****

*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 8th November 2021 7.45pm at Hatfield Road Methodist Church

***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.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1** | **Welcome and Apologies / Opening Devotions**  **Those in attendance**  Rev Rosemary Fletcher (RF) (Chair), Angela Spriggs (AS) (Notetaker) Freda Gray (FG), Ros Hancock (RH), Chris Kitchin (CK), Caroline Tough (CT), Eric Bridgstock (EB), Stuart Johnson (SJ) ,Val Parker (VP), Peter Wallace (PW), James Appiah (JA), Lianne Weidmann (LW), Denise Willingham (DW). Joe Kinchenton (JK)  **Apologies were received from:**  Rev Andrew Prout (on Sabbatical)  Joanna Rose  Noelene Browning  Graham Danbury  Gina Woodhead  Angela Andrews. |
| **2** | **Membership of the Church Council** was agreed subject to the following amendments:  Rev Ali Facey is no longer a member of the Church Council following a change of post.  Linda Kinchenton (Deacon).  Emma Williams (Children and Families Worker) and Maggie Dodd (Anna Chaplain) have joined the Church Council as observers. |
| **3** | **Minutes of Church Council 300621#**  The Minutes of the Church Council meeting held on 30th June 2021 were agreed as a true record subject to a minor amendment. |
| **4** | **Appointments and Vacancies #**  It was reported that:   * Emma Williams has taken on the roles of Sunday Club Co-ordinator and Babies and Toddlers Group Leader. Happy with appointments. * Adelita Serwaa-Bonsu has taken over as Baptismal Roll secretary. Joanna Rose (JR) has carried out a DBS check, Rosemary Fletcher and Joanna Rose are creating a job spec for the role. CT and RH offered to stand in as candle holder during baptismal services as Adelita has child care responsibilities. RF asked Emma at the last baptismal service. |
| **5** | **Letters of Greeting and Support / Correspondence**  RF reported that she attended the induction of the incumbent vicars of St Pauls, Diane and Jono Tregale, in September and that she would meeting him for coffee the following Thursday morning. RF represented HRMC and, Churches together in St Albans.  **Action (AS) To send letter of greeting to the new vicar of St Pauls (address7 Brampton Road).**  It was reported that Philip and Marion Eaton have transferred their membership to St Pauls.  **Action (AS): to send a letter of support to them wishing them well on next part of their journey.** |
| **6** | **Matters Arising not appearing elsewhere and Action Tracker #**  Latest news on Re-Opening the church following Covid-19 restrictions(DW)  DW noted that the church has started meeting again. So far no issues have arisen. The COVID committee will continue to monitor the effectiveness of measures and make any changes necessary.  Proposal to install a Defibrillator outside the Church (CK)  CK introduced a proposal to install a defibrillator outside the Church. The issues were as set out in a circulated paper, ‘Proposal to Supply and Install a Community Defibrillator’. The Councilagreed:   * to the provision of a community defibrillator outside our church building * to consider the launch of a scheme of voluntary donations to cover the costs outlined above   CK proposed that the Property & Finance Committee be authorised to take the necessary action to implement the provision. The Council agreed in principle.  The Finance and Property Committee would look at options in their next meeting on 22nd November.  Church Hiring Enquiries: (VP)  VP sought the Council’s permission to break some of the HRMC booking rules to support two groups who had approached her, details as follows:   * *Youth organisation Excite*   Excite, an Ecumenical youth group for young people in Harpenden and St Albans in school years 3-6, want to meet in the church on Saturdays from 3-9 o’clock. The regularity (monthly or termly) needs to be confirmed. The booking would contravene HRMC’s longstanding policy to take only one-off bookings on Saturday to avoid inhibiting its own events.  VP set out two options as follows:   1. 1. To accept, and treat each booking as a one-off booking, which was onerous for the bookings secretary 2. 2. To provide a licence for up to a year with negotiated, non-fixed dates, booked up to 2-3 months ahead.   It was confirmed that no member of the church will have to check the space afterwards, but in fact Emma Williams would be involved so would be able to check the building. EW is in support of the project.  It was noted that the process would need ongoing management and that HRMC would have to plan its dates in advance. The Church would also have to consider activities the following day. For instance it would not be feasible to host the group before Create and Celebrate. It was agreed that these activities enabled the Church to fulfil its objective of supporting young people.  