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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

Tuesday 15th March 2022 7.45pm at Hatfield Road Methodist Church

**Attending:**

Rev Andrew Prout (AP) (Chair), Angela Spriggs (AS) (notetaker), Val Parker (VP), Peter Wallace (PW), Ros Hancock (RH), Stuart Johnson (SJ) ,Graham Danbury (GD), Eric Bridgstock (EB), Chris Kitchin (CK), Denise Willingham (DW) Gina Woodhead (GW), Joanna Rose (JR), James Appiah (JA), Caroline Tough (CT)

**Apologies were received from:**

Joe Kinchenton, Linda Kinchenton, Maggie Dodd, Lianne Weidmann, Rev Rosemary Fletcher, Angela Andrews, Freda Gray, Noelene Browning

AP opened the meeting. The situation in Ukraine was remembered. Devotions were held. The Council held Maggie Dodd and her family in their prayers following the passing of her mother. AP noted that the COVID precautions were being taken during the meeting (wearing of masks, opening of windows, etc)

**Membership of the Church Council**

The **Membership of the Church Council** as at 150322 was agreed.

**Minutes of Church Council 081121 and Joint Church Council 16022**

The minutes to the Church Council 08112021 were agreed subject to the following addition in AOB:‘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’.

The Church Council agreed with the proposed addition. EB noted that the finance section within his Treasurer reports could be expanded to incorporate this.

The Minutes of the Joint Church Council meeting held on Wednesday 16th February 2022 were agreed.

**Matters Arising**

AP noted that new licences for Living Waters for their use of HRMC premises were still to be drawn up subject to their confirming how often they will meet. He reported that there was still no definite date for New Testament Church of God’s use of HRMC. This depended on the timing of the renovation of Fleetville Community Centre.

AP reported that at the Joint Church Council on 16th February both HRMC and MRMC agreed to be licensed for same sex marriages. Rosemary, Andrew and the Stewards will take this forward as soon as possible although there are no set dates. The Church can proceed with blessings immediately as these do not need a registrar.

AP reported on ongoing Covid-19 Management at the Church. He stated that he, DW, EB met every month (subject to guidance) to review the measures in place. AP expressed gratitude to EB and DW on behalf of the Meeting for the work they have done.

AP reported that Babies and Toddlers had now opened. It is intended that the Aldersgate Cafe will open in May, once or twice a month depending on the number of available volunteers. Girls and Boys Brigade was yet to open. AP is in contact with Lesley Saunders.

Eco-Church: RH and DW are still to take forward plans to register HRMC as an Eco-Church Award and will do so when time allows. They will identify what is needed for a Bronze Award. RH stated that she will take empty crisp packets from the Church to Fleetville Infants School. All toilet cubicles at the Church have been twinned with overseas toilets as part of the toilet twinning scheme. The twinned toilets are in 3 countries with connections with members in the church.

The Action Tracker as at 010322 detailing on-going and outstanding actions was noted. AP highlighted the need to review the Church’s GDPR compliance. He noted that many churches had given feedback that the review was impossible in the timescale. AP noted that the Church is largely compliant.

**Appointments and Vacancies**

AP reported that AS indicated that she wants to stand down as Church Council Secretary at the end of the Year after 3 years in post.

DW will be stepping down as Senior Steward at the end of the Year after 6 years as a Steward including 3 years as Senior Steward. Joe Kinchenton will be stepping down as a Steward when he and Linda Kinchenton move. AP noted that this will leave 4 church stewards. Two of these (Angela and Tomas) are often away during part of the year because of family and work commitments. The Church will therefore want to appoint at least one more church steward in May. Tomas is willing to take on the Senior Steward role.

**Letters of Greeting and Support**

AP noted that the Church had received correspondence from Tonga High Commission to express thanks for the £1,655 raised by the Church for the Tonga Appeal. AP thanked Eric for collecting the funds. The letter will be circulated with the Church Notices. The Vunipola family thanked the Church for its support, stating that they had been ‘humbled’ by it.

The Church Council expressed sympathy and support for Maggie Dodd following the death of her mother. AP stated that he had told Maggie to take what leave she needed to be with family in this period.

**Action: Gina Woodhead will send a card on behalf of the Church Council.**

AP stated that Valerie Chapman, member of the Methodist Church St Albans Christian Aid Committee, had approached him to ask if HRMC could host St Albans District Service on the evening 15th May at 6.30 p.m.. This is the same day as the HRMC AGM. The Church Council agreed that it was possible to hold both on the same day.

RH asked for the Church Council’s authorisation for the Church to advertise an event by Extinction Rebellion at St Lukes Church on 26th March. The decision would have implications for advertising future events by Extinction Rebellion. The event was already advertised through Churches Together in St Albans. There was no seconder for a proposal for the Church to advertise it separately from Churches Together in St Albans activities.

**Matters from Circuit, District and Connexion**

SJ gave a report on the Circuit Meeting held on 010322.

