

The Methodist Church Thames Valley Circuit Meeting High Street Maidenhead, 11th September 2014 at 7.45 pm

Minutes

Present Rev Andrew Baker plus 5 other ministers, 4 Circuit Stewards, and 30 other members as listed in the register of attendees. Apologies from 12 members noted there.

Rev Graham Hindle was welcomed to the meeting. He is living in the Connexion house vacated by Rev Heather Noel-Smith and working as a training officer for our Southern & Islands Learning Network Region.

Agenda Agreed as distributed plus

- under item 7: Cyber bullying
- under item 13: Circuit Stewards and their responsibilities
- under dates: Advance notice of Circuit Training Morning

Minutes of last meeting were agreed.

Matters Arising

- **Sections from September 2015.** No adverse comments had been received from the churches to the proposal and so it is agreed by the Circuit Meeting. Just to clarify, this means the superintendency is moving from St Andrew's.
- **Property –**
 - Hillside: The full deposit was returned but the shed left on site at the end of our lease.
 - Spring Lane manse: The work detailed in the minutes has been almost completed and Rev Sonia Hicks and her family moved in on 2nd August. They thank all involved for making this possible, and the Circuit for their best wishes on the move.
- **Report from Conference:** We await reaction from the District Synod.
- An ecumenical prayer meeting on Palestine/Israel will be held in Slough on 22nd September.

Extension of the invitation to Rev Gary Homewood

The Circuit Invitation Committee recommendation and reasoned statement had been circulated to members on 27th August with a request for anyone intending to oppose this, to notify the chair of this meeting in writing at least 24 hours before the meeting. No objections were received. This invitation for a further two years from September 2015 will now be processed. Rev Gary Homewood was thanked for offering to stay on.

Profile for the St Andrew's / Hampshire Avenue invitation

The suggested profile had been sent out on 22nd August with a request for any additional comments or amendments to be sent to the Senior Circuit Steward. These were discussed by the Circuit Leadership Team (CLT). The only amendment is in section B2: change the second occurrence of the word *opportunities* to *meetings*. The Circuit Meeting ratified the profile.

Safeguarding

Kathy Rickman presented the safeguarding report as attached to these minutes (see Appendix 1). The verifiers in this Circuit are the ministers plus Kathy and Mike Hogg. Completed forms for the next Safeguarding Training Module on 27th September should be returned to Kathy as soon as possible. The present policy was agreed for the next year essentially unchanged.

Ian Haggarty raised the subject of social media especially with the possibility of misunderstandings in emails and recent instances of cyber bullying highlighted in the media. The Circuit Meeting agreed to take the attached suggested Social Media guidelines (see Appendix 2) back to their church councils to be considered in detail and to bring feedback to the November Circuit Meeting with the aim of adopting them then.

Property

Circuit Property Consent was given to Eton Wick church to renew the tenancy of the property they own with a £30 per month rent increase.

Circuit Property Secretary, Phil Clack, reported that, as expected, following the £20,000 spent on manses last year just £6-7,000 was spent over the summer this year. This excludes the new manse where £14,000 from the disposal proceeds of the old one was spent bringing it up to standard. He advised property stewards to inspect their properties now in the daylight to avoid problems this winter, and to complete the property schedules. He reminded members that these schedules also include questions on Finance, Safeguarding and other administrative matters. These schedules need to be completed and agreed by Church Councils by 20th February 2015 so that they can be approved by the Circuit Meeting on 3rd March.

Land registry documents for houses owned by the churches are present in the Circuit safe except for Cookham Rise (registered with the church) and Woodlands Park (no documents).

St Mark's Crescent Redevelopment Scheme

Rev Gary Homewood said that the church currently needed to spend £80,000 repairs to the flat roof and £70,000 to modernise the kitchen and toilets. Taking this work into account, they have put forward a £423,000 proposal to:

- Resolve the above requirements.
- Redesign the entrance vestibule to make a meeting room.
- Extend the back room into the garden.
- Reconfigure the accommodation in the link between the original hall and church.
- Provide separate toilet and kitchen facilities for the pre-school.
- Replace the heavy church chairs with stacking ones.

