

WALTON CHURCHES PARTNERSHIP
Annual General Meeting - 3rd April 2019
7.30pm, St Mary's Church, Wavendon

Present: Rev. Matt Trendall (Chair), Lynn Atkinson, Ann Beaton, Alan Bird, Joyce Fennell, Rachael Jenkins, Ruth Maxey, Ayokunnu Otunla, Klaus Riedel, Carolyn Sanderson, Pat Sawyer, Alise Trendall, Stephanie Warren, Sue Wilson.

Observer: Steve Norman

Apologies: Ros Bird, Jim Churcher, Julia Davie, Roger Taylor, Emma Tyler, Jo Watson.

1.0 Welcome and apologies – Matt chaired the meeting and led us in Evening devotions. All were welcomed to the meeting.

2.0 Minutes of the 2018 AGM and Matters Arising

Steve Norman requested that his name and wife, Jackie's name be removed from the 2018 Minutes, after which the Minutes of the 2018 AGM were unanimously agreed.

There were no other **Matters Arising** not already in the meeting agenda.

3.0 Highlights of our worship community year

All Saints – Carolyn reflected on the rhythm of the weekly pattern of services, and ongoing life. The congregation was growing and continually diversifying, and the Church building was being used more. Pat said there were lots of new things happening with some long-established folk departing, while new people were joining. With the relatively new initiative of Go4th Sunday every month, All Saints was becoming more recognised in the community. So far, they have run many different projects, including:

- Inviting 3 speakers to give talks;
- Undertaking litter picking monthly, including with a scout pack;
- Holding monthly services in Milton Court, Kents Hill.

Christ the King – Lynn said the church had had a successful year with many social events and outreach. Activities had included:

- Inviting local school children into church for tea;
- A movie night where *The Shack* was shown;
- Fish and chips Quiz Night;
- The Baptist *Footsteps* course;
- Christmas Carol Singing;
- A WCP Ladies Meal;
- Hosted the World Day of Prayer, and raised £149 for charity.

Carol singing is also a positive force for uniting the Community and Catholic congregations.

St. Mary's – We have had many comments over the past year from visitors, about how welcoming our church is. This is evidenced by our regular and one-off events such as:-

- **Thursday Coffee Morning** – which has been going for nearly 10 years, and has continued to be popular, bringing in mums dropping their children off at the school across the road, villagers and people from further afield. We have a considerably well-established clientele, who aren't necessarily churchgoers.
- **Quiz Nights** – started a year ago and happen monthly on Tuesday evenings. These are very popular and have drawn in many from the community who are non-churchgoers. People enjoy it so much they have requested that the admission fee is increased!
- **Café Church** – happens every 2nd week of the month, and has been well received from most of our congregation. The informal discussions generate many useful points of learning.
- **Prayer Walks** – every 3rd Sunday of the month, several members gather, around 2.30pm, to walk around either land set aside for the new housing or around established residential areas. For example, we have prayed around Walton High School, and other areas where young people gather, and prayed that good influences may triumph over more negative ones.
- **Peace Exhibition** – this was held on Remembrance Weekend last November. We welcomed in several hundred visitors over the two days, and provided many exhibits to view on different aspects of peace, including children's work from the local schools.
- **Our various women's groups** – continue to flourish such as Open House, Review, and Breakfast at Frost's. This has inspired the men to set up their own social group, and a few recently went out for a meal and to the bowling alley.
- **A new Home Group** – at Melvyn's house has recently started, and is well attended.
- **Links with the Community** – and our links with the local community just keep on growing. We very much value our relationship with local schools and continue to deliver 'Christmas Cracked' and Easter Cracked' in association with the Bridgebuilder Trust. We have also established ourselves at Milton Court, Kents Hill, where a small group from our church entertain the residents monthly.

Catholic congregation – Klaus reported that a farewell event was held to mark Sister Yvonne's departure in Dec/Jan. She seems to have settled in well to her post in London/France. There are plenty of baptisms to undertake as well as several people preparing for their first Communion.