The Circuit adopted the Whitechapel Mission as a national project following an online visit from Tony Miller The Circuit Safeguarding officer Steve Matthews has stepped down with immediate effect due to ill health. Rev Rosemary Fletcher is reviewing the job description so that another Safeguarding Officer can be appointed as soon as possible.

The appointment of a circuit administrator is progressing. The Circuit is close to advertising.

Digswell Church will become a wholly Methodist Church from 1 Sept. To date it has been an Ecumenical Project with the Anglican Church.

The Welwyn Hatfield churches have been looking at their relationship and possible ways to share resources. There were no clear outcomes from the process which is now paused.

A Circuit Invitation Committee is being appointed to manage AP’s appointment. His current term is due to finish August 2023. The Committee will involve people from HRMC, MRMC and the wider Circuit, Rev David Mullins has agreed to Chair the Committee until September 2022. He will then hand over to Rev David Jebb, the incoming Superintendent Minister.

Circuit Finances can be maintained at the current level and these are sustainable over the next few years.

Rev Dr Jeffery John will be speaking at a Discover Together meeting on May 16th.

The District Synod with be held at MRMC on Saturday May 7th. Volunteers are sought.

The outcomes of the joint HRMC and HRMC meeting held at HRMC on 16th February to discuss God in Love Unites Us were reported to the meeting.

SJ reported on the appointments made since the last Church Council meeting on 08112021:

Rev David Jebb is appointed from 010922 (He will be Superintendent and in charge of SJPB, RUFC, Shenley). The Manse at St Johns Potters Bar is being prepared. Rev David Jebb is currently on sabbatical.

Rev Rosemary Mutopo has been appointed from 010922. She will be in charge of Oxlease, Birchwood, Ludwick Way and Digswell. RF has requested special dispensation for Rev Mutopu to lead services for Holy Communion within her 1st 2 years.

No appointment has yet been made to succeed Deacon Linda Kinchenton from 010922. One person has visited but was not a match for the role. The Circuit must now wait until after the next meeting of the stationing process on 28th March to decide next steps. SJ stated that the Circuit may need to reconvene the Stationing Committee to decide how to move forward if no deacon is found.

A farewell service for Revs Rosemary Fletcher, Bruce Anderson and Ali Facey and Deacon Linda Kinchenton will be held at 6.30pm on Sunday July 17th 2022 at MRMC

AP will have ministerial oversight of St Johns Potters Bar from 010322 – 310822 so that RF can concentrate on completing her ministry at MRMC.

A Circuit Easter offering service will be held at HRMC at 2.30pm on Wednesday 18th May 2022.

The next Circuit Meeting will be held 150622 7.30pm

The forthcoming Thinking Lunches will be held at MRMC on Thursdays at 12.30pm, dates 07/04, 05/05, 09/06.

There will be a Welcome Service for Rev David Jebb and Rosemary Mutopo at SJPB on Friday 2nd September 2022 at 7.30pm

AP noted that Rev Sue Stilwell is providing pastoral support at Potters Bar for 2 sessions a week.

AP asked the Council to remember the CLT and Circuit Stewards in their prayers. They have recently taken on a huge amount of work.

AP noted that on Monday 13th June 2022 Chris Kitchin and Graham Danbury are hosting a session for those new to Church Trusteeship or who would welcome a refresher.

**Reports from CFW, Anna Chaplain and Deacon Linda Kinchenton re Cornerstone Project, projects are pursued jointly with Marlborough Road Methodist Church**

The following reports were noted in the meeting:

* Report from CFW including Holiday Club and Sunday Club (Emma Williams)
* Report from Anna Chaplain including Holiday at Home (Maggie Dodd)
* Report on Cornerstone Project (Deacon Linda Kinchenton) AP highlighted a request for assistance for activities at the Cornerstone Project taking place at the Easter Weekend, and the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.

**Reports Part 1**

The following reports were received and noted:

Senior Church Steward (DW)

AP thanked DW for her superb support and guidance over 2 incredibly challenging years.

Worship Consultation (AP)

AP said that the Consultation will seek feedback on experiences of livestreaming services to see how to proceed in future. The Stewards will consider how the Church will commemorate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. It was noted that the date of the Jubilee Sunday coincides with Pentecost, the Create and Celebrate Service, and Thy Kingdom Come which provided an opportunity for outreach. AP proposed to look into doing an event in the car park.

Pastoral Committee (GW)

AP made mention that Pat Maziane was taken to hospital after falling ill at the Church following the previous Sunday Service. He thanked those who had attended to Pat.

Safeguarding (Standing Item) (JR)

No report was due for the meeting but JR noted that there was a gap in training capacity following Steve Matthews standing down.

CFW Management Group & Anna Chaplain Management Group (AP)

DW noted that the report gave an indication that the Lay Workers Group were looking to extend the appointment term of the Children and Families Worker as Emma’s first year of appointment was during the pandemic. DW noted that the extension will have to be funded by 2 churches, as the Churches would be unlikely to get further funding from grants. AP noted that there will need to be conversations with Emma before the proposal is brought to the Church Council for approval. This could then come to the June Council.

