**Minutes of Church Council**

**Monday 7th November 2022 7.45pm at Hatfield Road (in person)**

**Those items marked with a hash # relate to reports which will be taken as read.**

**If there is any objection or point for agreement then each item will be taken separately.**

***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 and to challenge injustice and make 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.*

1. **Apologies were received from:**

Freda Gray, Lianne Weidmann, Noelene Browning, Angela Andrews and Deacon Nigel Perrett (NP)

 **Welcome:** David Jebb (Superintendent Minister) (DJ)

**Present:** Rev Andrew Prout (Chair) (AP), Johanna Mason (Notetaker) (JM), Gina Woodhead (GW), Val Parker (VP), Eric Bridgstock (EB), Peter Wallace (PW), Denise Willingham (DW), James Appiah (JA), Caroline Tough (CT), Tomas Cvrcek (TC), Ros Hancock (RS), Maggie Dodd (MD), Stuart Johnson (Senior Circuit Steward) (SJ)

 **Devotions** were held and led by AP.

 **2 The membership of the Church Council** as at 071122 was agreed #

 **3 Minutes #**

 The minutes of the Church Council meeting held on 29th June 2022 were agreed with no amendments

 **4 Appointments and Vacancies #**

 **Vacancy – Children and Families Worker (CFW)**: discussed later

 **Vacancy – Church Secretary (From 010922)**

Angela Spriggs is stepping down as Church Secretary after 3 years in this post. No permanent replacement has yet been found. Johanna Mason had kindly offered to act as minute taker for the meeting this evening.

**Action: AP to write and thank AS for all her hard work, especially during the Covid pandemic when meetings had to be on zoom and all business conducted remotely. AP had approached several people to take on the role but who had declined, and will be approaching a further potential replacement**

 **Appointment – Sunday Club-Co-ordinator (SCC)**

Caroline Tough was formally appointed as SCC. This was agreed by all.

 5. **Letters of Greeting and Support/Correspondence**

 **No Action**

 **6 Matters Arising not appearing elsewhere and Action Tracker #**

 **Action Tracker**

PW enquired if the Mission Statement had been updated. Andrew confirmed that an updated version had been adopted at the last Church Council.

 **Matters Arising**

**Same Sex Marriage Licence -** AP reported that a Licence for HRMC had been received from the Registrar dated 13th October 2022. Both Methodist Churches in St. Albans (HRMC & MRMC) were now fully licenced in this regard.

**New Testament Church of God –** intend to use our premises on a Sunday afternoon as of January 2023, possibly for up to a year, whilst work is undertaken at Fleetville Community Centre. This date has not yet been confirmed as the NTCG awaits confirmation of a date for the commencement of said works. (AP and VP).

**Statement of Faith for NTCG (Required for Form 14A) –** DJ asked when this would be forthcoming. AP said it was in hand. **Action AP.**

 **Eco Church –** RH confirmed attainment of Bronze Award

 **Action RH to begin process to achieve Silver Award**

 **7 Matters from Circuit, District and Connection #**

AP noted that this is the first meeting of HRMC Church Council since the arrival of DJ, Rosemary Mutopo and NP and thanked them for making themselves so readily available. Their presence in the Circuit is much appreciated. DJ thanked AP for his arranging of the Welcoming Service at SJPB. DJ reported that very positive feedback has been received since their arrival just two months ago.

 **Re-invitation and Stationing** in September 2023 (update) –AP is currently going through this process and is visiting Somerset Mendip Circuit later in the week 10/11th November. AP asked for our prayers and all wished him well

SJ reported that the St. Albans Section has a prospective female candidate for the post of Presbyter to succeed Andrew. She will be visiting HRMC, MRMC and Cornerstone this coming Saturday, 12th November. A meeting of the Invitation Committee at HRMC will take place following her visit. TC and DJ to discuss the visit after the meeting to look at practicalities with the hope of a positive outcome.