Church Without Walls (CWW) – Sue - several new people had joined recently. In the past year, the church had had 3 x infant baptisms, and one adult baptism. The usual routine each month was:

- 1st Sunday – Quiet Church
- 2nd Sunday – Café Church
- 3rd Sunday – Forest Church
- 4th Sunday – Dinner Church

CWW had also established an initiative called *My Time* which consisted of spending time together engaging in activities such as craft and meditation. CWW members were also keen to engage with the youth in their area, and may well start a group soon. CWW already work with younger children in helping them with language skills, where English is not their first language. A trip to the Taize community in France is planned

for the summer. The average attendance on CWW Sundays is about 40 with a regular worshipping community of about 40 adults and 25 children. 47 have completed membership forms on a formal basis.

4.0 Mission and Ministry around the Partnership

a. Baptist Minister appointment summer 2019

Ruth Gookey has been appointed as the new Baptist Minister for Christ the King from August 2019. Ruth Maxey has been working closely with The Baptist Moderator for the Search Group, Rev. Ruth Bottoms, and they have produced the Terms of Settlement for Ruth G's contract of employment. The Council was presented with this document in advance of this evening's meeting. Ruth M. wanted to emphasise the key points:

- Parity is important across the Partnership re. all members of the clergy. For example, the salary being offered by the Partnership is better than the Baptist salary. Regarding holidays, Ruth G would have been entitled to 5 weeks and 4 Sundays per annum, but the Partnership have agreed on 6 weeks;
- Ruth G. officially takes up post on 15th August but she will move into the Manse on 1st August and have 2 weeks to settle in. She will take things at a slow pace until she is officially licensed at a special induction service 3 weeks later;
- Ruth G has additional on-going employment, albeit part-time, that was discussed at interview;
- Ruth G's salary will be processed by the West of England Baptist Association, which will ease the pressure on our WCP Treasurer.

A sub-group to draft these Terms of Settlement was appointed by the Search Group at their final meeting on 28th February 2019. The final draft has been completed and now has to be ratified by the WCP Council as the Employer.

Resolution 1: That the WCP Council agrees to these Terms of Settlement

Proposed by Rachael, seconded by Sue, agreed unanimously

Resolution 2: That the WCP Council agrees to use the West of England Baptist Association to manage the payroll for Ruth Gookey

Proposed by Matt, seconded by Lynn, agreed unanimously

b. Renewal of Ruth's post for 2018-2023 and future plans for Church without Walls

This has been renewed until 2023 as a Special Category URC post. Ruth met with the pastoral reps of the Synod on 3rd April, and submitted a request for a 2-year extension, until 2025. The request is a very specific one: to assist the new Pioneer Minister in the running of CWW during a 2-year transition period (2023-25). It will go before the National Accreditation Committee in September.

c. Pioneer post in Wavendon's new housing development 2020, incl plans for church plant in new church school and community hub in old school.

The local primary school, St Mary's CofE, in Wavendon Village is moving to Eagle's Rest in August 2019, and will be a key hub for mission in this new area. Matt already has permission from the Headteacher to use the school hall on Sundays.

3 years ago, Matt asked the Diocese for a Pioneer Minister to serve in this new area. After a much uncertainty and delay from the Diocese, a solution has been found, with a position becoming available in another part of MK. The Deanery have re-assigned it for our Partnership's needs. The Diocese have been asked to purchase a house on Eagle's Rest in 2020. The Pioneer Minister will be responsible for church planting in the new housing area. It is possible that after a few years this person will also look after the CWW congregation, once Ruth M. comes to the end of her contract.

Rachael asked if we were asking too much of the new Pioneer Minister. Ruth replied that there is certainly much work to be done, but that is where the Partnership comes into its own in terms of creativity and flexibility. We can draw on the resources of all of our 5 x congregations.

Lynn remarked that it was important, amidst all of this new mission, to sustain our established church communities, and indeed connect them with the new ones being created.

In the near future, there will be a need to consider how finances will be available to pay for this new minister. Matt reported that because the minister vacancy at CtK has been unfilled for the past 3 years, this means that we have saved a considerable sum of money which will ease the transition towards finding an additional staff salary. As Ruth M's contract progresses, the WCP will be paying for her housing more and more, plus we will be expected to pay increasingly more of our Church share to the Diocese.

