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*St Albans and Welwyn Circuit, Beds, Essex and Herts District*

Minister: Rev Andrew Prout, 16 Gainsborough Avenue, St Albans, Herts AL1 4NL | 01727 851834

Minutes of Church Council

Monday 2nd November 2020 7.45pm at Hatfield Road via Zoom

***Our Calling*** *in the Methodist church is to increase awareness of God’s presence and to celebrate God’s love. Help people to learn and grow as Christians, through mutual support and care. Be a good neighbour to people in need and to challenge injustice and make more followers of Jesus Christ. At Hatfield Road Methodist Church we work out this calling through our adopted statements of purpose, mission and vision, and annual intention.*

**Present:** Rev Andrew Prout (AP), Angela Spriggs (AS) (minute taker); Eric Bridgstock (EB); Val Parker (VP); Joe Kinchenton (JK); Ros Hancock (RH); Chris Hancock (CH); Rosemary Fletcher (RF); Joanna Rose (JR); Lianne Weidmann (LW); Stuart Johnson (SJ); Peter Wallace (PW); Gina Woodhead (GW); Caroline Tough (CT); Denise Willingham (DW); Chris Kitchin (CK); Angela Andrews (AA)

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| **1** | **Welcome and Apologies / Opening Devotions**  **Apologies** were received fromGraham Danbury; Freda Gray  Opening devotions were held. |
| **2** | Membership of the Church Council was agreed. |
| **3** | **Minutes of Church Council 220920**  The Minutes of the Church Council meeting held on Tuesday 22nd September 2020 were agreed subject to slight amendment for factual correction. |
| **4** | **Appointments and Vacancies**  A circulated list of appointments for 2020 - 2021 was approved subject to two amendments:  The Steward on the Social Events and Outreach Group is Noelene Browning, not Denise Willingham.  Freda Gray is on the Property and Finance Committee (her name is currently omitted).  CK asked whether there was a management group for the Anna Chaplain role. It was stated that the Anna Chaplain management group will be confirmed when the appointment is made. The management group will be appointed by the layworkers group (responsible for appointing the Anna Chaplain) under delegated authority as previously agreed. The layworker’s group is next meeting on 18th November. AP will supervise the weekly activity of the Anna Chaplain and RF or another trained person will provide pastoral supervision every two months as required by the Methodist Church.  The Council were all content with the list of appointments.  AP noted two vacancies, Sunday Club co-ordinator and Babies and Toddlers Group Leader. Emma Haggis and AP are providing Sunday Club with some support in the interim, and AP, Gina Woodhead and Freda Gray are acting leaders of the Babies and Toddlers Group, although the latter is currently not meeting because of COVID-19. |
| **5** | **Letters of Greeting and Support**  AP reported that he had been in contact with Mary, David and Peter Lewis following the death of Glyn Lewis, and had conveyed the Church’s love and care. |
| **6** | **Matters Arising not appearing elsewhere and Action Tracker**  **Action tracker**   1. The Council noted the Action Tracker as at 15/10/20 detailing ongoing and outstanding actions. JR noted that the quinquennial report (item 1) should be described as every five years, not a one-off.   CK requested an update on item 9, relating to an assertion of the border of a triangle of land adjacent to the church. EB stated that the Church had obtained the deeds relating to the neighbour’s and the Church’s boundaries. It is believed that there has been an error in the past. The matter is ongoing, and has been discussed at the last Property and Finance Committee. EB has also made good contact with the next door neighbour David White, manager of Sensors UK, who owns the land to the adjacent property. The Property and Finance Committee will report when it was resolved.   1. **Latest on Re-Opening and COVID-19**   AP thanked Council and church members for the huge efforts made over the last few months, including measures to allow services to happen, putting services on the website, and a whole series of other actions and activities, including pastoral contact, and cake deliveries.  