

Thames Valley Circuit Meeting
Wednesday 14th September 2022, at 7.45 pm
St Marks Crescent, Maidenhead SL6 5BQ

MINUTES

Vicci welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Connexional Year, with a special Welcome to: Deacon Margaret Chipandambira, Rev Cliff Shanganya, Rev Dr Pete Phillips, and Jason Yannacopoulos, a representative from Cookham Rise and who has completed his Worship Leader training and is hoping to be authorised by his Church Council, on the recommendation of the Local Preachers' meeting, on 15th September.

1. **The reading** was from Romans 41:13 – end. “We rustle around and “do” lots of stuff, because we feel we must or should. But the reality of our Faith is that it is a faith based on Faith – God’s faithfulness to us Hie people. We can trust that God is with us in all of this.”. Vicci then shared a list of all that has been accomplished in the Thames Valley in the last two years. (See Appendix 1 below.)
2. **Membership of the meeting**
 - The membership of the meeting was agreed. It is recorded on the attendance sheet in the minute book.
 - Those attending were the Superintendent, 3 other members of staff, 1 supernumerary minister, 3 Circuit Stewards and 19 other members.
 - 12 apologies were received, as listed on the attendance sheet; 4 members neither attended nor sent apologies.
3. **The published Agenda** was accepted with no items of AOB.
4. **Declaration of Interests:** None.
5. **The Minutes of last meeting** were accepted as accurate and signed.
6. **Matters arising not on the agenda:**
 - i) Circuit Strategy: This item was moved to follow “Matters from CLT”
 - ii) Circuit Directory: This year’s Directory has been distributed, and some amendments made already. Pauline Poole asked that all Churches check their entries for the Directory when asked.
7. **Safeguarding Report:** Kathy Rickman steered the meeting through the salient points of the report which was distributed before the meeting.
8. **EDI** Pete Philips presented a “scenario” for the meeting to consider. “Your Church has received an email from a local resident objecting to Slimming World holding meetings on your premises, citing the *bible* as their handbook name and *sins* for forbidden foods, and presenting false body image.” How does your Church respond?

Pete pointed out that even in our decisions of how to move forward for this we have to treat all people with dignity and respect – including those whose opinions may differ from ours.

- 9. GDPR:** Currently no issues. Pauline reminded the meeting always to protect identity – especially when forwarding emails from other sources who may have included names and addresses in the information you received.
- 10. The following reports had been circulated:** Conference, Local Preachers, Property, Safeguarding and Senior Stewards. These were accepted by the Meeting.
- 11. Finance** – Sue le Page was unable to attend the Meeting. Pauline will liaise with her to obtain a draft set of figures.
- 12. Property** – in addition to the report circulated in advance by Joy Brown:

i) The following proposal came before the Meeting:

St Mark's Church Council, as Managing Trustees, would like to register for consent from the Circuit Meeting any necessary amendments to the tenancy agreement on the cottage at 47 Alma Road, Eton Wick, to extend the tenancy for a further year and increase the rental to a level agreed by the tenants as reasonable and appropriate for properties of this nature in the local area.

Ed Filmore explained that he has been trying to get clarity on the process. A proposal for rent increase has gone to TMCP.

They are also looking to replace the double glazing, funding for which has already been allocated in the property budget for the cottage.

A vote was taken and passed unanimously.

ii) This proposal from Cookham Rise came before the Meeting and was passed unanimously.

The Circuit Meeting gives consent for Cookham Rise Methodist Church's project to provide wall insulation on West End Cottage.

They encouraged their tenant to apply for a Green Home Grant for this, but how now discovered that it should be raised as a project under property consents. Basically the cottage has no cavity wall and so a mix of external and internal wall insulation will be required.

The grant will pay for at least two thirds of this.

The provision of such insulation was recommendation number 1 in the Energy Performance Certificate E from October 2018 with an indicative cost of £4000 to £14,000 and £400 p.a. saving in energy costs at that time.

As a church Cookham Rise could fund this for up to £8000 so were happy for the grant application to be made. The surveyor who came recommended external insulation on the large end of terrace wall and internal on the two other external walls with windows.

We shall need to do something before this winter if possible so ask for CM approval of the provision of wall insulation and hope that we can get the grant.

Proposed: Sue le Page. Seconded Jason Yannacopoulos

Agreed unanimously.

iii) Request from Woodlands Park Methodist Church to Circuit Meeting

Chris Wren, Woodlands Park Church Property Officer stated the church is fortunate in having two houses that it rents. The Tenants have recently changed during the summer period, which made getting all the necessary Consents difficult for the approval process.

The Church would appreciate if the Autumn Circuit Meeting could agree:

“That in the event of a tenant leaving during the year, the further letting of the Church houses was agreed until Christmas 2023.”

This allows each Autumn Circuit Meeting to review the letting of property for a specified period and to re-evaluate the principle of letting properties. Also, that the above proposal should be amended to encompass all circuit property that is rented out. Agreement would allow the Circuit Superintendent to move quickly and act as required within the Consents process.

Following discussions with the District Property Secretary, Roy Hollands, the CLT are of the opinion that the above proposal is a reasonable one and should be amended to encompass all circuit property that is rented out as this would make the process faster and less burdensome for everyone.

