

Minutes of the Thames Valley Circuit Meeting held at Cookham Rise Methodist Church on Wednesday, 11th September 2019, at 7.45 pm

Note: **CA** – Church Action required.

Welcome

Sonia welcomed everyone to the meeting. She led the opening devotions, and introduced the circuit theme for the year: **Sharing our hope**

Foster care

Karen Williams and Sharon Stewart gave a short presentation on Slough Foster Care, and the need for foster carers in the 23-mile radius round Slough.

Children with many differing needs are taken into long- or short-term care, depending on their circumstances. They come from different ethnic backgrounds, and many have multiple problems. There are insufficient houses in Slough with a spare room. Karen and Sharon were asking for us, with our contacts in our communities, to spread the word, perhaps by displaying a banner outside. Church Councils to check whether they can help. **CA**

Foster carers have training and are supported and paid.

Leaflets were left for us to take away.

Membership of meeting and apologies for absence

- The membership of the meeting was agreed. It is recorded on the attendance sheet in the minute book.
- Those attending were the Superintendent, 5 other members of staff, 5 Circuit Stewards and 21 other members.
- 14 apologies were received, as listed on the attendance sheet; 9 members neither attended nor sent apologies.

Agreement of agenda, items for AOB

The agenda as distributed was agreed, with one extra item for AOB

Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last Circuit Meeting were agreed and signed as a correct record of the meeting.

Matters arising

- Circuit Directory. Now available. Please keep in a secure place in the church, NOT left on display. Please notify changes (especially email address) to the relevant people **CA**
- Annual Report. Now available. There is a printed copy for each church, and members can access their own copy through the circuit website.
The direct link is <https://www.methodistthamesvalley.org.uk/ar.pdf> **CA**
- Sonia said Connexion, will be sending material about the Marriage and Relationships discussions. Once the staff have decided on the best way forward, this will be presented to the circuit.

Safeguarding

Kathy presented her Safeguarding report to the Circuit Meeting. It is attached as Appendix 1.

At the next meeting for Church Safeguarding Officers, the District Safeguarding Officer, Philippa Read will be present, and Kathy urged all churches to make sure that a representative was present, even if the Church Safeguarding Officer could not attend. **CA**

There are actions to be taken by churches, including making sure that all who need to do the various stages of training have done so. **CA**

Kathy expressed her grateful thanks to Andy, Glenice and Jenny, her fellow-trainers. The circuit meeting expressed its thanks to Kathy for all her hard work.

Property

- The Leadership Team has decided that the role of Circuit Property Steward is no longer required as such. Joy is training Pauline (Circuit Administrator) to do the on-line returns etc. Each Circuit Steward will be responsible for sorting out any work required on the properties he or she looks after. The property report to the Circuit Meeting will be presented by one of the Circuit Stewards.
- Upton Road has been sold.
- Consents. High Street asked for permission to re-let the property they own at 9 Crescent Drive, Maidenhead. The agents have found a new tenant, who has accepted the existing tariff of £1395 00 per month. The meeting gave its approval.
- Update from St Mark's. Ed's report was circulated to members before the meeting. Sonia reported that everything was going well, and Anne (H) added that Thames Valley Voices was holding its Christmas service there on 17th December.
- Joy reported that Chris Hawkins, who has served the circuit very well for many years dealing with our property needs, is now able only to deal with small matters. Joy recommended David Hicks as someone to deal with property requirements. His Business Cards are available. **CA**
- A new manse visitor is needed for 40 Poplars Grove, and the meeting approved Keith Le Page in that role, for one year.
- Sonia reported that the demolition of the outhouse at Spring Lane (when a learner driver lost control) has been dealt with by the driver's insurance, and rebuilding should happen shortly.
- The meeting expressed its grateful thanks to all the Circuit Stewards, particularly Connie and Glenice for all the work they have done buying and selling manses.