SJ reported that Gainsborough Avenue Manse refurbishment/decoration was under review. **Action: SJ will approach and ask Church Members for their help with access whilst work is undertaken.** SJ reported that the Allendale Manse is to be let commercially as of January 2023 with a view to helping the Circuits finances.

 **Circuit Advent Study –** As of Wednesday, 30th November at 7.45pm, each of the four

Circuit Ministers will be leading one session of an Advent Study over a period of four weeks using the book ‘Unexpected Jesus’ (Cover to Cover). Each study will be via Zoom on successive Wednesdays. DJ to co-ordinate and hopes for a healthy response. The booklet is available on Amazon.

**Circuit Prayer Meetings –** These will be co-ordinated by DJ, via Zoom, on three successive Saturday mornings in November as of 12th between 9am and 9.45am focusing on things that are affecting the life of our Circuit. DJ believes it is important for Bible Study and Prayer to go hand in hand.

**New Places for New People -** DJ reported on this Connexion wide initiative and expressed the importance of all Churches going forward in Mission

**Circuit Safeguarding Officer and Administrator Update (SJ) –** There is still a vacancy for the post of ‘Circuit Safeguarding Officer’. It has been decided this will now be a salaried post. The post is currently being advertised. Within the Circuit, DJ, Joanna Rose, Steve Matthews and Chris Hancock are all able to deliver the Safeguarding Foundation Level Module for everyone who needs to complete it. The position of a Circuit Administrator had been advertised but it is now hoped that Chris Hancock will agree to extend his role as Temporary Circuit Administrator. This is yet to be confirmed.

 **8 Reports**

**Senior Church Steward#** (TC) **–** All going well in the Church at the moment with very positive feedback on Holiday at Home and the Children’s Holiday Club. Barbara Cvrcek is in the throes of putting together a Photographic Directory of Members for our new Minister. TC will be holding a Stewards' Meeting on 18th November.

New Church Charities to be in place for next year; local, national and global. In the current year £5,000 has been raised for various causes including aid efforts in Sri Lanka and Tonga. **Action: AP & Church Stewards**

**Worship Consultation#** (AP) **/Sunday Club** (CT) – Not many responses to Live Streaming survey but AP grateful to those who did respond and indicated their appreciation for this service. The feedback received was largely positive.

AP reported on an anonymous offer to replace the small screen with a larger digital screen for live-streaming.

**Action Property & Finance – Agreed**

Sunday Club currently only has two groups. However, with the Church's vision for growth PW thought there would be a need to think about where further groups might meet. It was suggested by CT that the dividing screens in the Small Hall might be needed and could offer a solution.

**Pastoral Committee/Secretary (GW) –** a new Directory of Church Members is being prepared. The possible inclusion of all the church family was discussed but there is uncertainty over whether this is legally allowed under current GDPR guidance. AP & GW will discuss in depth when they next meet. The church has three new members; Tom Cushny (from Methodist Church in Kenya), Sheila Agyeman and Agnes Duah (previously confirmed in Church of England).

**Lay Workers Group (AP) / CFW Management Group (AP) # –** The church is currently on the second round of advertising for this role following the departure of Emma Williams.

 **Anna Chaplain (MD) –** All in Report

**Cornerstone (NP/DJ) –** Nigel to report next time. Meetings are held every week. The outreach into the community has been very positive with every hope that this will grow in the New Year. 6/7 children from Cornerstone came to Holiday Club in the October half-term.

 **Safeguarding # (JR) –** Joanna not at the meeting. See (7)

 **Social Outreach # (DW) –** Future social events will be co-ordinated with both MRMC and Cornerstone to avoid dates/events clashing and to maximise support. VP said that an online joint calendar for both churches and Cornerstone has been set up.

 **Property & Finance # (EB)/Annual Church Return 2022 (AP) –** EB said no response yet from Biffa re waste disposal.

Interest rate increased to 2.55% with £222 interest made in October. Looking at budgeting re finances in the year ahead in light of the looming huge increase in heating bills. Heating costs at HRMC will rise. At MRMC it was already known that costs would rise from approximately £4000 to £18000.

