

Minutes of the Walton Churches Partnership Council Meeting

12th November 2019 at 7.30pm, St Mary's Church, Wavendon

Present: Rev. Matt Trendall (Chair), Rev. Ruth Gookey, Rev. Ruth Maxey, Ann Beaton, Joyce Fennell, Ayokunnu Otunla, Steve Potter, Carolyn Sanderson, Emma Tyler.

Apologies: Lynn Atkinson, Klaus Reidel, Rev. Keith Straughan, Sue Wilson.

Welcome and apologies

Matt welcomed everyone to the meeting, and opened with prayer.

1. Approval of Minutes of last meeting – 11th September 2019.

Ruth M. drew attention to Item 3. *Finance*, and the heading, *Bursary Fund*. See sentence “which Ruth uses for Taize, New Wine, trips away, etc.” Please delete ‘New Wine’. The Minutes were then approved unanimously.

2. Matters Arising

- *MK Confirmation service*. This is being held this coming Sunday, 17th November at St Mary's Church, Wavendon at 6.00pm. There are 13 candidates from MK taking part, with 8 coming from our Partnership congregations. Given the numbers attending, with their families, Ruth M. had concerns over parking spaces. Matt assured her that the former school car park was open to us, and there was also sufficient street parking.
- *Youth Café update*. Ruth has spent much time in ‘chasing’ Broughton and Middleton Parish Council for a response, but none has yet been received. The start date will be January at the earliest now.
- *Christmas Leaflet*. Ruth M. proposed to use the same A5 leaflet from previous years, with only minor adjustments. All WCP clergy have commented on it already, though Father Francis is still to give his response. In past years, we have ordered 10,000 leaflets at a cost of £200. Ruth G. felt we should order less, since any amount left over had a negative effect on morale. 7,500 was considered, even though, conversely, this would be more expensive. Ruth M said that each congregation should consider their own figures and let her know as soon as possible. The leaflets only take a week to print, so it would be good to have them ready by first week in December.
- *CWW Reference Group Report* Carolyn said that she, Ruth and Steve Potter had not yet met. They have arranged to meet on Wednesday, 13th November. One item that will be discussed is the URC's desire to recognise CWW as a new congregation. Given that the URC is a distinct denomination, and CWW is ecumenical in nature, this has caused issues for the URC in terms of wording the document.

Nonetheless, the intention is, for this move for recognition, to go before the General Assembly in mid-July 2020. This Assembly only meets once in two years, so for this item to go before the General Assembly now is very pleasing for CWW.

- *Bursary Fund Proposal* Ruth M. had produced an application form for anyone wishing to avail themselves of this facility. Ruth had drafted some wording to precede the application form, which was discussed as follows:
 - “Bursaries are available to help with the cost of courses, trips, retreats, youth events and other activities which are deemed to help the family or individual in mind, body or spirit. Bursaries are offered where the applicants’ circumstances are such as to prevent them otherwise taking part in the proposed event.” The word ‘trips’ was scrutinised. Did it mean someone could apply to take a holiday? The word was deleted from the text, as ‘other activities’ covered it adequately.
 - “It is anticipated that in most cases a bursary will be offered to cover only a proportion of the overall cost and that there would generally be an expectation that the applicant would seek to raise the remainder of the costs themselves.” What did ‘in most cases’ mean? Do we need to specify a range? No, just use discretion.
 - “only a proportion” – we need to be more specific on what this means. This will facilitate the sub-group in coming to a decision. We need to make it clear that applicants should be prepared to offer some money themselves. So, perhaps, re-draft to say, ‘Some expectation of match-funding would be sought from the applicant.’
 - A small sub-group of three/four people will consider the applications and make the recommendation to the Council (*anonymously*) in terms of bursaries that are to be offered. The small sub-group should consist ideally of one person from each congregation.

Action: Opportunities to be one of these sub-group candidates should be opened up to each congregation.

- Ayokunnu asked how the sub-group would make their decision. Ruth M. drew attention to the Supporting Reference, further down the application form.
- Emma asked how much should be set aside for this Bursary Fund. £500 from each of the 4 congregations should be sufficient, giving us £2000 in total.

Action: Agreed that **Guidance should be drafted for the sub-group.** There was discussion on the kind of proof required by the External Examiner, when monies were gifted to applicants. Matt stated that the very nature of bursary funds was that they were based on trust.

Proposal: that the WCP should set up a Bursary Fund from 2020

Proposed by: Ruth G. **Seconded by:** Ann B. **Agreed:** Unanimously

3. Finance and Admin

- *Treasurer's update and current financial position.* Emma reported that she had met with all of the WCP Church Treasurers. Bank accounts were very healthy and everything is as it should be. Everything has been paid. We have £88K+ in our deposit account, and £21k in our current account.