Following the recent announcement of a second lockdown the church must close for worship for at least a month. AP reported that the COVID-19 group, AP, EB and DW, decided that the church will not open for private prayer in this period. They felt that this was appropriate given the low numbers who attended in the summer, the effort required, and the shortness of the lockdown period. The church will sustain its pastoral contact and continue with website services. AP invited comments from Council members. No objections were raised.  AP stated that one group, Al Anon, might be permitted to meet on the premises through lockdown, subject to pending Government advice. They may be classed as an essential support service and have recently asked to reinstate meetings. AP stated that we would look to support them if their risk assessment is satisfactory. RF noted that the Government had not yet defined what support groups were allowed to meet under the new restrictions, but would confirm before Thursday.  AP stated that Christmas will be celebrated in some form. He stated that the Worship Consultation would decide how to proceed at their meeting on 11th November.  JR sought guidance on whether the music group could record in church during the lockdown. AP stated that the Methodist Church were in the process of updating their website. The COVID group will advise when they have the guidance in black and white from the Government and the Methodist Church.  AP stated that Emma Haggis (Children and Families Worker) had been busy working with families over Zoom, during half term. Only a few families responded, but it was felt to be worthwhile; families all appreciated being contacted. The Sunday Club are now working with Emma to decide what could be done for Christmas, including the Nativity Service, possible pre-recording, and Christingle. |
| **7** | **Matters from Circuit, District and Connexion**   1. **Report on Circuit Meeting 141020 including way forward discussions (see reports)**   SJ ran through the main points of the Way Forward discussion at the Circuit meeting on 14th October. He noted that the proposal to reduce the Circuit staff from 5 to 4, as set out on page 2 of the Way Forward report, was accepted fully at the meeting. The Circuit Leadership Team must now provide guidance on how the Circuit progresses to the next stage. This will be discussed at the next CLT meeting on 3rd November (following evening) and guidance to churches will follow.  He stated that it would then fall to Churches and Councils to consider more about how the changes would affect them, and to talk to each other. SJ encouraged Council members to read the circulated ‘Deacon in Circuit document’ which provides a good description of Deacon role. SJ reported that the Chair of the District had advised PW and SJ in a Zoom meeting that there was flexibility in how a Deacon’s time is used in the Circuit as long as it fits in with Circuit Mission Strategy. RF noted that there was also a summary of the 14th October meeting in the Circuit Reporter which had been circulated by email.  **AP stated that the** guidance on process once agreed by **the CLT meeting on 3rd November and minutes for the last Circuit meeting could be circulated** when available. AP proposed to the Church Council that, once the guidance was available, DW (Senior Steward), AS (Church Council Secretary) and he would meet to determine how to drive the process forward at HRMC. He stated that it was important that the Church is consulted as widely as possible. The next Church Council meeting is set for 16th February. AP proposed an additional Church Council meeting on 3rd February to discuss and agree our response. The CLT is looking for responses by the end of January, but AP stated that he was sure that the CLT would work with us, if we need that 3rd February meeting to discuss our final response after the consultations.  PW noted that the Circuit is working towards a special Circuit ‘Way Forward’ discussion meeting on 25th March. Having heard from all the churches at the end of January the Circuit will be working on the finalised proposals which will drive forward the Circuit’s plans for staffing from 2022. The process for invitation of new staff begins in Spring and Summer 2021.  The Council agreed that DW, AS, AP could drive the Way Forward plans on its behalf. AP expressed his gratitude to DW and AS for all they have been doing.   