Lay Employment Group (no comments made)

Communications Group (AP)

AP noted that the report presented brings the work of the Communications Group to conclusion except for actions to take forward. AP extended his thanks to Chris Kitchin, Chris Hancock, Lianne Weidmann and Marion Eaton, for all the work done by the group since it was set up in 2018.

PROD Group # (AP)

AP expressed gratitude to VP for setting out current progress. He expressed thanks to those standing down, including Chris Kitchin and Freda Gray. He noted that the Committee had welcomed a number of new members. The report sets out that work in the Small Hall is being prioritised with a view to increasing the Church’s capacity to open out into the Community. The Committee will liaise with local builders to identify the possibilities for improvements and potential cost then bring proposals back to Church Council.

VP confirmed that the Church could accommodate other Churches such as the Church of God of Prophecy or Living Waters if required while any work was being carried out (timings of both unclear). DW requested that proposed refurbishments of the vestry and kitchen do not happen at the same time as other refurbishments.

**Reports Part 2**

To receive and adopt the following reports and agree any proposal therein:

* Property and Finance# (EB)

EB expressed concern that the report from the independent examiner appeared to question his qualifications for the role of Treasurer. He emphasised that the independent examiner stated that there was no question as to the accuracy of the accounts.

**EB noted the following items from the report:**

**Gas:** The pence per kWh should be 8.375, not 8.448.

**Electricity:** E-on have initiated renewal of our electricity supply contract.  Gaia have provided options, as they did for gas.

**Lay Workers:** Connexion have confirmed that their second £10,000 Anna Chaplain instalment will be paid in April (they granted £50,000 in total).

**Interest Rate:** The CFB rate increased to 0.25% on March 1st, meaning the last three monthly interest on our savings have been roughly £1, £12 and £17.

**Defibrillator:** The defibrillator was delivered on March 2nd.  Its cabinet was expected week beginning March 14th [since received on March 18th.]EB expressed thanks to CK for the original proposal. He also thanked Ian Gotts, who identified an opportunity to apply for funding.

**Maintenance:** As a result of the fire alarm review service, the call points are being replaced with ones that can be tested.

**Fire Assessment**

Chris Hancock and Eric Bridgstock have carried out a fire risk assessment on March 14th, using the Methodist Insurance checklist.  This was a pre-cursor for a professional assessment by the company who have serviced our fire equipment for many years.  The main finding was the need to keep records of servicing, tests, drills, etc – EB will get a suitable “red book” to be kept in the Vestry.

Note and Approval of fully independently examined accounts 2020-21

The independent examiner is content to sign the accounts once agreed and signed off by the Council.

AP referred to an issue related to monies raised for a Gambian charity. The Church had previously raised money for a lift for a Gambian Church with whom Angela Andrews had contact. A lift was subsequently donated and Angela Andrews requested permission to use the money for the lift installation. The Church agreed to send the money but so far has not been able to because of COVID and because they could not find the right channel to transfer it. Church Council policy states that they can only send money to UK based charities, unless the Church Council agrees to the exception. The Church Council agreed that the exception could be made for a known contact and a known Church. It was agreed that the transfer would be made through the Methodist Church Connexion. It is aimed to achieve the transfer by August. The Council will also have to make sure that the money is spent on installing the lift.

The Church Council unanimously adopted the Church accounts for 2020 / 2021 which have been independently examined.

EB noted that the church finances were still healthy.

Approval of expenditure re Acoustic Panels in Main Hall

EB ran through proposals and options for installing noise reducing panels in the Large Hall. He proposed that the Church approved a quotation of £11,580 by the company Resonics which would reduce reverberation time from over 3.5 seconds to an estimated 1.3 seconds.

The Church Council discussed the various options and implications of sound deadening including the potential impact on musical performance. It was agreed that clarity of speech was more important than music; a more appropriate venue could be chosen for musical performances. EB and AP stated that the finances could be covered under the budget for renewals and renovation, and that the Church had available funds without drawing on legacy money. It was agreed that the acoustic deadening would make the Hall more attractive for hiring.

The Church Council unanimously approved the proposal to proceed with the installation of acoustic deadening to 1.3 seconds resonance by Resonics for £11,580. [PMN: The actual final cost was £10,992]

**Dates of future meetings**

Sunday 15th May AGM Following Morning Service

Wednesday 29th June 7.45pm (See Perpetual Calendar Below)

Closing devotions were held.

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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 17.10.21Sun 13.02.22Sun29.05.22Sun 17.04.22 | Mon 18.10.21Tues 22.02.22Wed 08.06.22 | Mon 25.10.21Tues 01.03.22Wed 15.06.22Sun 01.05.22 | Mon 08.11.21Tues 15.03.22 Wed 29.06.22Sun 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.

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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) | Deacon Linda Kinchenton  | 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) | 08/201706/201911/202111/2021 |
| **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  | 09/201509/2017XX/XXXX |