

## **Minutes of the Walton Churches Partnership Council Meeting**

**28<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 7.30pm, St Mary's Church, Wavendon**

**Present:** Rev. Matt Trendall (Chair), Rev. Ruth Maxey, Lynn Atkinson, Ann Beaton, Joyce Fennell, Ayokunnu Otunla, Carolyn Sanderson, Emma Tyler, Sue Wilson.

**Apologies:** Julia Davie, Klaus Reidel, Rev. Keith Straughan, Roger Taylor.

**Absent:** Tyrone Darrell, Rachael Jenkins.

### **Welcome and apologies**

Matt welcomed everyone to the meeting, and read from Isaiah 61 vs 1, followed by a prayer. There was no representation from the Catholic congregation. Emma joined the Council for the first time representing CWW, and Lynn joined as a rep for CtK.

1. **Approval of Minutes of last meeting** – 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018. There was a little confusion over the version that had been sent out with the agenda for this current meeting. Matt updated everyone on any amendments. The Minutes were then approved.

### **2. Matters Arising**

- Joint WCP Christmas service – quick review  
Matt felt it went well, and there was a good representation of all the WCP congregations, including two families from CWW, which pleased Ruth. Lynn commented that she always enjoyed these annual joint services. Next Christmas the venue will be at All Saints at 9.30am.
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – update  
This had been well received, and Matt had found the Prayer Booklet material very thought-provoking. It was agreed that it was a good idea to do something different every year, to keep the content fresh and varied, so that there was something for everyone.
- CWW Reference Group report  
At the last meeting, we learned that Ann Atkinson had decided to step down from being Chair of this Group. Since then, Ruth had asked Steve Potter if he would be interested in taking up this position, and he agreed.

**Resolution 1:** that the WCP Council are in favour of Steve Potter taking up the position of Chair of the CWW Reference Group.

**Proposed by:** Ann Beaton

**Seconded by:** Carolyn Sanderson

**Agreed** unanimously

Lynn reported that Rachael Jenkins was considering stepping down from the WCP Council. Lynn would ask Steve if he would be Rachael's replacement.

- Methodist and URC Area

Ruth distributed a leaflet to the meeting, explaining that the formal bureaucratic structure of the URC, in Milton Keynes, is no longer relevant or effective, and has been brought to an end. Ruth explained the URC hasn't had a strong identity, and only functioned at Synod and Diocesan level.

However, it had worked in partnership with the Methodist Church. The current state is that the Methodist Circuit has now been reformed, though the partnership is not being forgotten. As such, Circuit Meetings need to agree their membership for the future and want to include reps from the LEPs.

The Milton Keynes Methodist Circuit is therefore asking for three reps from each LEP. Ideally, they should be Methodists, but this is not essential. The three reps from our LEP would report to the WCP Council. There will be an event on 7<sup>th</sup> April to commit this new membership.

From our group, Ann Beaton and Sue Wilson volunteered. Ruth will send an email to appoint them officially.

A third person is still required plus another who would be willing to attend the twice-yearly East Midlands Synod. Lynn agreed to circulate information on this at CtK.

- WCP Statistics

Matt circulated some statistics on WCP membership and church activities which gave a profile of gains and losses compared to 2017.

Compared with 2017 numbers, membership had decreased by 9 people at All Saints, due to folk moving out of the area or passing away, while St Mary's had lost 3 elderly members, though others had moved in to the area to compensate.

Other tables showed numbers of school assemblies led by Matt, a breakdown of adults and children at the various churches, and attendance at Easter and Christmas events. Given the 14+ services held over Advent and Christmas, this year, our WCP Churches welcomed around 3000 people, which was a massive increase from 2017's figures. New Joiners remained largely the same, while there were fewer marriages and baptisms, though more funerals.

- Role Description for a Rep on WCP Council

Matt circulated a sheet providing a Role Description for Congregational Reps who sit on the WCP Council. This gives very useful and valuable guidance. Basically, WCP reps act as a channel for communicating information to and from the congregation to the wider Partnership.

Everyone was pleased with this document.

- New Appointment to review our Partnership  
The Church in Stantonbury has appointed a part-time Anglican minister to review our Partnership. Among all the other Partnerships within Milton Keynes, Walton seems to be one of the most effective and successful, and has been chosen as a focus over the next 18 months. The WCP Council have been asked to provide a rep to help with the review, and there are very firm guidelines;
  - Must be a lay woman;
  - Must have extensive knowledge of how the WCP came together.
 We were pleased that Carolyn Sanderson was very gracious to volunteer, and her appointment was unanimously agreed.

### 3. Finance

- Treasurer's report  
Unfortunately, Julia was unable to attend this evening. There were no major changes to report. Julia's main focus has been managing a balance of share across the various congregations. Her role will also entail managing the salary, and particularly, PAYE contributions, for the new Baptist minister at CtK.
- As reported at the last WCP Council Meeting, Julia will be emigrating to Canada at the end of June. Therefore, she has put together a Role Description for the position of WCP Treasurer. This will be circulated around the congregations.
- Any other financial feedback from congregations  
Lynn reminded the meeting that money still has to be released to pay for curtains, carpets, and other decoration for Twinflower, now that a new minister has been appointed.

### 3. Mission and ministry

- Appointment of Ruth Gookey as a Baptist Minister  
Now that the congregation at CtK has voted in favour of this appointment, it was important that it was also agreed by the WCP Council, as the employer. The motion proposed was:

**Resolution 1:** That Walton Churches Partnership formally approves the appointment of Ruth Gookey as Baptist Minister for the Partnership, with pastoral responsibility for the congregation of Christ the King Community Church, subject to the required DBS check and agreement of Terms of Settlement.