A vote was taken (Proposed by Joy Brown; seconded by Liz Tottingham) and agreed unanimously.

13. The members of CLT agreed that everything raised at the CLT meeting had been covered.

Item 6(i) was taken at this point. Vicci introduced the **God for All strategy** which commits the **Church** theologically, culturally, and financially to deepen its mission to be a growing, evangelistic, justice-seeking, and inclusive Church. This is a subject that needs to go to Church Councils for discussions, and will come back to Circuit Meetings in the future.

14. Circuit Greetings:

- i) The meeting agreed to send a card to Alison Mount who suffered a mild stroke yesterday. A full recovery is expected. Pauline to action'
- ii) The meeting was asked to send condolences to the Royal Family on the death of Queen Elizabeth. Vicci will write a letter.
- iii) Messages of thanks and appreciation from Rev Anne and Rev Margaret were shared to the Meeting.

15. Any other business

- M.D.R – Ministerial Development Review – has not been able to happen for the last 2 years. A new process has been designed and training for this will begin in January.
- Conference Decisions – have been shared and the report accepted.
- Statistics for Mission – Vicci reminded the Meeting that this is coming up. Any problems with this, please contact Pauline in the first instance, who will make sure that you get any help you need.

16. Vicci thanked all for coming and participating.

Deacon Margaret closed in prayer at 9 pm

17. Dates for future Circuit Meetings:

- Wednesday 14th September 2022
 - Wednesday 16th November 2022
 - Thursday 16th February 2023
 - Tuesday 16th May 2023
 - Wednesday `13th Sept 2023
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Appendix 1

Thames Valley Circuit in the last two years, in spite of Covid has:

- Learned how to use zoom!
- Run two Circuit-wide Lent Bible Studies.
- Had a Circuit Service led by MudSlide Morris and his band using the music of Johnny Cash.
- Raised funds for Colnbrook and Poyle, Burnham and High Street.
- High Street has refurbished some of its rooms, C&P has had a new kitchen, bathroom and garden, and Windsor has refurbished the office.
- St Andrew's and Cookham Rise have got Bronze eco church and are now going for silver.
- We have started Breakfast Church at High Street, a monthly evening service at Burnham, an afternoon children's service at Cookham Rise, an afternoon dementia service at Windsor and an evening Gospel Hour at St Andrew's.
- There has been a talent show at High Street, a barn dance at Windsor, and a Caribbean evening at Ledgers Road.
- Parade services have been held at Windsor, High Street and Cookham Rise.
- We were prepared to respond rapidly and publicly to the Queen's death.
- Two presbyters, a deacon and a lay worker have joined us.
- We closed two churches and transferred managing trusteeship of a cottage.
- We bought a manse.
- And in the difficult time in which we found ourselves, we worshiped God, we had weddings, funerals and baptisms, celebrated Christmas, Harvest and Easter, led Bible Studies and prayer meetings.
- We started a new choir at Windsor and re-started Thames Valley Voices and the High Street choir and they sang together at the farewell service, the welcome service and also last Easter for a fantastic presentation of Stainer's Crucifixion.
- We have set up a weekly, drama-based youth club at Windsor and two Circuit-wide teen projects: Life, the Universe and Pizza which is a Bible Study over food for young people project and Dance Connexion, a Praise Dance project, both happening fortnightly at Windsor and involving young people from across the circuit. We also took those children out for an end of term escape room experience and we ran a highly successful summer school for 32 children.
- High Street has been exploring its future, which included a major survey which was collated and analysed, and various meetings have happened to explore the results.
- Colnbrook and Poyle is exploring its future as a community hub and relationships have been built there.
- The Methodists are on the ecumenical map in Windsor, where Vicci is on the Core Group, with Susy organising the massively complex Carols at the Castle and at Burnham where Vicci is Chair of CTB and of the board of trustees of the Well, the ecumenical group that runs out of Burnham Methodist Church and provides fellowship and support and in the mornings, breakfast for school children waiting for buses. Meanwhile, Cliff has already become a member of the Board of Trustees of Slough Refugee Centre, an organisation that was started by the Methodist Minister Rev John Newton, and where Cliff and Margaret are rapidly building relationships. Methodists in Burnham are also

part of the *Open the Book* Team which has returned to Lent Rise School where Vicci is also a school governor with responsibility for well-being and personal development.

- Meanwhile we are involved in the District with Pete being a keynote speaker at Synod, Vicci taking over as Candidates secretary, Anne and Ian representing us at Conference and Pat Smith and Josh Wilson on the District Candidates Committee.
- We have had three safeguarding courses and met regularly to discuss safeguarding matters, and the Local Preachers had a training away day on the use of testimony. Two potential new local preachers have been given a note to preach and started training, and we have trained and authorised two worship leaders with a third being recommended the day after Circuit Meeting.
- Let us not tell a story that says we have been marking time for two years but celebrate all that we have done and then seek to move forward.

Gracious and Loving God, we thank you for all that has been achieved in this circuit over the last two years, all that you have guided, strengthened and supported in these difficult times. We thank you for it and we ask you to help us now as we go forward, that the church in these places here represented should grow in number and in faith. Amen.