

Churches Together in Newport Pagnell

Forum/Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 25 June 2015

Present: Eva Bangle, Keith Bedford, Betty Course, Freda Driver, Les Driver, Mary Howard, David Icke, Beth Mackay (Secretary), Rev Jenny Mills, Geoff Morris, Linda Morris, Rev John Reardon, Molly Reardon, Deacon Klaus Reidel (Chair), Hazel Reynolds, Chris Row, Linda Row, Nita Tolley, Paul Tolley (Treasurer), Jill Walker, Bill Watson, Chris Watson, Neville Watson

1. Opening prayers

The meeting opened with a Bible reading and prayers led by Deacon Klaus Reidel. A minute's silence was observed in memory of the late Robin Marsh who had given faithful service to CTNP over many years and is greatly missed.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Graham Ghaleb, Kimonie Nichols, Rev Jack Walker

3. Minutes of the last Forum meeting

The minutes were agreed and signed.

4. Matters arising

4.1 Noted that Roger Hall has replaced Michael Godfrey as the CTNP rep on the Newport Pagnell Partnership.

4.2 Noted that the Forum planned for January 2015 was cancelled and the June Forum is the only one taking place in the current year. As the Constitution currently stipulates two per year, it was agreed that the churches should be asked for approval to amend this requirement in the Constitution to **one mandatory Forum per year**. The number of Executive meetings has also been reduced from four per year to two in keeping with the decision to make CTNP less committee based. **Beth said she would contact the churches about this.**

5. Vacancies on the Executive

No nominations were received for the offices of President, Treasurer or Secretary so Paul Tolley and Beth MacKay offered to continue for a further year as Treasurer and Secretary respectively i.e. until June 2016. The office of President remains as yet unfilled.

6. Treasurer's report

Paul Tolley presented his report which showed a credit balance of £1705.98, of which £1078.72 is being held for the Holiday Club and £100 is for the Burkina Faso project. The remaining £527.26 is general CTNP funds of which £100 is ringfenced for the 'Mending the Gap' work with young people. Paul told the Forum that he has not requested contributions from the churches this year as the remaining balance is expected to be sufficient to meet planned activities up to the end of the year.

Paul also gave an update on the Burkina Faso project and reported that the total raised so far is £1512. There is still some way to go to reach our target of £5000 by 31 March 2017 and Paul said that fundraising ideas and offers of help to plan events would be welcomed.

Paul was thanked for his work as Treasurer and for agreeing to continue for another year.

7. Working group reports

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

7.1 Ministers group (see report submitted by Klaus Reidel)

a) The ministers were happy to hear that Revd Nick Evans is taking up post as Rector and they look forward to working with him. Noted that Revd Mindy Bell is moving to Slough and Revd Nicola Martyn-Beck will be taking her place in September as Methodist minister here.

b) Noted that the ministers meet every Tuesday morning for prayer but also have quarterly business meetings to discuss current issues. A recent one focussed on social concerns e.g. people in serious difficulty because of changes to benefit system. The ministers want to explore this together and Jenny Mills wanted to raise this at the Forum to get a feel for whether CTNP would support them in principle. There was general agreement amongst those present at the Forum.

7.2 Mission group (see report submitted by Hazel Reynolds)

a) Lent groups: Noted disappointment from the Methodist and Baptist churches that there had been no interdenominational housegroups for Lent this year. This had been due to a decline in numbers – partly because of alternative Lent offerings in individual churches (e.g. Anglican Discovery Groups). The feeling at the Forum was that if this trend is to be reversed, individual churches would need to commit to actively encouraging members of study groups to consider giving up their regular group for Lent and taking part in the interdenominational groups. In response to the question, *what is the purpose of having interdenominational study groups?*, comments included : to build relationships in wider church; although not in itself a mission activity, this helps lay a good *foundation* for mission. There were varying views on the value of the York courses and it was agreed that, if going ahead with the groups, alternative resources should be explored. **Churches to report back to Hazel Reynolds by 5 October with views on commitment to supporting the CTNP study groups.**

b) Good Friday/Easter: Feedback about this year's service (inside the Parish Church due to adverse weather) had been mainly favourable, although most people (if not all) involved were church people. Discussion included the following comments: consider holding the service on a different day e.g. Easter Saturday; widen the content to cover the whole Easter story; widen the content to draw in some modern-day issues e.g. conflict and suffering in the Middle East; see if it might be possible to take over the 10.30am slot at the Parish Church which is currently used for a rather poorly attended family service and use it for a CTNP service instead. No decisions were reached but there was general agreement that it is important to have something on Good Friday and the procession is a witness to others that this is a special day for Christians. All agreed that the 'Love Won' Easter biscuit distribution on Easter Saturday morning on the High Street was a great success and worth repeating.

