

## **WALTON CHURCHES PARTNERSHIP**

**Annual General Meeting – 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

**7.30pm, via Zoom**

**Present:** Rev. Matt Trendall (Chair), Lynn Atkinson, Alan Bird, Rev. Ruth Gookey, Roger Hancock, Rachael Jenkins, Rev. Ruth Maxey, Joyce McKenzie, Ayokunnu Otunla, Steve Potter, Sue Robertson, Carolyn Sanderson, Pat Sawyer, Gloria Terrelonge, Alise Trendall, Emma Tyler, Stephanie Warren, Sue Wilson

**Apologies:** Ann Beaton, Klaus Reidel

- 1. Opening Devotions** – Matt started the meeting with prayer and a reading from Philippians Chap. 4 vs 8-9.
- 2. Welcome and note of apologies for absence** – only two were received.
- 3. Minutes of the 2019 AGM and Matters Arising**  
Ruth Maxey drew the meeting's attention to 2 x incorrect pieces of information on the 2019 Minutes.
  - The last paragraph on page 2 says "CWW already work with younger children in helping them with language skills..." This should read, "CWW already work with adults in helping them with language skills."
  - Top of page 3, "47 have completed membership forms..." This figure should be 27.

There were no further comments or Matters Arising, and the Minutes were approved by all present.

- 4. Highlights of our worship community year – pre-COVID and since lockdown**  
Each of our churches delivered their highlights via a montage of photos on a Powerpoint slide. Please refer to Appendix 1 for details. Matt summed up by saying that we can be very pleased with what we have achieved so far. We should celebrate it. We have done a lot more than many other churches in Milton Keynes.
- 5. Confirming Congregational Representatives to WCP**  
Matt was pleased to announce that the people who had served in their respective posts last year were pleased to continue into this year.

**Resolution 1:** That the Congregational Representatives to the WCP who served in the 2019/2020 year, be confirmed in their roles for the year 2020/2021.

Proposed by Alan Bird, seconded by Pat Sawyer, and agreed unanimously.

Our representatives for the MK Mission Partnership and other WCP Council Officers also remain the same. Matt, particularly, wanted to thank Joyce for

doing such a great job in taking the Minutes for our WCP meetings, which are often quite complex and fast-moving events.

Matt wanted to declare that, after 4 years as Chair of the WCP Council, he has decided to 'step down' at or by the next AGM in 2021, and give someone else the opportunity to be Chair.

## 6. Finance Update & Receipt of 2019 Accounts

Emma explained her budget sheet. Up to the 31 December 2019, our total cash funds amounted to £108,808.78. After Receipts and Payments, our surplus for 2019 amounted to £13,220.07.

Our main source of income is the congregational shares. Our main payments are staffing costs plus housing costs related to Twinflower. Overall, we have done very well and, as WCP Treasurer, Emma is very happy with our situation.

Steve asked if Emma could say something about the recent Treasurers' meeting. Emma explained that all the church treasurers had met in September and looked at shares for next year. Ctk will receive up to a £4k rebate for 2019.

Matt commented that, unlike other churches, we have no dependency on lettings and fundraising. Therefore, Covid has not affected us financially as much as it has others. Matt wanted to minute his thanks to Emma for all of her hard work.

He was unsure whether David Harbey was happy to continue as Independent Examiner for next year, but would assume he was.

### a. Walton LEP Housing Ltd – approval of 2019 accounts

Steve Potter explained that the WCP owns a company called Walton LEP to manage Twinflower. The accounts have to be approved by the AGM and then sent to Companies House.

**Resolution 2:** That the WCP Council approves the LEP Housing Account for 2019.

**Proposed by:** Sue Wilson, seconded by Lynn Atkinson, and agreed unanimously

### b. Appointment of Treasurer and Independent Examiner

**Resolution 3:** That the WCP Council appoint Emma Tyler as our Treasurer for another year, and also David Harbey as our Independent Examiner.

**Proposed by:** Ruth Maxey, seconded by Ruth Gookey, and agreed unanimously

## **7. Safeguarding updates: appointment of Officer and Responsible Adults, and approval of current policy.**

Our current Safeguarding policy has to be re-written this year, so Rachael is currently working it on it. The WCP also have two new DBS checkers, Ayokunnu Otunla, and Joyce McKenzie.

The proposed training was unable to take place due to the arrival of COVID and the lockdown. There is training online but, unfortunately, several people are finding that the times of the training sessions are inconvenient e.g mid-morning or late at night.

Ruth M. asked if we could have training as a group. Rachael replied that this was not possible. All new job descriptions have to be sent out, so Rachael has lots of 'chasing' and paperwork to do.