Finance

- Sue asked that all churches talk to their congregations about reviewing their giving. This year will see considerably more expenditure as we are fully staffed. **CA**
- Reserves – the policy remains unchanged but will be reviewed and more details brought to the next meeting.
- Sue asked the meeting for permission to add Keith Machin's name to the list of bank signatories. The meeting approved.
- At the next Circuit Meeting, a revised Phone and Broadband policy will be presented.

Matters from CLT

- The list giving details of the assignment of ministers and circuit stewards to church councils is attached as Appendix 2
- There are no sabbaticals due this year. Carmel will be due hers in the next church year.
- Connie will be moving from the circuit shortly. The Leadership Team has agreed that Glenice will take over as Senior Steward, and that she and Connie will work together until Connie goes.
- The meeting welcomed and approved the (re-)appointment of Liz Tottingham as a Circuit Steward for this year.

Stationing

Both Sonia and Andy will be leaving the circuit at the end of this church year. Andy will not be replaced. A draft profile for a new superintendent has been submitted, but District has asked for more work to be done on it.

Strategy paper

Sonia said that work on the circuit strategy would begin again, now that the circuit is fully staffed, and that the staff would be working in their areas to start the process, which will gradually be taken over by identified lay members.

- Carmel will start in the Maidenhead section
- Anne (E) will start in the Slough section
- Sonia and Margaret will start in the Windsor section

More information to come at the next meeting.

Reports

Reports from the Local Preachers Meeting, MWiB, St Mark's 2020 vision and about Circuit Property were circulated in advance of the meeting. See appendices 3 to 6.

Sonia invited Anne (E) to give a brief report about Conference this year. Anne reminded the meeting of the three parts – the presbyteral session, the weekend celebrations and the weekday work. She commended to our attention the two big reports:

- The theology of the diaconate
- Marriage and relationships

Both can be found on the Methodist Church website.

Circuit greetings

Circuit greetings will be sent to:

- Naomi Connor – Senior Steward at Ledgers Road, who is recovering from a fractured pelvis.
- Chris Hawkins – grateful thanks for all his work on circuit property.
- Brenda Cheeseman – unwell.

AOB

- Andy's Carbon Footprint challenge – a reminder to come prepared in November. Anne H will remind churches three weeks before the November meeting, and ask for the papers to be sent for collation. **CA**
- Sonia has received a letter from the Connexional Grants Committee, saying that they have reduced their reserves, and will now be offering less. A copy has been sent to all churches.
- Sonia reported on her course on Pastoral Supervision, saying how good it had been – very intense – but very rewarding. She said that she had learned a lot, and that she had been invited back next year to train as a trainer – at Connexional expense!
- Sue offered thanks to Pauline for instigating the clear-up of the Circuit Office, and said that she had a number of files and folders available to anyone who wanted them.

Dates

Thurs 14 Nov 2019	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm	Eton Wick
Tues 18 Feb 2020	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm	High Street
Wed 20 May 2020	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm	Old Windsor
Thurs 17 Sep 2020	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm	Ledgers Road
Tues 10 Nov 2020	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm	St Mark's
Wed 17 Feb 2021	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm	Woodlands Park
Thurs 13 May 2021	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm	Hampshire Avenue
Tues 14 Sep 2021	Circuit Meeting	7.45 pm	St Andrew's

Closing prayer and thanks

Andy closed the meeting with a prayer, and Sonia thanked Cookham Rise for its hospitality.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

Appendix 1 Safeguarding Report

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) was launched by Theresa May in 2014. The Inquiry has been investigating how institutions fail to protect children and young people, and how they do protect them. It is the churches turn to be included in the inquiry. I have completed information about what training we have done, how many have been trained and the qualification of trainers to present the training, which includes the professional experience of the trainers. This information was sent to the District Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for collating.

