

Thames Valley Circuit Meeting
28th FEBRUARY 2024, at 7.45 pm
Windsor
MINUTES

- 1 **Rev Vicci welcomed everyone to the meeting**, by reminding us that we live in troubled times, and that the world **HAS** the answer to all its many problems yet refuses to use it. Vicci chose the hymn “The right hand of God is writing in our land” and was questioning herself as to whether that was what she wanted to say to us, or whether it was chosen just because she likes it! The song was written in Kingston, not Surrey close to us, but Jamaica. Recently Vicci received an email enquiry about a wedding ceremony from a couple in Windsor. It was only as the requests for the ceremony became more out of keeping with our traditions that Vicci realised that the message originated in Windsor, Missouri. These two incidences serve to reinforce that across the world we are all interconnected from shared name places to an understanding of the “answer above”. We are both Global and Local.

- 2 **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, 5 Circuit Stewards and 22 other members. 7 apologies were received, and two visitors as listed on the attendance sheet; 0 members neither attended nor sent apologies.

- 3 **Declaration of interests** – there were no Declarations made.

- 4 **The Agenda was agreed with no other items requested for AOB.**

- 5 **Minutes of last meeting** were accepted and duly signed, after the Minutes were amended by hand to include a “k” to the amount given for the Mission at item 16 point 4

- 6 **Matters arising not on the Agenda.**
Easter Offering – Charles Buckman (HA) confirmed that all was in hand. All Churches have received Offering envelopes and posters.
The Annual Ratification of Letting for the year – the Meeting agreed ratification of Lettings with the proviso that these were straightforward continuations of current styles of contracts.

- 7 **Safeguarding Report** – It was reported that the Learning Network has been unable to deliver planned Advance Module training. It was hoped that this would be rectified soon.

- 8 **EDI** – Jason Yannacopoulos (CR). Suggested that the Circuit should have an EDI Officer. With 15 years experience working in this field. Jason is willing to take on this role.
Proposal: VD proposed that the Circuit create the role of EDI Officer and appoint Jason Yannacopoulos to that role. This was seconded by MCh and carried unanimously.

- 9 **GDPR** - forms for this year have been sent to all Churches, and some have already been completed and returned to District,
Action point: please nudge those responsible in the Churches to make sure it is done in timely fashion.

- 10 **Accept reports already circulated** and not addressed as Agenda items: there were no such reports.

Although there was no Local Preachers report this quarter VD updates the Meeting on the current situation regarding the shortage of personnel to fill Preaching appointments. In the latest Plan (Mar – May) there was a shortfall of 44 appointments offered, partly due to Rev Cliff's Sabbatical. These have been filled with some Churches having 3 LA's and more than usual joint Services in others. We will have to review the way in which we work. VD offered training for those running LA's.

Action point: Please have conversations in your Churches, encouraging all to reflect on the possibility of their gifting and calling.

The Meeting congratulated both Aqeela Daud and Mwadzi Magaisa who have been accepted for pre-Ordination training from September.

11 Finance – SLP spoke into the Finance Papers distributed ahead of the Meeting and attached to these Minutes.

- Last years' accounts have been signed off by the independent examiners.
Proposal (i) That Circuit Meeting accept the examined Accounts up to 31st August 2023. This was carried unanimously.
- The Budget for 2024/2025 was presented to the recent Treasurers Meeting. SLP invited questions from the meeting.
Proposal (ii) that Circuit Meeting accept the Budget as presented to the Treasurers Meeting. This was carried unanimously.
- **SLP proposed** using the same External Examiner for the current years' accounts. This was carried unanimously.
- There is a Legal Requirement to have two authorised signatories for Legal Documents. SLP proposed three names from which two can be drawn: Sue Le Page, Joy Brown and Phil Mount. This was carried unanimously.

12 Property There were no questions for JB from the previously distributed report.

13 Matters from CLT:

- a) The Meeting shared the success of Aqeela and Mwadzi.
- b) Rev Cliff will be on Sabbatical from 1st March to mid June.
- c) Pauline Poole the Circuit Administrator is planning to retire at the end of April, which has caused the Leadership Team to focus on Succession Planning – something that is also vital to the continuation of the work in all Churches.
- d) JB and SLP are also coming to the end of their 6 years as post holders at the end of July. The Meeting was reminded to review the role holders in all Churches. CLT recognised a need to think about Training.
- e) There are plans in the pipeline for a Circuit Job Fair later in the year.

14 The Work of God in the Thames Valley

Building new lifeboats – High Street – John Statham shared with the Meeting about the recently formed Evangelism and Mission Working Group established in High Street.

They have so far organised 4 successful outreach initiatives:

- a) Christingles, which they offered as part of the Christmas Fayre organised by their Uniformed Organisations.
- b) Saturday Christmas film showing
- c) Coffee, cake and Chillax
- d) Disco

70% of the attendees are new connection for whom these events at are their way of connecting with Church.

High Street (and many other Churches) are reflecting on how these contacts translate into Church membership; and how to market the variety of Services that are on offer.

Youth – Unfortunately Sophie was unable to attend the Meeting. VD reported that it is hoped to take a group of young people to 3Generate. When information becomes available it will be

shared around the Churches – please keep an eye on your inboxes. A large percentage of the cost of attending can be met by the District. VD will follow up.

15 Circuit Greetings

- a) Please send greetings to Mary Hall, wife of Local Preacher Richard Hall who has been sick for a while now.
- b) Malcolm White, whose recovery is not going as quickly as he would like.
- c) Richard Cattley

16 Any other business

MHA representative. VD reminded the Meeting that for some years there has not been a Methodist Housing Association representative within the Circuit. This is a voluntary role and mostly involves receiving and distributing information as it arrives.

Action point: Ask around your Church for a volunteer to fill this role.

17 The Meeting closed at 8:55pm, sharing The Grace.

18 Date of next meeting: Tuesday 14th May at High Street