1. **Deferred Special Resolution of Conference re Leasing and Licensing of Premises**   As required by Methodist law the Church Council was asked to approve or reject a proposal, set out in the above document, that the current maximum period of 12 months for leasing and licensing of Methodist Church premises be removed. SJ explained that this had been found to be too limiting in some circumstances. It was clarified that individual Churches could still set a limit as part of the agreements they established with leasing organisations. The Council supported the proposal unanimously.  AP: The Circuit also asked all churches to be mindful of those in need and on the margins, and to see how they can look at decreasing their carbon footprint, and improving their work and ministry to care of the environment. |
| **8**  **9** | **Reports Part 1**  The Council noted the content of the following reports:   * Senior Church Steward * Childrens and Families Worker Emma Haggis * Childrens and Families Worker Management Group * Pastoral Committee * Worship Consultation   AP asked the Council’s permission for Helen Wallace to be accepted for receipt into membership of the Methodist Church. The Council gave their unanimous support. AP asked PW to pass this message onto Helen.  **Reports Part 2**  AP thanked EB for his work on the Annual, Budget and Property reports. EB presented the Annual Accounts 2019-2020 and budget 2020-21. On the Accounts he noted that the both income and expenditure had reduced because of the COVID-19 crisis. Sums on the accounts may look inflated because of a large legacy and funding for the layworker posts.  The Church Council unanimously agreed to adopt the Annual Accounts, subject to their independent examination by John Robinson, and the Budget 2020-2021.  AP thanked Eric for his work in transferring bank accounts. This was a significant amount of work.  EB presented a pre-circulated proposal to contract Christopher Dunphy to replace the central heating in the sanctuary and replacement of one of the two church boilers. EB noted that the boiler in the church had been malfunctioning over the past week and so there is no heating until it is fixed. AP stated the proposal, with unanimous recommendation from the Property and Finance Committee, was that the Church contract Christopher Dunphy do the work using £15,000 from restricted funds and the remainder from our annual maintenance and repairs budget, with an overall budget of £30,000 to allow for any necessary additional work over the quotation of the £26,220 including VAT. It was clarified that the new boiler would have lower running costs. Other churches had reported that their new [Dunphy] heating system was warmer and cost them less.  Several Council members raised concerns that there was no second quotation so there was no way of ensuring that the quotation was reasonable. AP stated that although only one quotation had been obtained, considerable efforts had been made to obtain a second, including from a firm RPM. The Property and Finance Committee felt that the longer the Church delayed, the greater the potential costs and were satisfied based on references received that Christopher Dunphy would do the job well. It was noted that Christopher Dunphy were church heating experts, had fitted over 900 churches, and came very highly recommended.  It was highlighted that the Scheme of Financial Delegation which the Church Council agreed a few years ago requires the Church to get a second quotation, that, Charity Law as managing Trustees requires us to demonstrate good use of money. It was highlighted that Charity trustees are required to make balanced and adequately informed decisions, taking appropriate advice when necessary and obtaining best value for money whilst thinking about the long term as well as the short term. The opinion was expressed that there was no obligation to accept a lower quotation if we feel that someone else would do better work. PW noted that the Ludwick Way Church had received the best quotation from British Gas. AP noted that the guidance says that in normal circumstances a second quotation should be obtained, but as long as the trustees are satisfied that attempts have been made to get a second quotation, you can proceed.  EB agreed to look for another supplier and secure this for the February meeting. CK recommended that the Christian Resources Exhibition Management could have other church heating suppliers on their list.  ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Church Policies**  AP presented the Church’s updated Statement of Purpose, Vision, Mission and Intention 2020-21. All members of the Council were content with this document.  AP presented the Register of Meetings for the year 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021. He noted that this was unchanged except for the added COVID group and the responsibilities of the management group for the Children and Families Worker and Anna Chaplain. HRMC is / will be the employer of Emma Haggis and the Anna Chaplain. AP stated that he can circulate if helpful the agreed terms and conditions so everyone has the up to date document. AS stated that the documents have now been signed. It was important to ensure that Church Council members are happy that they know their responsibilities in relation to these posts.  PW queried the appointment of an Anna Chaplain during lockdown when many of the potential beneficiaries could not be visited, limiting the work that can be done. DW stated that, following a detailed discussion at their last meeting, the Anna Chaplains working group had decided it was feasible to proceed with recruiting. They identified that other Anna Chaplains had done a lot of work even during lockdown and had found creative ways of making and remaining in contact with people. RF stated that DW’s research had identified a lot of need and loneliness. She noted that the post could potentially be postponed for two years until any lockdown situation has passed. She noted that the role requirements may have changed slightly; those in post would have to be more technologically able. RH noted the difficulties in starting a new post when in lockdown; it is difficult to get to know people. RF acknowledged her awareness of this.  It was confirmed that those appointing the lay workers had taken the lone worker policy into account. AP stated that this had been updated since last circulated. He noted that the Management Group is responsible for applying this and other policies [as set out in k below].  The following (pre-circulated) Church Policies were presented for adoption for the year 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021:   1. Financial Management : Financial Controls 2. Financial Management : Scheme of Delegation 3. Financial Management : Benevolence Fund 4. Financial Management: Charitable Giving 5. Financial Management : Reserves 6. Babies & Toddlers Group 7. Lone Worker 8. Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults 9. Use of Premises and Charges 10. Data Protection and GDPR (As per Connexional Policy) 11. As an Employer (Caretaker/CFW/Anna Chaplain) Health and Safety at Work, Grievance Procedure, Disciplinary Procedure, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (As per Connexional Lay Employment Advisory handbook)   CK felt that the Council could not adopt the employer policies because they had not seen them. AP stated that they were all contained in the handbook for lay employment of the Methodist Church and when we went through the appointment for both posts all the paperwork had been signed off by the District, by the lay employment secretary. The links to the policies have been circulated.  The Church Council agreed that it was content with the Register of Meetings.  AP noted that the Safeguarding policy had also been updated. JR stated that this came directly from the recommended Methodist Church policy with names inserted. AP noted that the Employment policies [referred to in k above] are as in the current Connexional advisory handbook, but next time these could be added in verbatim as well. All Council members were content with the policies bar 1 abstention.  The Council agreed to extend permission for Living Waters to worship at HRMC for a further 12 months from 1/9/20. |
| **10** | **Dates of future meetings**  Next full Church Council meeting is Tuesday 16th February 2021 (See Perpetual Calendar Below). An additional meeting is planned for Wed 3 Feb.  A few good news stories to mention, a thank you from David who attended the café on receiving cake deliveries, There is also a lot of appreciation for deliveries of notice sheets and services, GW was thanked. RH: any further business: GW said that Kirsty and baby were keeping well. |
| **11** | **Closing Devotions by** RevRosemary Fletcher |

