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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 Wednesday 30th June 2021 7.45pm at Hatfield Road via Zoom

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| **1** | **Welcome and Apologies / Opening Devotions**  **Present: Rev Andrew Prout (AP), Eric Bridgstock (EB), Val Parker (VP), Chris Kitchin (CK), Stuart Johnson (SJ), Joanna Rose (JR) Graham Danbury (GD), Gina Woodhead (GW), Ros Hancock (RH), Denise Willingham (DW) Caroline Tough (CT), Angela Andrews (AA),**  Including our remembrance of those who have died.  **Apologies from:**  Freda Gray  Lianne Weidmann  Peter Wallace  Rev Rosemary Fletcher |
| **2** | **Membership of the Church Council**  **Membership of the Church Council** as at 300621 was agreed. AP noted that Chris Hancock and Helen Jeffery stood down as representatives of the Congregation to the Church Council at the AGM. **Angela Spriggs will write to them to express thanks for their substantial service over the years.** AP confirmed that Chris Kitchin, Ros Hancock, Caroline Tough and Graham Danbury were all duly elected to the meeting until the next AGM in accordance with Standing Orders.  The Council was content with membership of the meeting with the above amendments. [It was noted that the Council list circulated was incomplete. A correct Council list has been circulated with the draft minutes. |
| **3** | **Minutes of Church Council 090321 and Joint Church Council 210421 #**  The Minutes of the Church Council meeting held on Tuesday 9th March 2021 were adopted as a true and correct record.  The Minutes of the Joint HRMC / MRMC Church Council meeting held on 21st April 2021 were adopted as a true and correct record. |
| **4** | **Appointments and Vacancies**  AP noted a continuing vacancy for Sunday club coordinator. He and Emma Williams, Children and Families worker, will meet with Sunday Club leaders on Sunday 4th July to discuss plans for the Summer and Autumn. AP noted that Lianne Weidmann is stepping down from her Sunday club role because of other commitments at home, church and work.  CT asked if the intention was to find a leader for the Sunday club activities or do without a leader and run it with existing Sunday Club staff.  AP stated that the Church needs a dedicated Sunday Club coordinator with central responsibility for registers and for safeguarding purposes. He indicated that it may be necessary to create one Sunday Club group rather than the existing two, because of fewer leaders and children.  CT questioned whether there had been any active or wide calling out to the Congregation to fill these roles.  AP stated that he had approached one person who did not want the role, but it had not been actively pursued during lockdown. AP proposed a more concerted effort after lockdown.  DW stated that this vacancy, and those for other prominent roles where members have stepped down during the COVID period, should be publicised more widely within the Church so that the Congregation is aware of the roles.  DW also referred to a proposal under consideration that Sunday Club might be run only fortnightly, with all age worship once a month on the first Sunday and all age communion on the third. She stated a need to ensure that the all age worship was truly all age worship. She noted that this change would very much affect the life and worship of the Church. She stated that the Church needs to seriously consider its Church’s offer to children and families attending the Church. CT agreed that the Church needs to have a good plan in place for children and families, especially as we have a Children and Families worker. Otherwise the Church is wasting its resources.  AP also noted the vacancy of a Babies and Toddlers Leader. He stated that he, EW, GW and FG would be meeting to review how this might work from September. He noted a leadership gap in Daycare following the sad death of members, which also affects the Babies and Toddlers Group.  JR proposed producing a plan for Sunday Club which could be shared with the Congregation, setting out what can be done with both existing and greater resources. This would help people see what the Church would like to do given the right resources and encourage them to step forward.  DW proposed that some may be willing to be a second attender / assistant for safeguarding purposes, rather than being a full Sunday Club leader running the session. AP noted that the main challenge lies in finding a Sunday Club leader. He stated that EW has thoughts and ideas which will be shared at the upcoming meeting.  AP affirmed the Church Council’s representatives to the Circuit meeting: DW or who holds position as Senior Steward; EB as Treasurer; and JR as one of three permitted Council representatives. There are currently two vacancies. One follows Chris Hancock’s stepping down from the HRMC Church Council and the other is a standing vacancy. The Church Council normally requires representatives to the Circuit to be members of HRMC Church Council so that they can report back although it is not required by Standing Orders. It was noted that Chris Hancock (CH) is on the Circuit meeting as a local preachers’ representative so was willing to stand as representative from HRMC without standing on the Church Council.  CK considered that such a representative had to be a member of the Church Council to represent the Council’s views. RH considered that they representing the Church’s views.  It was proposed and seconded that CH stood on the Circuit Council as representative of HRMC, noting that he would not be on the Church Council. 7 in favour; 1 against. Therefore carried.  CK proposed that Angela Spriggs be approached as a representative to the Circuit. [AS was temporarily absent from the meeting due to technical difficulties]. It was agreed to approach her.  James Appiah has indicated that he would be willing to serve on the Church Council. AP put his name forward to the Church. The Church Council approved his appointment. All were in favour, subject to his fulfilling the necessary safeguarding criteria **(Action JR**). |
