

# Minutes of the Walton Churches Partnership Council Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 at 7.45pm

**Present:** Ann Beaton, Tyrone Darrell, Joyce Fennell, David Harbey, Ann Harris, Ruth Maxey, Brenda Nield, Yvonne Pilarski, Keith Straughan, Matt Trendall, Sue Wilson

**Apologies:** Catherine Held, Rachael Jenkins

1. Welcome

Sister Yvonne welcomed everyone to this first meeting of the new WCP Council, before formally opening in prayer.

2. Proposing and election of Council Officers

The first position to be considered was the Chair. Keith proposed Sister Yvonne as the Chair, and this was seconded by Ann Beaton.

The Vice Chair was then considered. Ruth proposed Matt, and this was seconded by Ann Harris.

Next, Matt proposed that Joyce be elected as Secretary to the Council. This was seconded by Brenda Nield.

These officers will usually serve for a term of one year. As the AGM, in March 2017, was only a short time away, it was agreed that for this first term only, the officers would serve until March 2018.

The Council also needed a Treasurer. David Harbey, already undertaking this post, agreed to continue for a little longer, although he was keen to step down as soon as someone else could be found. As a formality, Ruth proposed David, and this was seconded by Sister Yvonne.

3. Getting to know one another

Sister Yvonne suggested that, in pairs, we find out about our partner's early experiences of church, and then report back.

4. How did the Walton Churches Partnership begin?

Matt led on this item, and distributed an A4 paper which gave us some history and background. In answering the question, 'What is our role as the Council?', Matt had set out 4 bullet points to summarise our activities.

5. What are we already doing together in the Partnership?

Ruth led on this item, and distributed an A5 paper which set out all the ways in which the Churches of the Partnership already share resources from Youth & Children's Work, Prayer, Worship, and Resources to Leadership, Property & Finance and shared Social events. Once the new Baptist Minister is appointed at Christ The King, they will be employed by the WCP, and will join this Council.

6. Open discussion on priority areas for working closer together and sharing mission. Sister Yvonne drew our attention to the first bullet point on Matt's handout sheet: *"To assist in finding ways to work together more fruitfully for the kingdom of God."* With regard to **mission**, Ann Harris remarked on how many people, especially from the All Saints and St Mary's congregations had already attended the Mission Intro course run by the Mission Partnership team. The course had provided all attendees with the tools, and practical examples, to move forward more effectively into the area of mission, and we now have to consider how we will use this knowledge to deliver mission to the new housing developments near the M1 motorway.

Brenda felt strongly about the poor quality of our **communication** between the churches of the Partnership. At Christ the King, there is an excellent one-year course being advertised called 'Footsteps', but it seemed that very few people outside of that church were aware of it. Sue Wilson suggested a newsletter among the churches would be very useful. The drawback here was finding someone with a lot of time available who would be willing to undertake responsibility for a newsletter. It would need much coordination between all of the churches. Ann Harris, of All Saints, was mentioned as doing a good job regarding communicating information via email with a large number of people. Trish Rosewell, too, at St Mary's made tremendous efforts for communicating events, too, throughout each month. Lynn Atkinson has recently begun a similar role at Christ the King Community Church.

David thought that we need to be more specific about what type of communication was necessary; **internal communication** with our own congregations, and also **external communication** using various kind of technology available to us. He believed we should commit to these first. Ruth said that perhaps each congregation should have a group email, to facilitate sharing of information and news.

Ann Beaton asked Sister Yvonne if there were any opportunities for **sharing activities** across the Partnership such as a service with the Catholic congregation. Ruth questioned why we might want to do this. It should not be just for the sake of it. There needed to be a particular focus and reason. Ruth mentioned that The Week of Guided Prayer was an activity that had been shared across the Partnership very successfully. The few weeks that the visitors from Taize had spent with us in August had also been a time of sharing prayer and Taize chants. Ruth said we must remember that not every piece of news is worth sharing, if it is not relevant to particular congregations.

With regard to forthcoming communications, Ruth had ordered several boxes of **Christmas flyers for distribution** among the Partnership churches. In terms of attracting youth members, there is to be Taize weekend in Birmingham in 2017.

There is also a day out to Warwick Castle on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017 that is being advertised for all churches, and Ruth is keen to pursue this. **ACTION:** church representatives on the WCP Council to make their congregations aware of this event.

## 7. Practical Matters

**Finance Updates:** David led on this item, and clarified procedures and processes.

Individual churches – look after their own finances with regard to weekly service collections and any other activities run during the week e.g. coffee mornings.

WCP - pays salaries and expenses to the clergy

- owns and manages the Manse at Twinflower, Walnut Tree.

David obtains his money from the churches in the Partnership, except for the Catholic congregation. He meets with the congregational Treasurers from time to time to monitor their budgets. Owing to a close bereavement, David has been unable to provide a budget for 2017, nor the outturn for 2016, and apologised.