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| **Perpetual Calendar** | **Advance notice in church notices**  **(4 weeks before CC meeting** | **Minutes / notes / reports from meeting due with Church Council Secretary**  **(3 weeks before CC meeting** | **Agenda to be published**  **(2 weeks before CC meeting** | **Date of meeting** |
| **Church Council**  **AGM** | Sun 11.10.20  Sun 24.01.21  TBA  Sun 18.04.21 | Mon 12.10.20  Tues 26.01.21  TBA  Sun 25.05.21 | Mon 19.10.20  Tues 02.02.21  TBA  Sun 02.05.21 | Mon 02.11.20  Tues 16.02.21  June 2021  Sun 16.05.21 |
| **Pastoral Committee** | These committees / groups need to decide their own meeting dates in time to **meet the deadlines in the next column for papers to the Church Council** |  |  |  |
| **Worship Consultation** |  |  |
| **Property & Finance Committee** |  |  |
| **Social, Events, & Outreach Group** |  |  |

**HRMC Membership of Church Council at September 3rd 2020**

Church Stewards appointments take effect on 1 July each year. Elected Reps with immediate effect.

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| **Position** | **Name** | **Date Appointed** |
| **Circuit Ministers**  SO 610 (1) (i) | Rev Rosemary Fletcher (Superintendent) | 09/2013 |
| Rev Andrew Prout (Minister Pastoral Charge) | 09/2014 |
| SO 610 (1) (i) & SO 610 (4) (i) | Rev Alison Facey | CLT 2015 |
| **Church Stewards**O 610 (1) (vi) | Denise Willingham (Senior Church Steward) 1a | 05/2016 |
| Angela Andrews 1 | 05/2018 |
| Tomas Cvrcek 1 | 05/2018 |
| Lianne Weidmann1 | 06/2017 |
| Joe Kinchenton1 | O7/2019 |
| Noelene Browning 1 | 10/2019 |
| **Church Treasurer** SO 610 (1) (vii) | Eric Bridgstock | 06/2018 |
| **Pastoral Committee** SO 610 (1) (viii) | Gina Woodhead 3 | 01/2009 |
| **Church Council Secretary** SO 610 (1) (ix) | Angela Spriggs | 10/2019 |
| **One Circuit Steward appointed by the Circuit Stewards** SO 610 (1) (xii) | Stuart Johnson | 09/2020 |
| **Not less than six representatives nor more than fifteen elected annually by General Church Meeting** (SO 610 (1) (x) | Graham Danbury 1 | 05/2018 |
| Chris Hancock 1 [Elected by ballot] | 07/2009 |
| Ros Hancock 1 | 05/2015 |
| Helen Jeffery 1 [Elected by ballot] | 02/2005 |
| Chris Kitchin 1 | 06/2017 |
| Caroline Tough1 [Elected by ballot] | 05/2012 |
| **Plus up to 15 additional persons appointed by the Church Council to ensure that all areas of the church’s life are adequately represented and in particular that, wherever possible, young people are included in its membership** SO 610 (1) (xi) **as follows:** 5 **& 6** | | |
| **Sunday Club and Youth Superintendent** | Vacancy |  |
| **Property & Finance Committee** | Eric Bridgstock (Chair of Meeting)  Vacancy | 06/2019 |
| **Mission Secretaries Action Group**  (Mission in Britain / World Missions / JMA / Christian Aid / Justice & Peace) | To Be Appointed | - |
| **Worship Consultation Convenor** | Peter Wallace | 09/2015 |
| **Safeguarding Officer** | Joanna Rose | 05/2009 |
| **Other** | Freda Gray [Catering & Property]  Val Parker | 08/2017  06/2019 |
| **Elected to Circuit Meeting**  (Ex Officio Officers) SO 510 (1) (vii)  (plus 3 others) SO 510 (1) (viii) | Church Steward [Ex Officio]: Denise Willingham  Church Treasurer [Ex Officio]: Eric Bridgstock  Joanna Rose  Chris Hancock  Vacancy | 09/2015  09/2017  XX/XXXX |

*Notes*

*1 Elected annually by the General Church Meeting (SO 632), must be a Member of the Methodist Church (SO 632) and may serve for a maximum of 6 years or for longer subject to there being no one to fill the vacancy and their election being endorsed by ballot with at least 75% voting in favour (SO 607).*

*1a Electedby the church stewards as senior steward for one year at a time.*

2 *Appointed annually by the Church Council, must be a Member of the Methodist Church (SO 635) and may serve for a maximum of 6 years or for longer subject to there being no one to fill the vacancy and their election being endorsed by ballot with at least 75% voting in favour (SO 607).*

3 *Appointed annually by the Church Council from among the members of the Pastoral Committee (SO 644 (6), must be a Member of the Methodist Church (SO 632) and may serve for a maximum of 6 years or for longer subject to their being no one to fill the vacancy and their election being endorsed by ballot with at least 75% voting in favour (SO 607).*

4 *Appointed annually by the Church Council and may serve for a maximum of 6 years or for longer subject to there being no one to fill the vacancy and their election being endorsed by ballot with at least 75% voting in favour (SO 607).*

*5 Appointed annually by the Church Council (SO 610 (1) (xi)), must be a Member of the Methodist Church (SO 610 (2A))*

*6 Young people under the age of 18 cannot legally become managing trustees and so are not eligible to vote on managing trustee business (SO 610 (2A) (b) footnote).*

The references here to Standing Orders (SO) are those of The Methodist Church contained in *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of The Methodist Church Volume 2.*