 PW asked how this huge increase in heating costs will impact on reserves. EB confirmed that £25,000 has been moved from the church reserves to the deposit account. The church currently has £189,000 in reserves of which £78,000 is restricted and £64,000 is ring-fenced for the future lay worker

The meeting agreed to approach John Robinson to act as Independent Examiner of HRMC’s Accounts for the year ending 31/08/22.

**Action – AP to send formal letter of invitation to John Robinson and to duly complete the Annual Church Return to the Methodist Church**

**Approval of Annual Accounts for year end 31/08/22 formally proposed by PW & seconded by CT pending independent examination. Agreed.**

 **Approval of Budget for 22/23 proposed by EB & seconded by TC. Agreed.**

EB reported on a Gift Aid query as to whether this includes lay worker pledges as well as the regular offering. **Action – Clarification will be sought from the Methodist Church**

CT asked whether the Youth & Sunday Club ‘Energize’ resource has been renewed. EB confirmed that this had been renewed the previous week. The large outlay on the main hall last year (sound reduction boards) was a one-off cost. EB has yet to apply for the District Grant for Warm Spaces of £1,000. **Action AP/EB**

**Small Hall Refurbishment (See Separate Report & Paper)**

**Proposal as finalised following discussion:** *The Church Council invites the PROD Group*

*to further engage with 'Alliance Facilities' or 'RPM' with a view to finalising a scheme of work for the Small Hall on the basis of the papers presented to the meeting and to this end consents in principle to any such scheme on the following costed basis:*

*Budget £60,000 with £40,000 drawn from restricted funds (legacies etc.) and remainder from a combination of General Funds and an appeal to the congregation*

 **AP –** The Small Hall is unusable in its present form and so its refurbishment is a priority. 5 companies have been approached to undertake building work; 2 responded with equal quotes. The final decision as to which company is chosen will be made by the PROD group

 **EB –** One of the two companies comes highly recommended by several contacts and seems highly competitive. All this adds to confidence in the company.

 **VP –** Clarification on certain aspects of the quote from the preferred company are still outstanding and the alternative firm is still in the background if necessary

**A**P – To facilitate access one of the companies had suggested that space could be taken from the Prayer Room. Creating two accesses to the Prayer Room could connect it to both the small hall and the toilets via a corridor or passage.

**RH –** Concerned that the Prayer Room is already small and dark, so reducing space and therefore light would only make it worse. **AP** suggested that perhaps a sliding door in the Prayer Room could be a solution if this option was preferred. Further investigation needed.

**CT –** A folding partition would be preferable in the new small hall with expanding children’s work. **PROD GROUP** to discuss this with CT to determine the best way forward.

**DW** asked how the new Small Hall could be insulated. **EB** said a suspended ceiling might be an option. Another possibility is to install insulation in the roof void to improve efficiency and warmth.

 **AP –** Old heating to be replaced and the draft from the main door also to be addressed.

 **EB –** Work to repair the leak over the cleaning cupboard could be addressed at the same time as work on the Small Hall.

 **AP –** Work on the Small Hall could start in the spring. £40,000 towards the cost of the works will come from restricted funds with the balance coming from other general property funds, whilst also encouraging the congregation to help fund a % of the project (20% suggested).

 **RH** agreed it is a good idea to involve the congregation – creating ownership. Plans could be shared with the congregation showing how the improvements to the Small Hall benefit the church and also the local community.

**AP** - The improvements to the Small Hall will create a positive space and illustrates well the work and mission of the church together with its outreach in the community. A further meeting will be called once the detail has been finalised by the **PROD GROUP.**  It may be necessary to go through the Consent process in Methodist Church depending on this detail especially if structural work is entailed.

 **DW –** Raised concern over funding available and priorities. In particular, the Sanctuary needs refurbishment and also the front entrance.