Matt asked Rachael if she was happy to continue as our lead for Safeguarding, for another year, and the reply was 'Yes'. Matt notified the meeting that our present Safeguarding policy now has a new appendix, concerning working online. This has been approved by the Diocese.

**Resolution 4:** That we approve our present Safeguarding Policy.

**Proposed by:** Alise Trendall, seconded by Steve Potter, and agreed unanimously.

**Resolution 5:** That Rachael Jenkins continues in her role as Safeguarding Officer for another year.

**Proposed by:** Roger Hancock, seconded by Ayokunnu Otunla, and agreed unanimously.

**Resolution 6:** That the WCP Council agrees to Ros Bird serving as the Responsible Adult for another year.

**Proposed by:** Ruth Gookey, seconded by Ruth Maxey, and agreed unanimously.

## **8. Mission and Ministry updates**

### **a. Eagle Farm Pioneer Post and future plans**

*In 2016* – the initiative to recruit for a Pioneer Minister, to serve on the new housing development of Eagle's Rest, received approval from the Diocese;

*In 2018* – the new bishop instituted a new system of approving local projects. As a result, our efforts to recruit were undermined on two occasions;

*In 2019* - our efforts were given renewed hope by the support of the Milton Keynes Deanery. However, our initiative was then placed by the diocese

into another stream. We put a great deal of time and effort in meeting a short deadline with a very long and complex application form for Staff Development Fund (SDF) money, and had signed off the application, only to be told that our funding was being cut by 10%. For the WCP, this meant that the project was no longer financially viable, and we felt that we had no option but to withdraw. The COVID crisis has also changed our community, so we were no longer sure this was the right project post-COVID. For Matt, especially, this has been a very painful time and costly process. Matt believes that we must pray for a group on Eagle Farm to come together with a passion to start a Christian community on their own patch. Then, hopefully, they will seek to join us to realise this initiative.

Alan asked if it was an option to approach the Methodist and Baptist churches to ask for a contribution to this project. While Matt appreciated the idea, the monies needed were too great. We need intensive investment over a considerable period of time to make it work.

Ruth M. commented that we had now passed the moment for this. Matt has been on an emotional rollercoaster, and we need to acknowledge the massive amount of work he has undertaken. In the future, things may change. Ruth believes that our lack of success was heaven-sent.

**b. Investing in Church Without Walls (CWW) through the 2020s**

Our priority is to sustain our present Pioneer Minister post currently filled by Ruth M., before committing to a new one. Therefore, we must ringfence some monies, possibly, £70k-£80k, for CWW into the 2020s. Ruth M. noted that, before the onset of the pandemic, in March this year, the Partnership had decided to support a part-time post for CWW. Now, plans may change. Future discussions have been 'parked' until the effects of the COVID crisis are clearer. However, we must be open to exploring new ways of church and leadership.

**c. Walton LEP's registration as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation**

The initiative that all churches must register as charitable organisations started in 2011. Since then, the Sponsoring Denominations have been working to agree a model constitution which can be used by the 850 LEPs in the UK. The WCP are preparing a draft for the next Council Meeting in November. Joining as a CIO will consolidate our status as a legal entity. We need to agree two documents:

A Constitutional Agreement;

A Partnership Agreement;

plus appoint a team of Trustees over the next months, and have the status of our Baptist Pension Fund liability confirmed. Matt emphasised that churches must join the CIO by end of March 2021. Registration with the Charities Commission must be completed by the end of March 2021. We have been given the opportunity to have a session with a solicitor at a

reduced cost. Information regarding the CIO will be presented to our congregations over the next few weeks.

**d. Christmas**

The pandemic and ever-changing local guidelines and restrictions on meeting with others, makes planning Christmas events difficult. Matt envisages our churches generating their own ideas rather than joining together as a Partnership. From the creative ideas that have sprung up so far from the congregations, with reference to the online services, Matt hopes that this creativity will continue. Ruth M. queried whether it would be useful to print and deliver the same kind of A5 Christmas leaflets that we have used for at least the past two years. Given that we had no firm plans at present, this question was left open.

**e. Resourcing online and 'in person' church for the foreseeable future**

Matt reported that the online services had become very popular across the Partnership churches. Some people had been sending out the link to relatives all over the country and even across the world. As a result, there are anything between 300 and 600 people joining in every week. Other members of our community have worked hard to continue an 'in person' church, too. Matt anticipates these two forms of church continuing into the foreseeable future across all our congregations.

**9. AoB**

Steve Norman had sent in a question regarding Partnership finances. Please refer to Appendix 2, to read the staff team's response.

**Closing devotions** – Ruth G. led the meeting in prayer.