| **5** | **Letters of Greeting and Support / Correspondence**  AP informed the meeting that the Methodist Church has put together an annual checklist relating to GDPR. Every church is required to complete this annually by 31st August and report compliance to the District. This would be completed by Angela Spriggs.  AP noted a document ‘*The Runaway Train*’ produced by an organisation opposing the adoption of the same sex marriage proposals and cohabitation at the Methodist Conference (set out in ‘*God in love unites us*’). He stated that there had already been an appropriate level of debate on the subject and he did not intend to do anything further with *The Runaway Train*’.  AP told the Council that Trinity URC required £600,000 of essential repairs. They are considering options for the future. They are in the process of approaching all Churches locally including HRMC. Next steps are not clear but the Council will be kept informed.  AP expressed his good wishes on behalf of the Church Council to Rebecca, Caroline and Chris Tough’s daughter, and Alice on their marriage on 10th July, and to all the family. AP stated that it would be his privilege to be in attendance at their wedding to offer a blessing. Following the vote of the Methodist Conference it will be possible to have a formal blessing in the Church next year. **Gina will send a card to Rebecca and Alice on behalf of the church, wishing them well.**  The Council acknowledged the death of Alan Davey since the last Church Council meeting. All thoughts and prayers are with Sue Davey.  AP stated that the Church would also wish to give Betty Burdett, who is leaving the area to be with her daughter, an appropriate farewell at the right time. AP, DW and the Stewards will organise this. |
| **6** | **Matters Arising not appearing elsewhere and Action Tracker**  Latest on Re-Opening and Covid-19  AP stated that the Church COVID group will meet to consider the implications of the lifting of restrictions on 19th July. The group will look to move to a single service model, possibly from the 11th July, if it is safe to do so. It will consider the numbers attending Church.  Dissolution of De Havilland Project and continuing Salisbury Village work  AP referred to the report on the De Havilland Project circulated to the Church Council. He noted that since the last Council meeting changes to funding arrangements for the Project had been discussed at the Circuit and Diocese, as set out in the timetable provided. He noted that the arrangements had been signed off by MRMC Church Council and the Circuit, but remain to be signed off by the Project, Diocese and HRMC. The two St Albans Churches are due to take over responsibility from 1 September.  GD noted that when details were circulated in April there was a reasonable expectation that the diocese would give their share of the funds (£15,000) to the project but this will not now happen. Although the Circuit have agreed to underwrite the costs, the lack of these funds inevitably places a greater financial burden on HRMC and MRMC, albeit indirectly. GD noted that his initial vote supporting HRMC’s and MRMC’s adoption of the project was on the basis of receipt of the funding and he may have voted differently had he known that they would not receive it. VP noted that the Circuit’s adopting the shortfall means that all Churches will share the burden and not only HRMC and MRMC. AP noted that the costs would be covered from the Circuit’s existing reserves. GD stated that this still means that finances will not be available for other projects.  There will be a meeting of the Bishop’s Diocesan Council on 13th July to agree to the dissolution of the project. The existing Project Committee will then act on Circuit and the Diocese instruction to dissolve the project on 31 August, to be adopted by HRMC and MRMC from 1 September.  DW and CK sought clarity on the status of legal responsibility for the Project. It was noted that legal responsibility had to sit with one Trustee body. MRMC will have legal responsibility for the project with respect to financial concerns and safeguarding issues, to balance out HRMC’s taking on responsibility for the lay workers.  The Church Council voted on the two proposals set out in the Report:  **In so far as HRMC and MRMC are concerned both Church Councils, further to the Joint Church Council held on April 21st, should at their forthcoming Church Council meeting …**   1. **Agree to take joint responsibility for the work in Salisbury Village with MRMC taking legal responsibility (as agreed at the Joint Church Council on April 21st) from 1st September 2021.**   **6 in favour; 2 against**   1. **Note and agree to the financial terms set out in the boxed area below and being presented to the Circuit Meeting on 16th June 2021.**   **6 in favour; 2 against**  The Council noted the Action Tracker as at 220621 detailing ongoing and outstanding actions. |
| **7** | **Matters from Circuit, District and Connexion**  Report on Circuit Meetings 250321 and 160621  SJ reported on the stationing of a new Deacon. Linda Kinchenton, the existing deacon, has indicated that she does not wish to be reappointed from 2022. He stated that he had made good progress on the profile for a new Deacon. He has received feedback that the proposed profile is strong and the position attractive, providing encouragement that the Circuit will be successful in filling the role.  Other upcoming meetings  AP noted other upcoming meetings:   * Visit of President of Conference Rev Sonia Hicks to MRMC 10 October 21 at the 10.30am Sunday Service. HRMC are likely to join with MRMC for this service * Circuit Study Day with Doctor Chris Hewer on 20 November 21 * Circuit Quiet Day with Rev Abi Thompson (Sub-Dean of Cathedral) 260222   Matters Arising from Methodist Conference 240621 – 010721  AP reported on outcomes from the Methodist Conference. He stated that following debate of the report ‘*God in love unites us’*, Conference agreed, with 254 in favour and 46 against, to alter the definition of marriage affirming same sex marriage and allowing Methodist Churches to conduct same sex weddings where their Managing Trustees permit. In due course the Church Council will be required to indicate whether they are willing to host same sex couples marriages in the Church along with all Methodist Churches. RH noted that a discussion on a section on couples living together had been deferred indefinitely.  Rev Andrew Prout’s Sabbatical September – November 2021 and arrangements for cover  AP noted that he will be on Sabbatical from 23 August to end of November. Rev Rosemary Fletcher will have pastoral care of HRMC in his absence. AP is meeting with the sabbatical support group on the week commencing 4th July. AP hopes, if permitted by COVID, to walk a part of the Camino pilgrimage in Northern Spain for part of his sabbatical. If this is not possible he may walk part of one of the Northern Saint routes in the UK. |