With regard to the Church Without Walls (CWW), there are three elements of funding:

- Ruth's house is paid for by the Anglican church
- Ruth's salary is paid by the United Reformed Church
- Ruth's running costs and expenses are paid by the WCP

*Update on Twinflower Re-development:* Given that there has been no Baptist minister in post for the second half of 2016, this means a saving on salary, although pension still has to be paid. This saving of approximately £8000 has been ring-fenced to be put towards building costs for Twinflower. Matt explained that the house set aside for the Baptist Minister is recognised as not being fit for purpose. A group was set up in April 2016 to discuss this, and as a result, the decision was made to build a two-storey extension at a cost of approximately £100,000. An architect, Alison Swarbrick, has been appointed and her initial drawings should be available before Christmas this year. Peter Laws, of Christ The King, is happy to manage the project, as he has a great deal of experience in the building industry.

The building will be paid for via several means:

- Grant from a local charity
- Money saved from having no Baptist minister in post as yet
- Fundraising among the congregations

Planning permission is to be submitted before Christmas and work could be completed by Summer 2017.

David said that a proper order needs to be proposed to the WCP where various building costs have to be paid. He proposed the following, regarding authorisation of cheques:

Sums up to £200 – for incidental costs – Peter Laws

Sums between £200 and £1000 – Matt and David (As long as building work is satisfactory)

Sums over £1000 – permission to be sought from WCP.

**All who were present agreed to this proposal.**

*Search for a new treasurer:* Ruth said that with regard to David's role as Treasurer, he has been wishing to step down for some time, but it has been very difficult to find anyone who is interested enough and qualified to undertake the role. If any of the WCP Council members know of anyone who might fit the role, then please let us know. As regards managing finances for CWW, Paul Lindsay, a new church member had indicated he was interested but has not yet committed himself.

David said that the WCP needs to decide what kind of Treasurer they require. Is the WCP looking for just a bookkeeper who will not attend the WCP meetings? It is not a full-time job, from David's point of view, and the new person would receive a handover. David stated that from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, he would undertake the Treasurer role until March but not attend the meetings.

Ann Beaton suggested contacting accountancy companies. In the light of Government initiatives to encourage staff to volunteer in the community, perhaps this might be a way to gain accountancy help.

#### 8. Partnership personnel updates

Matt led on this item.

- a) *Search for Baptist minister.* A group has already been convened and various sub-groups set up to take responsibility for key issues. Ruth Bottoms, a minister who lives in Leighton Buzzard, and works in London, has agreed to be our Moderator, and comes with an extensive range of experience for this role. At present, there is a sub-group working on the church profile for Christ The King, and their work will be reviewed at a meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016. Another group is meeting for regular prayer.
- b) *Keith Straughan's role within the Partnership.* Matt reported that Keith came to him about three years ago to offer his time and support to Ruth and Matt. Keith is a retired clergyman, who was ordained twenty years ago. He has been helping Matt and Ruth by taking services for almost two years now, and is now ready to offer himself on a voluntary full-time basis. Matt and Ruth have been very grateful for his support, and propose that Keith should be officially and formally introduced to the Partnership, given a job title, and acknowledged by the Diocese. The Diocese have already agreed to provide him with training and support; Matt will be his line manager, and Keith would like to be called an Associate Priest. His primary base will be at All Saints and CWW. Matt asked for comments on this proposal.

Brenda suggested that Keith should meet with the Stewards from Christ The King (CtK) before agreeing to licence him as Associate Priest. They might also wish to find another way for Keith to meet the wider congregation.

Ruth certainly felt that there should be a special service to recognise Keith officially as an extra Clergy member on the team. Perhaps, in the New Year, the WCP can arrange a special induction service.

Out of courtesy, then, it was agreed that Brenda should approach the Stewards at CtK in the first instance, to introduce Keith. At this point in time, it was agreed that the WCP could not agree to the proposal until the Stewards had been approached. **ACTION:** Brenda to approach Stewards at CtK. **ACTION:** this item needs to be added to the next Agenda for a conclusion.

#### *East Wavendon Development*

Matt led on this, and reported that a bid had been made to the Diocese for a Pioneer Minister to work for ten years within the new housing development. A house would be purchased for this person, and they would be funded by the Anglican Church.

In February 2017, the proposal will go before the Deanery Synod, and should be formally agreed. The Diocese will then agree it in March. First homes are planned to be ready by December 2017. It is hoped that the Pioneer Minister will arrive about the time that St Mary's C of E Primary School opens on its new campus in the Summer of 2018. David explained that the WCP will pay for this minister's expenses, though like Ruth, it is hoped that the church community which emerges will begin to cover some of its costs within five years.

9. **A.O.B.** Sister Yvonne mentioned that we could consider events where we could share faith across the Partnership such as Lent Groups. Ruth said that there were certain items that were more appropriate for discussion among the Clergy Team.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 – Venue to be confirmed