c) Membership: Noted that the Mission Group currently has very few members and therefore needs to be viewed more as a commissioning group rather than a task group. Additional helpers are therefore needed to help organise CTNP activities e.g. relating to Christmas/Lent/Easter. Contact Hazel Reynolds hazel_reynolds@hotmail.co.uk

7.3 Communications group (see report submitted by Neville Watson)

a) Christmas leaflet: Last year's Christmas story leaflet reached a wide audience via individual churches, school carol services, Christmas Lights event plus some targeted street distribution. It is hoped to do this again and Neville is currently working on a draft for discussion at the next Comms Group meeting on 29 July. Neville wants to recruit a team of

volunteers who are willing to do some leaflet dropping for a few hours in mid December. Proposed communication plans are to be put to the Executive for approval at its next meeting on 1 September.

b) Membership: Neville would like to widen the group of active members of the Comms group to include representatives from all the churches. Contact nevillefromnp@gmail.com to volunteer.

c) Website: Neville has done a lot of work on the CTNP website over the last year and it is updated regularly. He asked that people send him details of events as early as possible so that the website is maintained as a focal point of reference for CTNP and general church events.

7.4 Christian Aid group (see report submitted by Pat Parker)

It was agreed that, given the shortage of house-to-house collectors, this had been a good effort (£4327 from house collections and coffee morning), and the Lent lunches had once again been very popular and a great success raising a further £2078 for Christian Aid. (See also Treasurer's report for progress update on Burkina Faso fundraising project.)

7.5 Emergency Help Scheme (see report submitted by Nita Tolley)

The annual garden party/AGM takes place on 11 July and, as stated in the report, Nita will be standing down as Chair but will remain on the committee. Nita asked for prayer that a replacement Chair will be found as soon as possible. A job description is available and anyone interested is asked to contact Nita. Klaus thanked Nita for all she has done as Chair of the Scheme over the last few years.

8. CTNP Holiday Club

Jill Walker reported that planning for this year's holiday club (10-14 August) is well underway and there is a good mix of volunteer helpers from the churches. Additional volunteers are always welcome and if there are any First Aiders available to help, they would be particularly welcome. They wouldn't need to do anything else other than be available as a First Aider as and when required. Materials for junk modelling are also needed for the club. At the time of the Forum there were approx 100 children registered and by mid-July this had gone up to 130. Prayers are requested for everyone involved.

9. United services

The next united service will be a Songs of Praise service in mid-November. Date and other details will be confirmed later.

10. Any other business

10.1 Civil War Re-enactment: Geoff Morris told the Forum that there is to be an English Civil War re-enactment in Newport Pagnell on the weekend of the 2016 August Bank Holiday. Approx 5000 visitors are expected to come each day. Local schools are to be involved too. Could be a good opportunity for the churches to lay something on.

10.2 Food Bank: Geoff also reported that the number of food parcels given out by the MK Foodbank has gone down slightly this year but that the demand may increase again as a result of further planned changes to the benefit system. Geoff brought copies of a book, 'Sonnets and Small Pleasures' produced by John Marshall and Martin Small to raise funds for the Foodbank. Copies are on sale for £5 per copy.

10.3 Sound system: Volunteers will be needed to set up the sound system for CTNP Good Friday

service next year as Keith Bedford will be away. Keith was thanked for the way he has taken responsibility for the sound system at our open-air services for so many years.

- 10.4** **Mead Centre**: Jenny Mills told the Forum that the URC has received planning permission for the redevelopment of the Mead Centre. They now have to raise £660,000 over the next three years so all financial donations welcome!

11 **Date of next Forum**

The next Forum was arranged for **Thursday, 23rd June 2016 starting at 7.45pm** at the Methodist Church.

The meeting closed with The Grace.