| **8**  **9** | **Reports**  The Church Council received and noted the following reports:  Worship Consultation: The next meeting will be held on Monday 12th July. It is open to everyone. The Consultation Group will be planning ahead for worship post COVID. It will consider what has been learned from worshipping in real and virtual space during COVID, and also the appeal for different times of services.  Property and Finance EB noted that the builders have completed repairing the wall, and renovations to the Wesley Room are completed.  RH asked about the Church’s actions to work towards becoming an eco-church. She noted that the Church is already looking into twinning toilets; this was put on hold during COVID but the Church expects to hear on progress shortly. She noted that is also possible to twin fridges and bins. RH asked that the Church looks into providing recycling facilities. It was noted that currently FG took recycling rubbish home, and the Church had no control over recycling of users of the Church premises. **EB agreed to look into recycling with Biffa.** It was also noted that the Church will also need to register with the Council for Green Waste collection which is now being charged for.  Anna Chaplain Management Group: AP noted that the group had had its first meeting with Maggie Dodd the previous evening, 29th June. He noted that there will be opportunities for the Church to meet with Maggie Dodd, Emma Williams and possibly Linda Kinchenton on the evening of 10th August, at MRMC, and the afternoon of Wed 11th at HRMC, to hear about their work and opportunities for service.  CFW management Group # (CT)  Safeguarding: JR noted that all checks were up to date. They were completed during the COVID period as required. She noted that training is outstanding but this is now possible online. JR will be in touch with those concerned. She noted that there is now one course for everyone, regardless of whether they are completing it for the first time or repeating. The course is valid for 4 years.  The Annual Report 2020-21 as presented at the AGM also for the purposes of the Charity Commission (previously circulated). AP expressed thanks to Angela Spriggs for her work in compiling the Annual Report and all work done throughout the year where there have been an unprecedented number of meetings. The report was received and unanimously adopted by the Church Council. The Annual Report has now been uploaded onto the Charity Commission website.  **Church Policies**  The Statement of Purpose, Vision, Mission and Intention 2021-22. The Church Council noted and agreed the Statement as written.  The Register of Meetings for the year 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022 The Register was noted and agreed.  Church Policiesfor the year 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022   * Financial Management : Scheme of Delegation * Financial Management : Benevolence Fund * Financial Management: Charitable Giving * Financial Management : Reserves * Babies & Toddlers Group * Lone Worker * Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults * Use of Premises and Charges * Data Protection and GDPR (As per Connexional Policy) * 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)   Re Financial Management and Controls – DW raised the issue that the Church had had to adapt its ways of working during COVID which are not now in line with the Financial Policy as laid out. The Church no longer has financial stewards. The weekly collections have to be quarantined before counting. They are counted by EB and DW together and full records taken. The amounts concerned average about £30 rather than approximately £300 to £400 before the COVID period. The treasurer has also had to bank takings. EB clarified that although cash collections have decreased the Church is receiving more in collections through direct debit. EB also declared that he still receives envelopes with cash from some members of the congregation who do not have another option. He stated that he takes proper records and treats the monies with due diligence so that it is traceable. **EB will review the Financial policy with a view to updating it.**  The Church Council unanimously adopted all policies as they stand.  Extension of permission to worship for Living Waters for further 12 months from 1/9/21  The Council was asked to agree to the above extension. It was noted that the Living Waters Church had not met during the pandemic but had contacted VP during the last few weeks to identify what they had to do. They may come back on a reduced basis. VP proposed to invite Living Waters to renew its licence, subject to getting all paperwork in place. The Living Waters will need a COVID risk assessment. It is proposed that Living Waters uses and adapts HRMC’s risk assessment if they do not have one.  The Church Council was content to agree extension for a further 12 months from 1 September. |
| **10** | **Dates of future meetings were as follows**  Mon 8th November 2021 / Tues 15th March 2022 (New Date) / Wed 29th June 2022 (See Perpetual Calendar Below) |
| **11** | **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 17.10.21  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 Church Council membership 1 July 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) | Rev Alison Facey | | CLT 2015 |
| **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) | 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 | 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 | |