The Methodist Church is responding to the Inquiry; it has already changed the Leadership Module to the Advanced Module and requires a wider audience to participate. In our Circuit we are starting with Presbyters, Local Preachers and Worship Leaders. Last Wednesday we held the Essential Preparation session at the Local Preachers' meeting. This includes Theological Reflections which has helped us to look more deeply into what we mean when we talk and preach about All are Welcome, Forgiveness, Justice and Holding Office with the responsibilities entailed. Our District Safeguarding Officer will lead the main course on February 1st 2020.

We appreciate that as a Circuit we may have more tightening of our procedures to do but overall we have made a lot of headway and are mainly up to date with our training. Nevertheless there is always more to learn and especially when new situations arise.

During the summer we looked again at the Risk Assessment template for outings. Churches should tell me if they are planning an outing and I will support the leader to complete the Risk Assessment which is required in order to make sure that all eventualities are covered as far as possible.

The next Circuit Safeguarding meeting is on Tuesday 17th September starting at 7.45 p.m. at Windsor Church. Philippa Read our DSO will be attending. It is important that each Church Council is represented; if the Safeguarding Officer is unable to attend a representative should come instead.

The next CSS Foundation Refresher Course is on Wednesday October 2nd at 6.45 p.m. in the vestry at St Andrew's. There are a handful of people who are in post who need to do the course.

My thanks go to Sonia, the Church Safeguarding Officers, Andy, Glenice and Jenny for their support and commitment to safeguarding all who come onto our premises. Please always remember this works both ways and we all need to safeguard ourselves, our churches and our circuit.

Kathy Rickman, Safeguarding Officer

Appendix 2 Assignment of three staff members to each Church Council 2019/20

Church Council Secretaries please ensure that agendas and minutes are sent to your circuit steward and **Rev Sonia Hicks** and two other ministers as below, although usually just one will attend the meetings, thank you. This is a requirement under S.O. 610(4) of CPD.

Ledgers Road, Hampshire Avenue, St Andrews (English), and St Andrews (Urdu):

	Rev Anne Ellis and Deacon Andy Packer
Woodlands Park:	Rev Carmel Ieraci and Rev Anne Ellis
Cookham Rise:	Rev Carmel Ieraci and Rev Margaret Dudley
High Street:	Rev Carmel Ieraci and Rev Anne Ellis
St Marks Crescent:	Rev Carmel Ieraci and Deacon Andy Packer
Windsor:	Rev Margaret Dudley and Deacon Andy Packer
Old Windsor:	Rev Margaret Dudley and Deacon Andy Packer
Colnbrook and Poyle:	Rev Margaret Dudley and Rev Anne Ellis
Eton Wick:	Rev Margaret Dudley and Rev Carmel Ieraci
Burnham:	Rev Carmel Ieraci and Rev Margaret Dudley

Assignment of a Circuit Steward to each Church Council 2019/20

Burnham	Glenice White
Colnbrook	Connie Jeffery/Liz Tottingham
Cookham Rise	Glenice White
Eton Wick	Sue Le Page
Hampshire Ave	Keith Machin
High St	Connie Jeffery/Liz Tottingham
Ledgers Rd	Charles Buckman
Old Windsor	Sue Le Page
St Andrew's (English)	Keith Machin
St Andrew's (Asian)	Charles Buckman
St Mark's	Glenice White
Windsor	Joy Brown
Woodlands Park	Joy Brown

+ I know the Treasurer usually has one CC, but times are hard!

Appendix 3 Local Preachers' Meeting Report

Points to note:

1. As reported to the March Circuit Meeting, the Methodist Conference of 2018 stipulated that "all preachers should undertake peer review of their ministry every three years". Guidelines have been recently issued and circulated and the process is underway. This involves a conversation with one or two other preachers after a service where the preacher is leading worship, and reflecting together on the preparation and leading of worship and how the service was received by the congregation.
2. The Creating Safer Space Advanced Module course is being rolled out, and Kathy Rickman led the recent meeting of local preachers and worship leaders through the first part of the course entitled 'Essential Preparation'. Part 2 is the 'Core learning session', and will be delivered by Philippa Read, the District Safeguarding Officer, on February 1 February 2020.
3. The Western Area study day planned for 15 June at Staines Methodist Church had to be cancelled owing to lack of support.
4. We thank all our worship leaders who do so much to enhance the worship life of the church, through leading of prayers, bible readings choosing hymns and songs and supporting and preparing worship with our preachers.
5. We hold in our prayers and assure of our support those preachers who are no longer able to preach and lead worship.