However, as for the 2020 forecast, we are going to struggle. Currently, we are potentially £3k - £4k down. This is due, in some part, to the fact that congregational shares were capped, and there was a 6% increase going out to the Diocese. It had already been agreed that we will help CtK this year. Matt said he wasn't too troubled by being £3k to £4k down. Four years ago, our bank account contained only £30k, and now it has £100k.

2019 Congregational share rebate for CtK. Last year, we gave a rebate to CtK to help them balance their books. This year there is also likely to be a deficit up to £5k. Given the long minister vacancy, this is understandable, and so the Council proposed:

Proposed: that the WCP should help CtK again this year and grant them up to £5k.

Proposed by: Matt. **Seconded by:** Ann B. **Agreed:** Unanimously

- *Approval of 2020 Budget and congregational shares* We noted amends to All Saints' share (up by £500) and allowance for the Bursary Fund (£2,000) and the Youth Cafe (£1,000). We accept these amends:

Proposed: that the WCP should agree this budget and shares

Proposed by: Matt. **Seconded by:** Ruth M. **Agreed:** Unanimously

Matt wanted to minute his thanks to Emma for all of her hard work over the past few months.

- *Safeguarding update and training.* Rachael Jenkins is liaising with the Diocese regarding new training. Ideally, we want to have the next level of training – C2 – to be delivered in March 2020, but the Diocese aren't 'up to speed' with this yet.

Ruth M has set up a support group for safeguarding. There is a need for at least one person, within the WCP congregations, to become a DBS Verifier. The system followed for DBS checks is the Baptist one. Ideally, there should be one from each of our four congregations, and Rachael would welcome help with admin.

Action: **Opportunities to be one of these DBS Verifiers should be opened up to each congregation.**

Ann Beaton volunteered to organise the training, and will speak to Rachael directly.

- *CIO registration update* Matt had been given no further information.

4. Mission and Ministry

- *Future planning updates:*
 - Thy Kingdom Come – end of May
 - Week of Guided Prayer – dates have been confirmed with the Prayer Guides. **One or two volunteers are required to undertake the admin for this event.**
 - Taize Trip – 16th -23rd August 2020
 - Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – Ruth M. suggested a party for 2020. A ceilidh had been held a few years ago, and was popular. Carolyn will contact the people who led this previously, and seek their availability for either w/c 17th/18th January or 24th/25th January. **We will need a volunteer from each congregation to act as a party planner.**
- *Post-Alpha/Lent Bible Course Spring 2020* – Ruth M introduced us to a Bible Course that has been produced by the Bible Society. It includes 8 weeks' worth of DVDs plus a booklet to work through, and covers the whole Bible from end to end. Booklets cost £5, and all participants would be encouraged to buy their own copy. It was agreed that we should go ahead with this from either the last week of January (25th?) or first week of February (3rd?). It would be advantageous to run this twice a week at two different venues with say, one happening in the evening and the other in the daytime, to allow everyone to have a chance of attending.
- *Eagle Farm Pioneer Post – September 2020 - planning committee and drafting profile* - Though Matt hasn't had formal notice from the Diocese, Tim Norwood, the Area Dean, has told him that he can proceed with preparations for a new Pioneer Minister. The Strategic Development Fund, who will provide us with the money to fund the post, will not formally endorse this until at least March 2020.

We now need to press ahead and form a Sub-Committee which would generate a Profile and role description, and generally oversee recruitment. The brief would be similar to Ruth M's role, to plant a church in a new-build area. Matt would be the Chair, and felt that Ruth M. should definitely be involved, given her own experience of church planting. Others will need to join the group, too.

Ruth G suggested that the WCP puts together a presentation, in the New Year, to show the wider WCP (our congregations) what is going on with the new housing development in mission terms. We need to generate interest and involvement.

- *WCP environmental policy* Matt wanted to minute his thanks to Lynn A. for the tremendous amount of time and energy she had put into

producing the documents for this Council Meeting. The work was very detailed and comprehensive. As such, it was felt that it could neither be a tick box exercise nor be imposed on people as it was presented here. Carolyn said it was important for people to 'own it'. Steve felt that it was for each congregation to work out their own priorities. We need a simpler audit, and broader high-level principles. For example, in all our decisions, going forward, we could be encouraged to ask, 'what will be the environmental impact?' Matt preferred to adopt the practical measures rather than pursuing a 'Bronze, Silver, Gold' approach as put forward by Ecochurch, as this gave it a competitive edge.

5. Updates/feedback from around the churches

We ran out of time for this. However, it was suggested that churches email the Secretary with any updates for inclusion in these Minutes. [No updates forthcoming.]

6. Date/Time of Next Meeting – Wednesday, 15th January 2020 at 7.30pm at St Mary's, Wavendon.

The meeting closed with everyone saying the Grace together.