

**Minutes of Churches Together meeting
Monday 10th July 2023 at the Seventh Day Adventist Church
Bury St. Edmunds**

Welcome: Helen welcomed everyone to the meeting and read from 1 Cor.1. She then invited individual prayers.

Present

Helen Moore (Southgate – Vice Chair), Andrew Caldecott (CCMH), Julie Farrant and Sharon Steven (Whepstead Baptist), David Sutherland (Forge Community Church), Eilish Heath, Walter Chenyika and David Bagstaff (St. Edmund's RC), Pam Pitts (Cathedral), Paula Ashman and Robert Mark (Salvation Army), Gerda Tooley and Sam Potter (Southgate), Rosie Perham (St. Mary's), Rosemary Clare (Garland St. Baptist), Martin Tilley (URC), Catrin Diverres (Trinity), Richard and Andrew Shone (SDA Church), Jonathan Ford (ChristChurch Moreton Hall), Andrew Soman (Bridge), Margaret Steavenson (Cathedral & NBLVT) - Minutes

Apologies

David Wakeford (Trinity), Heather Corbell (Horringer), Elaine Green (Quakers), Val Gagen (St. George's), Andy & Ali Miller (NBTLV), Regina Collender (St. Edmund's RC), Robert Green, Andy Williams (St. Mary's), Sally (Vineyard Church)

Minutes of previous meeting (24.4.23) were received as a correct record. No matters arising. Proposed by Helen Moore, seconded by Andrew Caldecott.

Finance: Elaine had circulated a statement of accounts. Helen referred to the previous discussions re a 10% increase in subs for 2024. This was agreed to be activated at the AGM. Proposed by Eilish Heath, and seconded by Andrew Caldecott.

Vice Chair's report:

I continue to meet, email phone Andrew and Elaine regularly, we work very much as team so this is our report.

I would like to highlight two ongoing ministries. Heather Corbell continues to keep us all informed and up to date by sending out regular messages and the What's On sheets, which she also compiles. We can use these to support each other through prayer. Thank You Heather.

Also, thanks to Peter Sebbage and his gang of writers for the regular articles appearing as Thought for the Weekend in BFP.

On 10th June 13 people met in St Edmunds Church for our prayer morning. Thanks to Regina and Eilish for the breakfast. We focussed our prayer on CT as we prayed for direction and guidance for the future and specifically for people to be willing to stand as chair and other positions.

Study and Share groups happened in June. My thanks to Mike Simm who led on Tuesday 12th at Southgate and to Gerda for providing refreshments. Mike led us in a Bible Study on 1 Cor 1 and we considered the reasons behind unity, our attitude to other Christians and the qualities needed in a future chair of CT.

8 days later we met at Whepstead Baptist and had some teaching from Simon Ladd, via video which led into a discussion of the practical ways in which to be CT. Thanks go to Sharon for hosting us and providing tech support and to her and Julie for refreshments.

Over the 2 sessions we had approx. 35 people representing 10 different churches. Obviously this year we trialled having the sessions on different days and in different locations and I would be grateful **for** feedback to assess how effective this was in allowing people to attend at least one.

I hope that those who were able to attend felt that it was worthwhile. I think we were left with challenges to consider. While the public face of CT may be the Walk of Witness on Good Friday, being churches together might be more of a grass roots thing which is then reflected in the strength of our unity at these big events. How do we as a group enable Christians to be “together”?

Simon has kindly agreed that we can make his video more widely available and here is the link. Please do make time to watch it and consider its contents, its about 40 minutes of your time. <https://youtu.be/WwaKCzP4lyM>

I would just like to mention in passing 2 events. I have heard excellent reports of the Strawberry tea at Whepstead, jointly run with Brockley Baptist. I also attended and very much enjoyed the SA concert that Paul told us about last time. Although not officially CT events I think they do reflect what we can do, in supporting each other.

Andrew and I have begun to compile a document which is a guide to staging the Walk Of Witness with important dates, contacts with details etc. Added to the document produced by Terry from the cathedral this hopefully will aid in future planning. We are not saying in any way that this is how the event has to be done in future, but we hope that by sharing what we did this year and making contact names and details available, we will aid the planning of future events. Until now many of the details have been on Andrew’s phone or in his head, so there are obvious advantages to putting it on paper, and I hope that we can compile similar documents for other events. Along with a directory of useful contacts, these documents should aid the smooth running of CT and make the transition between officers smoother.

*Arrangements for AGM (Monday 18th September) – **please can someone offer a venue?***

At the AGM we need to elect officers for CT, including Chair, Vice Chair, Events Officer Finance Officer, Minute Secretary.

Nominations need to be received 2 weeks before the AGM, though preferably sooner so that the names can be considered and prayed over by members. Before nominating anyone please make sure they are willing to stand. Andrew is happy to advise further

Events

A third 'Study and Share' meeting would be arranged (date tbc) to inform attendees about Churches Together generally and also its individual churches.

AGM would be held on Monday 18th September (venue tbc).

'Exchange of Greetings' – this would be organised when Claire Rose returns from holiday.

Prayer Morning 2nd September – **please can anyone offer a venue?**

Sunday 10th December – Churches Together evening to be held in the Cathedral. A sign-up sheet would be prepared. Churches are invited to contribute with a song or reflection/ Bible reading. We would like as many churches to contribute as possible to reflect the range of churches in CT.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity would commence on Sunday 21st January 2024.
30th June 2024 – evening in the Abbey Gardens. Andrew had already booked the Gardens.

Reports from member Churches: Andrew reported on Bridge Community Church. He gave us a brief history of the church with reference to the name change a few years ago and the setting up of 2 different sites. He explained a little of how this works in practice. Andrew also spoke about the ministry of the church and their community outreach including the Community Shop based in West Road.

Sharon reported on Whepstead Baptist Church
(see after AOB)

AOB The Air Cadets were in need of a new Chaplain as Val Gagen is retiring.
Andrew C. is seeking more information on CVM and CVW (Christian Vision for Men and Christian Vision for Women) and hopes to arrange an event.
Anniversary: 23.10.23 is the 40th anniversary of the foundation of Christ Church, Moreton Hall.
Personnel changes – Jonathan Ford is retiring this autumn and David Bagstaff and Walter Chenyika are moving on this summer.