pat Parker, Rev John Reardon, Molly Reardon, Hazel Reynolds, Jill Walker,

#### 3. **Minutes of the last Forum meeting**

The minutes were agreed and signed.

#### 4. **Matters arising**

##### 4.1 Mending the Gap: noted that there was nothing further to report on this at the moment.

#### 5. **Vacancies on Executive**

##### 5.1 Noted that Beth MacKay was now officially standing down as Secretary having served six years. No nominations were received for the posts of Secretary or President. Members of the Forum were asked to keep looking for volunteers from their churches and in the meantime, the vacant roles would have to be covered by members of the Executive on a rotational basis.

##### 5.2 It was also noted that Paul Tolley's term of office as Treasurer is due to expire in June 2015 so a replacement Treasurer will need to be found before then.

#### 6. **Treasurer's report**

Paul Tolley presented his report. The accounts showed a credit balance of £1891.87 of which £1185.62 was being held for the Holiday Club and £100 was ringfenced for any future 'Mending the Gap' activities. Paul said that the remaining balance should be sufficient to meet requirements up to the end of the year. Klaus thanked Paul for his work on the accounts.

#### 7. **Working group reports**

Detailed written reports from each of the working groups had been circulated prior to the meeting and the following additional points were noted in discussion.

##### 7.1 **Ministers group**

Michael stressed that he hoped people from the churches would engage with the CoMPass courses run by the Mission Partnership. He also reminded CTNP that, following his retirement in October, the remaining Anglican clergy would be very stretched. Members of the Forum

thanked Michael warmly for his contributions to CTNP over the last six years and wished him well in his retirement.

## 7.2 Mission group

**(a) Good Friday open air service:** Although it was agreed that this had been a success, there was some discussion and disagreement amongst members of Forum about the appropriateness of two of the chosen hymns. It was agreed that the ministers should take responsibility for approving the hymns in advance and that alternative formats such as passion plays should also be considered for future years.

**(b) Lent course:** There was some discussion about whether CTNP should run a Lent course again next year as numbers had fallen considerably this year. Some of the churches run their own study groups and people are reluctant to leave these for the Lent period. Online courses were suggested as an alternative although the value of face-to-face study was also recognised. One of the questions asked was what is the point of the Lent groups? Are they to bring people of different churches together? Or are they purely for study? It was agreed that these issues should be explored further by the Executive.

**(c) Future of the Mission Group:** Pat Hudson was unable to attend the Forum and, as stated in the report, was now retiring from CTNP after 30 years' service. Pat has held many roles over the years – Chair, Treasurer and Chair of Mission Group – and her input will be sorely missed. She was warmly thanked by Klaus and other members of Forum in her absence. Hazel Reynolds will be replacing Pat as Anglican rep on the Mission Group and, instead of having a dedicated chairperson/leader, it is intended that members of the group will each take responsibility for organising individual events. During the Forum discussion it was suggested that the Mission Group should in future be seen more as a **commissioning** group rather than a task group and that there should be more distribution of tasks to the wider CTNP community.

Michael said that there were three key areas of mission that CTNP needed to focus on and resources should be channelled accordingly:

- Homeless (winter night shelter at Lovat Hall)
- Children and young people (holiday club and Mending the Gap)
- Elderly (Dementia Friends).

## 7.3 Communications group

Neville Watson was welcomed to his first Forum as Chair of the Communications Group. The group now has representatives from each of the churches. These are: Eva Bangle (URC); Ian Palmer (Methodist); Keith Bedford (Baptist); Mary Howard (St Bede's); Hazel Reynolds (St Peter & St Paul); Beth MacKay (St Luke's); Paulona Wong (Chinese Church). Neville thanked these representatives for their willingness to be part of the group. The aims of the group are detailed in the report and Neville stressed that it is to be an active discussion group and open to new ideas. He encouraged feedback on current publications and communication strategies.

## 7.4 Christian Aid group

Pat Parker was unable to be at the Forum but had submitted her report which gave details of the money raised from the Lent lunches and from the Christian Aid week collections. As in previous years there had been a shortage of collectors and it wasn't possible to cover every street but the money raised was still an increase on last year.

A discussion had taken place at the May Executive meeting about a new Christian Aid project in Kenya which focuses on improving maternal healthcare in Narok County in south west Kenya. Churches are being asked to commit to raising £5,000 over two and a half years and the EEC will match and triple this so that each £5k becomes £20k. It was noted that in order to be eligible for the EEC funding, the money raised must be from **new** fundraising initiatives

and not from ones that already exist (e.g. the Lent lunches or annual house-to-house collections). A task group would need to be formed to work on this and Nita Tolley and Beth MacKay offered to be part of this group. Following discussion the Forum gave approval for CTNP to take part in this fundraising initiative.

#### **7.5 Emergency Help Scheme**

Nita Tolley had given full details of the scheme's activities in the report and reminded members of the Forum that the annual garden party would be held on 12<sup>th</sup> July and all were welcome.

#### **8. Holiday Club**

Geoff Morris reported that preparations for the holiday club were going well and lots of volunteer helpers had come forward from the churches.

#### **9. Dementia-friendly churches**

Michael Godfrey reported on recent training sessions run by Hazel Reynolds, a Dementia Friends Champion and an Alzheimer's Society volunteer. These had been well received within the Anglican churches and two additional sessions had been arranged for CTNP during July. Part of the training session was given over to considering the role of churches within a dementia-friendly community. A number of people present at the Forum had attended the earlier sessions and had found them very helpful.

#### **10. United services**

It was agreed that the ministers should decide whether or not to hold some kind of service in November to replace the traditional Covenant Renewal service which was no longer required.

#### **11. MK Mission Partnership**

The Forum welcomed Rev Canon John Robertson who had joined us to talk about recent developments in the MK Mission Partnership and its change in direction from being a sponsoring body to becoming primarily a mission-focussed organisation providing resources to enable Christians to become more confident in articulating and spreading their faith. John told the Forum about the next round of coMPass courses which would be running in the autumn. There would be five courses on different topics and people from any of the churches could enrol on one or more of these. There is a fee of £40 per course but bursaries are available from Mission Partnership if required.

John encouraged us all to look at the recently revamped website for full details of these courses, along with prayer and reflection resources and up-to-date information about mission activities and projects in the area. Michael said he hoped that people from the Newport Pagnell churches would engage with these resources and that CTNP might work more closely with the Mission Partnership on mission-focussed activities.

#### **12. Any other business**

Michael reminded the Forum that someone would need to replace him as CTNP rep on the Newport Pagnell Partnership. It was agreed to discuss at the next Executive meeting.

#### **13. Date of next Forum**

The next Forum was arranged for **Thursday, 15 January starting at 7.45pm** at the Methodist Church.