**Proposed by:** Lynn Atkinson  
**Seconded by:** Sue Wilson  
**Agreed:** Unanimously

Ruth G will start at the end of August 2019, so we will need to generate a Welcome plan for her nearer the time. Ruth M. asked if she could release the news in her next CWW newsletter. Matt agreed but did not want to announce it via the website or by email just yet.

The next step is to send Ruth G. a formal letter of appointment.

- Pioneer Minister

Our application for a minister to plant a church on the new Eagle Farm housing development was submitted some time ago. At the time, we satisfied all of the Diocese's criteria. Since then, however, the Diocese has changed the way they appoint posts, and we have been a casualty of that change.

Matt has been working closely with Tim Norwood, Area Dean, in order to seek a way forward. A few weeks ago, Tim was able to find a solution: in the west of MK, a clergy post had become redundant though it still carried a salary. Tim suggested transferring it to the WCP and, specifically, to solve the challenge of planting a new church on Eagle Farm. Matt wholeheartedly agreed. The post won't be available until 2020. We just need to hope that the Diocese will provide funding for a house on the new development. Until we know if we have accommodation provided by the Diocese, we cannot move forward.

Ruth commented that this raises the profile of our Walton Partnership: we already have history of establishing a new church in Broughton/ Brooklands in the shape of CWW. Our share will increase year on year but given we have saved money over the past three years, through not having to pay for a Baptist minister, we are in a good position financially.

- Renewal of Membership across the WCP

Church membership has to be reviewed once in every six years according to the Anglican Church. Matt had leaflets to distribute that Ruth had designed. Page 3 was deliberately blank so the individual churches could write their welcome and introduction. Feedback from St Mary's and All Saints was very positive. The term 'Associate' was discussed. Matt felt there should be an alternative level of membership to Full Membership, to accommodate those who attended services/ events at our churches but who weren't fully committed. The word 'Friend' was preferred. [Either way, we agreed it should be a separate leaflet.](#)

Other comments were:

- Change 'Mobile' to Telephone Number;
- Need one form per individual, not per family;

- Lynn thought that there should be two versions – one for New Members and one for Renewing Membership. Roz at CtK had already come up with some revised wording, and Lynn would email this to Ruth.
- 'Youth Café' Proposal for Broughton & Brooklands  
Ruth brought a proposal to the table regarding establishing a Youth Café. A Youth and Community organisation called *Pulse* had already set up three such ventures within Milton Keynes which were run by MK Council. *Pulse* could set up everything for us, and run it on our behalf. It sounded great but discussion around how we would finance it caused concern. The cost would be at least £7k per year. Sources considered were:
  - Broughton Parish Council – would they pay for 50%?
  - Broughton Trust?
  - Matt felt the WCP should underwrite this venture financially, [even if other sources of funding were found](#).

Ruth has emailed the Parish Council informally about this, and is eagerly awaiting a reply.

Matt said there was already a *Pulse* Youth Café at Wavendon Gate School, and it had been running for the past few years. Over a Tuesday and a Thursday evening, they received 70 members weekly. There is currently no Youth Club in the Broughton area.

Conclusions were that:

- we should take a softly, softly approach as regards the Parish Council at this stage;
- Endorse it as an idea, and gain buy-in from the other congregations;
- Visit a Wavendon Gate *Pulse* session;
- Attend the next Parish Council Meeting.
- Joint Ash Wednesday Services  
Ruth had emailed Father Francis and Klaus Reidel, and the Catholic Community would be happy to go ahead on 6<sup>th</sup> March at 7.30pm at CtK. There would be a morning service at 10.30am at All Saints to include 'Ashing'. This service was open to the whole Partnership.
- Lent series proposal: 'A Season for the Spirit'  
Matt explained that we are to use a book this year, a classic Christian book from 1991, called 'A Season for the Spirit'. Matt had already pulled together some themes and hoped that Home Groups would follow it.

Ruth informed the Council that CWW will have an opening and closing *Quiet Church* service to introduce the theme of Lent. This will be at St Michael's Priory at 11.15am.

Ruth had set up a *WhatsApp* group so that people, who were not attached to a Home Study Group, could follow the Lent Series virtually.

- Other Lent and Easter services

Lynn advised that CtK would like to undertake Lent Lunches.

Carolyn said that All Saints have already planned to do a Lunch.

- 'Thy Kingdom Come'

Held at the end of May/beginning of June, this event has been very successful at St Mary's and All Saints in past years. Matt would like to do it again. Last year, at St Mary's, the congregation were encouraged to take the names of a couple of streets near them and pray for the residents. There was nothing on the website yet about the event.

Ruth reminded everyone that there would be no Week of Guided Prayer in 2019.

- Taize Pilgrimage August 2019

Ruth is taking two families to the Taize monastery in France during the week of 18-25 August. This annual event usually attracts 1000 -2000 people. Anyone can come.

- New Wine

Matt mentioned this annual Christian festival which is moving from its long-held location of Shepton Mallet to Peterborough this year. It takes place during last week of July/first week of August, and regularly attracts up to 12,000 people over the two weeks. Day tickets as well as Weekend tickets are available. People usually camp out, but there is more standard accommodation available nearby. Matt is attending on 27<sup>th</sup> July, and wants to open this out to more people from the WCP.

#### **4. Updates from around the churches**

Not covered as no time left.

#### **5. Date/Time of Next Meetings – AGM Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> April – 7.30pm**