Alan asked if the Baptist Church Strategy fund had been considered as a possible source to grant funds.

Matt emphasised the very significant amount of change that was, and will be happening over the next decade, that will change the face of MK forever. However, we have been here before:

- Thirty years ago, when new housing appeared on Walnut Tree, Christ the King Community Church was built. Then the Local Ecumenical Partnership was born.
- With Broughton and Brooklands being built, there was a need for a church to be planted. Ruth M was commissioned to lead the project and the Church Without Walls began, and is still flourishing.
- Now, more and more housing is being built to the east of Wavendon.

In the Parish of Walton alone, 10,000 houses are being built, equating to approximately an additional 25,000 people added to MK's population. This is more than in any other parish in the UK. So, we must seize the moment, and take every opportunity to bid for any funds available, and consider our own Partnership's strategy.

Ruth emphasised that out of all the various LEPs in Milton Keynes, Walton LEP stood out among the rest in doing more mission than anywhere else.

d. *'Celebrate and Bless': major investment in church growth and discipleship across Milton Keynes*

Milton Keynes is the fastest growing town in the whole of the UK. The Diocese of Oxford have therefore decided to set aside £3 million to 'grow' the church. Partnerships all over MK are being asked to consider how best to spend the money on offer in terms of numbers of ordained and lay workers required within their areas over either a 3-6 year period or a longer 5-10 years.

Resolution 3: That we will need to set up a small working group if we are to bid for some of the money available

Proposed by Ruth, seconded by Matt, agreed unanimously

e. Catholic Cluster and provision for Christ the King

There are 4 x priests to serve Catholic congregations in Milton Keynes, but no one single person allocated to CtK. Sister Yvonne is greatly missed and will not be replaced, so everyday things are more difficult without a liaison/ admin person on site.

f. Key Partnership events coming up:

i) **Passover Meal** – on Tuesday, 16th April at 6.00pm, CtK are holding a Passover meal. Each church has been given an allocation of tickets. If anymore are required, please contact Lynn. Peter Cutler will lead the event.

Maundy Thursday 18th April, CWW are holding an event at 7.30pm at Broughton Pavilion, which will consist of Communion and Prayer. St. Mary's are also hosting a joint WCP communion service at 8pm.

ii) **'Thy Kingdom Come'** 30th May to 9th June– One million Christians around the world will be supporting this initiative of Bishop Justin Welby, which is now in its 4th year. There are many resources available. All Saints is currently working in partnership with the Grand Union Vineyard Church for an event in Monkston on 8th June, which will be open to everyone.

iii) **Summer BBQ** – This is scheduled for 21st July in the Rectory Garden, Wavendon, from 3.00pm until 6.00pm.

g. Ideas for 2019-2020

As regards ideas for the coming year, the WCP Council has regular discussions on what's best to present at congregational level or Partnership level. We need everyone's ideas, and Partnership reps need to talk to their congregations about this. The Council will have an agenda item for the next Council meeting so that we can give priority to any forthcoming ideas.

Ruth reported that she was looking into starting up a Youth Café for CWW. The company, *Pulse*, are already running three such Youth Cafés across MK, and they are very successful. *Pulse* provides the organisation and practical running of these Cafés, but we need to finance it. The Parish Council will contribute £5,000 p.a. Ruth asked if the Partnership could contribute £1,000 p.a. for the hire of a venue?

5.0 Confirmation of Congregational Representatives to WCP (2 per congregation) and MK Mission Partnership, and of other WCP Council officers for 2019 -20.

For the WCP Council, these are:

- *All Saints*: Carolyn Sanderson and Ayokunnu Otunla
- *St Mary's*: Ann Beaton, Joyce Fennell (Joyce is also Secretary for the Council)
- *Church Without Walls*: Emma Tyler, Sue Wilson
- *Christ the King Community Church*: Lynn Atkinson, Steve Potter
- *Christ the King Catholic Church*: Klaus Reidel

- *Staff team (ex officio)*: Rev. Matt Trendall, Rev. Ruth Maxey, Rev. Keith Straughan plus Baptist Minister (Rev. Ruth Gookey) when appointed.
- *Treasurer*: Julia Davie until June 2019, then Emma Tyler;
- *Chair*: Matt Trendall. Matt will alternate chairing meetings with Ruth M.