The Church Council supported the booking in principle, subject to confirmation of details.  **Action (VP): The meeting day will be checked with Emma Williams.**  **Action (VP): To find out how regularly the Excite wishes to meet and consider how this might fit around HRMC activities.**   * *New Testament Church of God (NTCG)*   VP stated that the New Testament Church of God had enquired about meeting at HRMC while Fleetville Community Centre (its normal meeting place) is renovated, scheduled for about 12 months from approximately July 2022.It was noted that Sunday bookings would more difficult and that the NTCG would need to be flexible on times. HRMC does not normally have more than one Sunday booking so would need to check whether Living Waters (who have previously met at the Church) intended to return. The time would also need to be worked round any returns to Sunday evening services (although none are currently planned).  The Church Council unanimously agreed to support the booking in principle, subject to confirmation of details.  **Action (VP and RF): To meet with Pastor Pearl Roper at home.**  Winter Beds Project (RF)  It was noted that the Winter Beds Project (for homeless people in St Albans) are looking for volunteers. There will be no overnight work. Details are as in the HRMC notice sheet.  Action Tracker as at 081121 detailing on-going and outstanding actions  Actions are as set out in the action tracker. AS reported that she had been given responsibility for the GDPR risk assessment but this was beyond capacity at the current time.  New Church Council member induction  It was noted that Graham Danbury and Chris Kitchin will be running induction sessions for new members of the Circuit Meeting and all Church Councils in the afternoon and evening of Monday 13th June 2022 at HRMC. All are invited, including those who would value a refresher. |
| **7** | **Matters from Circuit, District and Connexion**  Circuit Study Day with Dr Chris Hewer 201121 (RF)  Dr Chris Hewer will be leading another Circuit Study Day at St Johns Potters Bar on Saturday 20th November.  Circuit Quiet Day with Rev Abi Thompson 260222 (RF)  The Rev Abi Thompson is provisionally booked to lead a Circuit Quiet Day on 26 February 2022. This will be confirmed as she has moved roles since the booking and is now the Dean of Sheffield Cathedral.  Future staffing changes within the Circuit (SJ)  SJ reported that there would be 3 new appointments in the Circuit in 2022, requiring 3 rounds of stationing. A candidate for the Superintendent role was due to meet members of the Circuit on the 14th November.  Post meeting note: Following a meeting on 13th November the Revd David Jebb has formally accepted an invitation to become the Circuit Superintendent Minister from 1 September 2022.  SJ stated that stationing for the Deacon, Probationer Presbyter roles will take place in January, during the third round. The Presbyter will be a probationer. The Deacon will not. The Circuit will not be able to support two probationer roles. The Circuit has received feedback that it has submitted a strong profile for the Deacon role. The prospective visit days are 15th and 22nd January.  Contribution to Pension Reserve Fund (SJ)  SJ reported on a resolution at the Methodist Conference to ask each Church to make a one-off voluntary contribution to the Methodist Ministers Pension Fund. This was prompted by an assessment showing a potential shortfall of approximately £40m. The Conference acknowledged the poor timing of the request. It had assessed that a donation of 15% of individual Church reserves may achieve the target. It was for each church, Circuit and District to make its own decision. It was noted that the Methodist Council would have to reconsider what to do if the target was not met.  The Treasurer EB stated that he had received a very clear steer from John Scott, Circuit treasurer, not to respond. The current global financial situation is uncertain. The request may be premature. John Scott had recommended that we wait until it became compulsory. The Methodist Conference will reassess the situation in three years. EB recommended that HRMC made no voluntary contribution at this time.  The Church Council agreed with the recommendation.  Same Sex Marriage (RF)  RF reported that, following the 2021 Methodist Conference vote in favour of same sex marriage, each Church is to decide individually whether or not to register or make its premises available for same sex weddings.  RF proposed that this decision should be made at a separate Church Council meeting. She sought a view at the present meeting on whether the Church Council was open to discussing this issue further. The Church Council indicated its support. A meeting has been scheduled for 19th January 2022.  