The church commissioned a feasibility study to advise how they could best enable what is already happening in this community hub and provide further for the needs of an ageing population in the future. The District have praised the concept and the way it has been thought through. 40% of the cost is likely to be covered by grants for community use and £76,000 is already firmly committed by the church and its members. This leaves the 57 members £176,000 to raise over three to five years. They are planning to do a series of fun events for the community.

The Circuit Leadership Team has had an opportunity to hear about the scheme and asked Phil Clack to visit the site on their behalf. He had been impressed. The Circuit Meeting decided that this project fitted the Thames Valley Circuit vision and voted to give Circuit Property Consent. 37 were in favour, 0 against and 2 abstained.

Finance

The treasurers' meeting will be on 15th January at St Andrew's. Those churches with TMCP accounts should now be able to access them online.

Circuit Outreach

Travelling in Hope is the Circuit theme for this connexional year. What should we be doing to share God's love at this time in this generation?

World Prayer Safari is the Circuit mission event on 18th – 19th October at Windsor Church. Churches have been allocated countries and are asked to tell Rev Sonia Hicks by the end of September what facilities they will need.

Windows Into ... resources for group sessions. Sonia is also the person to contact for the Circuit copies.

Circuit Services A teddy bears' picnic themed service was held outside at St Mark's Crescent and a Lament for World War 1 at High Street Maidenhead.

Alive in Slough Deacon Andy Packer reported on the third *Alive in Slough* discovering God the Father on the Friday evening, God the Son on the Saturday and God the Holy Spirit on the Sunday.

Pilgrimage Three members of the circuit had shared in the pilot Methodist Women in Britain three day pilgrimage to Lindisfarne, walking ten miles a day and Sue Le Page encouraged other women to look out for the two trips next year.

Circuit Greetings

Replies have been received from Jo Saunders, Rev Philip Morse and Rev Steve Wild.

Greetings to be sent to Rev Beatrice Quaye on her retirement, Rev Heather Noel-Smith in her new home, Felicity and Alan Kendon, both recovering well from surgery, and Bernadine Bergan from Ledgers Road who has recently been in hospital. Letters to be sent to Charlotte Booth on the death of her father Tom, and the widow of the Rev Ray Sargeant.

AOB

Reports for 2014 Anne Haggarty will be requesting these from churches and circuit groups for the year to 31st August 2014.

Appointments Ian Haggarty was appointed **substitute Circuit Representative to Synod** from 1st October 2014.

Circuit Stewards and Churches

Elsa Daniel:	Burnham, Hampshire Avenue
Alan Crowle:	Windsor, Woodlands Park
Anne Haggarty:	Colnbrook & Poyle, St Andrew's English, High Street
Liz Tottingham:	Cookham Rise, St Andrew's Asian
Connie Jeffery:	Eton Wick, Ledgers Road, St Mark's Crescent
Chris Wren:	Old Windsor

Circuit Training Morning Saturday, 7th March – please see attached notice (Appendix 3) and book the date.

The meeting closed with the saying of the Grace together at 9.15 pm.

Appendix 1 SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The Thames Valley Circuit Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed by the Circuit Safeguarding Officer, who has not made any recommendations for change. However further additions are being proposed at this meeting.

One point to note is that we are being encouraged to apply for Disclosure and Barring (DBS) online and the Circuit verifiers to verify online via a secure pathway. There will still be the necessity for paper copies for those who do not have access to the internet. The Circuit and Church Safeguarding Officers will be checking who needs to have their certificate renewed. The Connexion and District Safeguarding Officers keep the Circuit informed of changes in the law and procedures. The Circuit Safeguarding Officer liaises with them when necessary.

A Creating Safer Space Foundation Module was held in March at St Mark's and was well attended. The next one is on September 27th at Eton Wick. The next Circuit Safeguarding meeting is next Tuesday, 16th September.

Individual Church Safeguarding Co-ordinators continue to be diligent in their role and we thank them for all they do to 'create a safer space' in our churches.