As a legal requirement of the Anglican Church, we must have a Parochial Church Council.

To minimise meetings, it is helpful if these officers also serve on the WCP Council.

Members of the PCC are: Ann, Joyce, Keith, Matt, Ayokunnu, Carolyn and Julia;

These will be joined by the 3 churchwardens for Walton: Pat Sawyer (All Saints), Ray Holmwood and Roger Hancock (St. Mary's);

Deanery Synod rep. - Carolyn Sanderson;

MK Mission Partnership Reps for this year are: Ann Beaton for St Mary's (+ 1 vacancy), Ann Harris & Sandy Gray for All Saints, Lynn Atkinson & Jo Watson for CtK. There are no reps currently for CWW.

By law, Churches must have a Responsible Adult (previously known as Childrens' Advocate.) For the WCP as a whole, this is Ros Bird. However, our individual churches have their own reps. as follows:

At All Saints, it is Sandra Mills; at St. Mary's, it is Ann Beaton; at CWW, it is Jackie Bennett; at CtK Community Church it is Ros Bird.

Resolution 4: that Ros should continue the work, as overall Children's Advocate, for another year.

Proposed by Ann B, seconded by Sue, agreed unanimously.

6.0 Finance & 2018 accounts

Each church pays a share to the WCP Council. Our financial position at the end of this financial year is that we have reserves of £91,730.53 which is £2,000 more than last year.

The Twinflower upgrade has cost £106,355 so far, with £12,000 budgeted for 2019 to complete the work (matching the 2017 overall cost estimate of £118k). The monies were derived from:

- A £40,000 grant from the Broughton Trust;
- A £10,000 grant from the Methodist Church;
- c. £21,500 of congregational fundraising plus c.£4,500 of Gift Aid;
- Savings gained by not paying Baptist Minister salary for 3 years.

Accounts have not yet been independently examined, so cannot be signed off.

Lynn requested, on behalf of CtK Stewards, that Matt provides her with a detailed spreadsheet of all Twinflower expenses.

7.0 Appointment of Treasurer and External Examiner

Matt wanted to record his grateful thanks to Julia for her work as Treasurer over the past year. We are delighted that Emma Tyler has agreed to succeed her.

Proposed by: Ruth, seconded by Ann B., agreed unanimously

Independent Examiner: Taiwo Adesanya has stepped down, so we need to look for a replacement. Rachael said that perhaps her mother could undertake this as she already does this kind of work in her 'day job'.

8.0 Safeguarding

Rachael explained that she had updated the Safeguarding policy. Some of the key changes were: now four different levels of training. Other changes can be seen in the document on online. The whole policy is currently 59 pages long!

Resolution 5: That Rachael continues her work as Safeguarding Officer for the Partnership for another year.

Proposed by Matt, seconded by Ruth, agreed unanimously

Resolution 6: to agree the Safeguarding Policy

Proposed by: Ruth, seconded by Lynn, agreed unanimously

9.0 Walton LEP Housing Ltd

- 2018 Accounts – Walton LEP Limited is effectively a holding company for the asset of the house. The company has no income or expenditure.

Resolution 7: to agree the 2018 Walton LEP Housing Ltd accounts.

Proposed by: Ayokunnu, seconded Lynn, agreed unanimously

- Update on Twinflower
The project has now been completed, save for flooring and decorating. A small budget has been set aside for the incoming incumbent to choose the décor, carpets, and curtains. The new minister will receive a mobile phone, broadband, and have all utility bills paid.

10. Any Other Business

Alan Bird was concerned about the constitution of the WCP, in that we don't have proper charitable status. He had already met with Matt to discuss this. Matt explained that the reason why we haven't progressed with this yet is that he was advised to wait until Churches Together in England had generated an agreed template for LEPs to use. Only last week, that template became available. Therefore, we will be able to start the process within the next 12 months. We will have to have Elected Trustees. Matt apologised that he had not communicated this earlier.

Date of Next WCP Council Meeting

Wednesday, 19th June 2019 at 7.30pm.

Venue: St Mary's, Wavendon

The Meeting ended with Evening Compline