David Ridley, Local Preachers' Meeting Secretary

Appendix 4 Methodist Women in Britain Report

From this meeting onwards Lynn Packer is standing down as Chair of the MWIB Thames Valley circuit, due to stationing.

Over the last few years we have been involved in raising money for various causes including, Dalit community, Alexandra Divine, MHA, British Legion. We have done this by organising a stall at the Canal Boat Festival, coffee mornings and craft sales. Also quiet days have been organised to give people a way to reflect on their spirituality. Every year we organise the Easter Offering service and this year we had the privilege of having an ex-president of MWIB nationally, Mrs Anne Browse who gave us a very inspiring message, followed by a lovely meal that was provided by some of the ladies on the MWIB committee. A flower display was provided at the front of the Church by Alison Mount and we thank Windsor Methodist church for hosting this. The Canal boat festival is due to take place again on the 7th and 8th of September. Of course it will have already taken place by the time the circuit meeting meets. We will have a prayer box available for people to write their concerns for prayer as last year, and will endeavour to have some Christian Merchandise as well as the Craft.

It just leaves me to say that I have enjoyed my time as chair and I hope that someone will step up to take my place and continue the good work that MWIB have achieved. If no one comes forward then I envisage a small committee that will meet to organise the Easter Offering service.

Lynn Packer, Circuit MWiB President

Appendix 5 St Mark's Crescent 2020 Vision Building Project

The building project has progressed well since the last Circuit Meeting and will be completed in early November.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the contractors who have organised work in such a way that we've been able to reopen parts of the premises to the majority of our regular users in time for the start of the autumn term.

Unforeseen issues (new soakaways, additional roof supports, electrical extras, fire & security upgrades) arising during the initial phases led to additional costs but these have been partially offset by cost savings and extraordinarily generous individual gifts and grants awarded by Methodist Church and other charitable organisations. As a result, we have also been able to replace hall and other lighting with low energy LED alternatives and refurbish the old hall entrance porch whilst keeping the requirement for loans to roughly half of that budgeted earlier in the year.

We sincerely thank those who've made offers of loans to enable us to meet project costs. Fund-raising will continue as we work to repay these and we invite you to keep the project in your prayers and support our fund-raising events wherever possible.

You can follow progress of the building work on our Facebook page or the church website (www.stmarksmaidenhead.org.uk).

Appendix 6 Property report

Manses:

It's been a busy year property wise with the sale of **Upton Road** (which hopefully is now near completion) and the purchase of 2 new Manses, **Poplars Grove**, Maidenhead and **Sutton Avenue**, Langley/Slough. Both the new manses have been renovated and are now occupied.

Clarence Road has undergone some major renovation and corrective work to underpin and stabilise the house. It has also had a replacement kitchen. There are still some minor works to be done there.

Spring Lane also has some garden works to be carried out but is largely alright structurally.

Salt Hill Drive is likely to be sold once vacant and there are only minor works to be undertaken there.

On line Property Returns situation to date:

Property Stewards and **Manse Visitors** should watch out for the opening of the on line returns for 2019. These will be available soon but it's not too soon to begin pulling together the information you will require to complete the return.

Would all **Manse Visitors** please contact your presbyter to arrange your visit/inspection.

Quinquennials:

DLK are still our preferred inspectors as both the other companies are very expensive.

Neil Barr is aware that we have been considering other options/companies and is obviously quite eager to retain our services.

Just a reminder for property stewards to call Neil to arrange their inspections when they are due.

Joy Brown