It was decided that voting for the meeting is to be by secret paper ballot given the sensitivity of the issue and to protect relationships in the Church. The vote will be subject to a conscience clause such that it direction does not have to concur with the views of the minister. It was also noted that all Church Council members should be present given the importance of the vote.  **Action (Church Council): To hold a meeting to discuss registration of HRMC for same sex marriage on 19th January 2022, in person at HRMC.**  **Post meeting note: It has been agreed to hold this meeting jointly with MRMC, with a separate vote for each Church Council.**  RF noted that the General Registry Office had stated that any non-Methodist Congregation using the premises also needed to give consent. This potentially included Living Waters, who have previously used the premises, although it was noted that they did not currently have a lease agreement with HRMC. It was suggested that HRMC did not want to be restricted by Church Congregations it allowed to use the premises out of goodwill. It was suggested that the Church decided its own position and made that a condition of hire, not vice versa. It was noted that if the NTCG came into HRMC after the decision has been made, they would have to abide by the decision of the Church Council. HRMC needed to find out whether Living Waters wished to continue meeting at the Church to understand how to proceed regarding the necessary consents, and if so, to have conversations with them regarding their position on same sex marriage.  **Action (VP): To find out whether Living Waters wished to return to Hatfield Road.**  **Post-meeting note: RF has since had a telephone conversation with Rev Lionel Wallace and delivered him a copy of *God in Love Unites Us*.**  DW noted that the Church also needs to discuss all other matters about relationships that were covered in the report *God in Love Unites Us,* such as singleness, attitudes to cohabiting, widowhood, divorce and attitudes to grief and healthy relationships etc. It was noted that the Church has a role in identifying what makes healthy Christian relationships.  Justice, Dignity, Solidarity (VP / RH) – EDI  VP reported on a Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Training Day held at High Leigh Conference Centre on 12th October. It was led by the President of the Methodist Conference, Rev Sonia Hicks. The day revolved around how to achieve Justice, Dignity & Solidarity among our church congregations by developing greater love and connectedness through positive action. It included topics related to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, as well as Unconscious Bias. The main message from the day was that, to achieve Justice, Dignity and Solidarity in our churches, we all need to be aware of our assumptions, and we need to want to change.  Ecochurch (RH)  RH stated that she had consulted about twinning our Church toilets, where the Church pays a sum of money for each of our toilets and this is used to fund toilet facilities where needed. The amount needed was approximately £60 per toilet. The total sum would be £300 for the church’s 5 toilets. There would be a laminated sign on each toilet door announcing the project.  It was proposed that a group is convened to look at an eco-friendly plan for the Church. It was noted that the Property Committee aim to do any repairs and maintenance in the most eco-friendly way. It has also considered solar panels, but it is not known whether the roof would support them.  Roy Vivian, Caroline Tough and the garden team were thanked for the work done on the Church garden.  **Action RH and DW: To complete the Eco-church questionnaire for the Church. It looked to achieve the Bronze Level.**  Work on the margins  It was noted that the Cornerstone House project worked with those on the margins (see accompanying *Cornerstone House Church Council Report* by Deacon Linda Kinchenton). |
| **8** | **Reports**  The Council received and noted the following reports:   * Church Stewards (DW) * Worship Consultation (PW) * Property and Finance and PROD group reports (EB) * CFW management Group (CT) * Children and Family Worker report # (EW) * Anna Chaplain report (MD) * Cornerstone House report (LK) * Pastoral Committee (GW) * Safeguarding (JR)   Joint Stewards meeting  RF noted that HRMC and MRMC had held a joint stewards meeting. She stated that Denise Willingham had given notice that she will be standing down as a steward at the end of the Methodist year. She has started her 6th and final year, including 4 years of being a senior steward. It was noted that the stewarding role was a good way of being part of the church. The Council discussed the current gap in the Senior Steward role. The Stewards had tried to share the role but it was agreed that this was not really viable. The Church needed a central contact generally and for the Circuit Directory, and one person with an overview.  