**AP –** The Sanctuary will be addressed after completion of the Small Hall. There will remain with his proposal £40,000 of funding available in restricted funds (currently not allocated).

 Improvements to the front entrance to the Church to make it friendlier/attractive will be a project for the future.

 **Action – EB formally put the proposal as set out in italics above**

 **Action – VP seconded the above proposal**

 **Action – Unanimously adopted**

 **NOTE: A decision re the dividing schemes/flexibility for the Sunday Club will be formally agreed at the next meeting following consultation with CT**

 **9 Other Areas of Mission & Ministry**

 **Warm Welcome Cafe –** the Cafe is registered with ‘Warm Welcome UK ‘Warm Spaces

**DW –** We need to advertise the Cafe so have designed a poster to be used in Morrisons and other premises together with a new sandwich board to place outside the church. St. Paul’s are making their building available as a ‘Warm Space’ on several other days in the week. Churches Together in St. Albans are compiling a register both for publicity and local co-ordination.

 **GW** confirmed that the Cafe was already advertised on Mumsnet. **MD** said she would post details about the Cafe on St Albans Mums website

 **AP –** We all need to encourage our friends, contacts and neighbours to visit the Cafe. A District Grant of £1,000 may be available for the café. **Action AP / EB**

**Boys Brigade and Girls Brigade –** both these have ceased to meet having been unable to resume post pandemic. Andrew is in contact with Lesley and Helen (Company Captain and Officer) and will discuss with them how best to celebrate the life and times of the Brigades in our church, marking the end of an era.

**Communications – ‘**Welcome to Church’ hard copy leaflet now updated. The detail will also be added to the church website. AP – Thanks for DW and MD for putting together the above leaflet and to CH for his superb help with the church website.

**AP –** The joint stewards meeting continues to keep in view communications across the section, and to consider how this might evolve. AP, MD & NP are looking at producing a regular bulletin to share news across the section.

**Children's Half-Term Holiday Club –** Over 30 children attended the Club the Activity Morning this October.

 **Visit of Fleetville Infant School Tuesday, 29th November (am & pm) –** 2 groups will attend in the morning whilst the Warm Welcome Cafe is in full flow and 1 group will attend in the afternoon with a total of 90 children visiting the church.

**Carol Service –** This will be held on Saturday, 17th December to avoid a clash with the FIFA World Cup Final the following day.

 **10 Any Other Business**

**AP** proposing to run the Bible Society 'Bible Course' for those interested in learning more about the Bible, what it is and how it all fits together. It runs over a period of 8 weeks, will commence in the near future and at a time to be determined. So far 3 people have expressed an interest. Offers of a venue are welcome

 **Circuit Superintendent Minister David Jebb addresses the Meeting**

 DJ's first visit to Hatfield Road was on 9th October where he held the Sunday Service.

The Methodist Church has launched 'New Places for New People'. The Methodist Church has seen a growth of 11% with Fresh Expression initiatives such as Messy Church etc. The potential for reaching out within HRMC and the whole Circuit is huge.

 It is important to grow new members, to create disciples, not just increase our numbers. There are many needy people in our local communities and we need to think about how we can engage with them. 'New Places for New People' has funding of some £140,000 to help set up initiatives that reach out to those in need of some sort. These initiatives will take place outside of traditional church activities and include ideas such as Holiday Club. Between 2022 and 2027 the Methodist Church hopes to launch numerous, diverse outreach projects within communities themselves.

HRMC could be a part of this project. DJ will be taking stock of possibilities over the first 6 months of his tenure, thinking about visionary ideas/projects and where the Circuit might be in 5 years' time. Improving HRMC's church building to make it more attractive is a positive step towards reaching out to the local community. We need to pray for guidance in mission and vision for growth, for HRMC to have the desire to become a Mission Church.

 **11 Dates of future meetings**

Church Council Tues 28th February 2023 7.45pm

 Church Council Wed 28th June 2023 7.45pm

 Annual General Meeting Sun 21st May 2023

 **12 Closing Devotions**