Appendix 2 SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

The Thames Valley Methodist Circuit endorses the clear guidelines set by the Methodist Connexion in its document **Social Media Guidelines**, available as a pdf download at: http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/conf_social_media_guidelines_part2_0710.pdf

All forms of communication provide opportunities to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in the world. However, new ways come with new values. Whereas the printed word has a certain finality of declaration about it, social media is interactive, conversational and open-ended. Moreover, it happens in a public, not private, space. The Methodist Church therefore encourages the user to use social tools as a means of engaging in an interactive conversation with people of all faiths and none.

Principles

The following principles should be applied when using social media:

- Be credible. Be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent.
- Be consistent. Encourage constructive criticism and deliberation.
- Be cordial, honest and professional at all times. Be responsive. When you gain insight, share it where appropriate.
- Be integrated. Wherever possible, align online participation with other communications.
- Be a good representative of the Methodist Church. Remember that you are an ambassador for Christ, the Church and your part of it. Disclose your position as a member or officer of the Church, making it clear when speaking personally. Let [Galatians 5:22–26](#) guide your behaviour.
- Be respectful: respect confidentiality. Respect the views of others even where you disagree.

Policy

- Participate online in the same way as you would with other public forums. You take responsibility for the things you do, say or write.
- Never share personal details like home address and phone numbers except with someone you know and trust, and if you decide to do so, then use a private message. Be aware an address can be disclosed in many ways – for example, via photos or a GPS position as well as in written form.
- Always remember that participating online results in your comments being permanently available and open to being republished in other media. Once something is posted to a blog or other internet site, it should be assumed to be still available even if it is later deleted from the original site.
- Stay within the legal framework and be aware that safeguarding, libel, slander, copyright and data protection laws apply, as well as the [Constitutional Practice and Discipline \(CPD\)](#) of the Methodist Church.
- For general guidelines on confidentiality, refer to [With Integrity and Skill](#) – if telling a story about anyone, ask yourself **Is this my story to tell?**
- Be aware that this may attract media interest in you as an individual, so proceed with care whether you are participating in an official or a personal capacity. If you have any doubts, take advice, but remember that you are responsible for your online activities.
- Staff should be aware of and act in line with [Speaking for the Methodist Church](#), the Team email policy and the Team policy on the use of IT equipment, as well as With Integrity and Skill and the whistle blowing policy where necessary.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Email is good for some communications and not for others. It is good for factual information, etc., but less good as a substitute for conversation. So, don't use email as a means of avoiding conversation – e.g. when handling conflict or a difficult situation. Remember that email is instantaneous and typed text can come across differently without the nuances of vocal inflection. Therefore, often emails can come across as more strident in tone.

- Do not send anything you would not say to a person's face (word for word).
- Do not send anything you might regret or as a means of letting off steam!
- Do not send anything you would not be happy being forwarded to others, unless you mark the email “Confidential”.
- Do not use block capitals for emphasis unless absolutely necessary.
- Small courtesies are important - e.g. “Dear [name] or Hi [name]” and then your own name and perhaps “Yours/Regards/Best wishes” at the end. It may sound old-fashioned but it acts as a reminder that it is a human being who will read it!
- Try not to be impatient for a response – some people think that all others do is wait at the keyboard for an email to come in. Often people receive many emails a day (for some this can be hundreds, excluding spam) and information overload can be a real issue.
- On the positive side, sending emails can support existing conversations/relationships e.g. after a meeting saying “Thanks! You may recall we agreed to do ..., etc”. It also leaves an electronic trail so that previous messages are recorded.
- Good email etiquette would also involves replying to messages (even ones that don't ask for it) saying “Thanks for this, etc”. If you can't respond to a request for a while, reply and say so, it takes the heat out of the situation!

Appendix 3 TRAINING MORNING

Thames Valley Methodist Circuit

TRAINING MORNING



Saturday 7th March 2015

10.00am - 12.30 at St Marks Crescent, Maidenhead

This is for New and Existing people who are involved as or interested in being a: Steward, Treasurer, Worship Leader, Pastoral Visitor or Powerpoint Producer.

* Please book this date in your diary *