Holiday Club for young people school years 1-6  It was noted that the Holiday Club held over October half term was a huge success. 2 of the holiday club families have come back to services including the new ‘Create and Celebrate’ services. The fantastic organisation and planning was noted.  Financial report  EB presented the draft budget for the year ahead for approval, noting that it showed a planned loss of £49,000 explaining this was deliberate designed to drawdown reserves to support the lay workers and significant building projects.  He also pointed out that a deficit of £33,000 was planned for 2020-21 but the actual loss was just under £8,000.  The 2021-22 budget was approved.  **Post meeting notes:**  **John Robinson has agreed to audit HRMC Church Accounts 2020/21 year ending 31/8/2021. Angela Spriggs has written as Church Council Secretary to confirm this appointment by post, with our grateful thanks to John.**  **The discrepancies in the Statement of Accounts are now resolved.**  Change in insurance renewal (EB)  EB recommended increasing the excess of the Church insurance, following a quoted increase in insurance premium from £2,585.48 to £2,771.72 (7.3%) at the last renewal. Increasing the excess from the current level of £50 to £500 or £1000 would reduce the premium to £2,373.5 or £2,224.19 respectively. The Council agreed to give authority to the Finance Committee to decide whether to increase the excess to £500 or £1000.  **Post meeting note:** The insurance policy has since been renewed with a £500 excess.  Acoustics in Large Hall  The Property Committee is looking into improving the problematic acoustics in the Large Hall. EB reported that he had been quoted £10,000 by Resonics to reduce reverberation, from a company who had done a similar project in Sandridge Village Hall. EB noted that he had found a quotation received by the church in 2010 for £13,950 +VAT. EB sought support to look into these improvements further, by getting other quotations to deal with reverberation issues.  The Church Council agreed to pursue these changes.  **Action: EB is to obtain further quotes for improving the acoustics in the Large Hall.**  **Post meeting note: Sound Reduction Systems have since provided an estimate, and visited on 25 Nov to make measurements and get a better understanding. A third company has been approached but appears not to be interested.** |
| **9** | **Dates of future meetings**  Tues 15th March 2022 (New Date) / AGM Date to be fixed / Wed 29th June 2022  (See Perpetual Calendar Below) |
| **10** | **AOB**  MRMC / HRMC Funding for joint projects (PW)  PW sought clarity on the MRMC’s funding for the lay worker project and Cornerstone House. It was noted that  MRMC insurance and safeguarding was covering the expenses of Cornerstone House and MRMC had enough money in reserves to cover the lay worker project. PW requested that the MRMC / HRMC funding and finances of their joint church projects (lay worker employment) are subject to regular review by the Church Council meeting’.  EB noted that the Churches had received all grants related to the layworker posts.  Permission for Maggie Dodd to take extended communion to those housebound (RF)  RF noted that MD has sought permission to take extended communion to those who are housebound using a set Methodist liturgy. The Church Council agreed to support the application. It was noted that MD needed to be realistic about the number she could do. |
| **11** | **Closing Devotions were held.** |

**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 17.10.21  Sun 13.02.22  Sun29.05.22  Sun 17.04.22 | Mon 18.10.21  Tues 22.02.22  Wed 08.06.22  Sun 25.05.21 | Mon 25.10.21  Tues 01.03.22  Wed 15.06.22  Sun 01.05.22 | Mon 08.11.21  Tues 15.03.22 Wed 29.06.22  Sun 15.05.22 |
| **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 8th November 2021**

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **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) | Deacon Linda Kinchenton (observer) | | 11/2021 |
| **Church Stewards** SO 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) | Caroline Tough1 [Elected by ballot] | | 05/2012 |
| Ros Hancock 1 | | 05/2015 |
| Chris Kitchin 1 | | 06/2017 |
| Graham Danbury 1 | | 05/2018 |
| James Appiah | | 06/2021 |
| **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  Emma Williams (Children and Families Worker, observer)  Maggie Dodd (Anna Chaplain, observer) | 08/2017  06/2019  11/2021  11/2021 | |
| **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 [Ex Officio]  Vacancy | 09/2015  09/2017  XX/XXXX | |