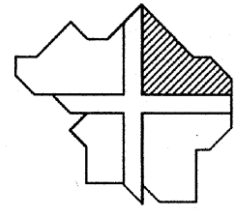


**Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership (SEP)
Minutes of the Trustees Meeting held on
Thursday, 24 November 2011 at 7.45 pm
at New Bradwell, St James' Church**



Document date 01.12.11
Corrections 18.01.12

1. Opening Prayer

Mr Mike Morris opened the meeting with prayer for guidance that decisions made this day would be in furtherance of God's plan for this partnership.

2. Advance Notification of Any Other Business

Appointment of Revd Peter Ballantine as a Canon at Christchurch Cathedral, Oxford

3. PCC Meeting

There was no formal PCC business to be discussed.

Recent vandalism involving broken windows at St Mary Magdalene had now been rectified, but Trustees noted with regret that the Robert Hooke memorial shelter at Willen (actually Campbell Park civil parish responsibility) had recently had a number of the metal plaques stolen.

4. Minutes of Meeting on 1 September 2011 for approval

The version sent out with the agenda for this meeting had not recorded the office of the Hon Treasurer correctly. Apart from this error the minutes were agreed to be a true record of the meeting and the corrected version was signed by the Chairman.

5. Lenten Course of Accompanied Prayer

Mrs Margaret Broadhurst explained how for 2012 the course would extend through the seven weeks of Lent with sessions on Wednesday afternoons and Thursday evenings. Full details will be available in the New Year with an inaugural 'taster session' on 29 January. Costs will be kept to a minimum with the aid of a grant from the Society of the Sacred Mission.

6. Matters Arising

Implementation of 'Christmas Cracked'

Revd Andy Jowitt reported that the Standing Committee recommended adoption of the concept. Not all schools in our area had yet agreed to become involved, but Great Linford, Willen, Bradwell Village, New Bradwell, Stanton, Summerfield and Hanslope will all participate. Revd Chris Howden is coordinating the venture, which will require teams of 3 – 4 leaders for each event plus organisation of refreshments.

Sharing Agreement for New Bradwell, St James

Revd Chris Collinge had written to John Rees, Solicitor, Oxford, urging action. However, additional legal advice is that implementation may actually require establishment of a full sharing agreement for all of the SEP churches. Willen Church Council had already signified their support for this.

New Bradwell Community Centre

Discussions with the Management Committee and the civil Parish Council are continuing, also Milton Keynes Council are anxious to off-load their responsibility for a small part of the building. A full survey of the structure is scheduled for 30 November 2011. It may be feasible to implement an 'Albermarle Scheme' (requiring only payment of a peppercorn rent for a compatible charitable purpose).

SEP Constitution and Standing Orders

Revd Andy Jowitt explained that Oxford diocesan lawyer, John Rees, has registered concerns

- (i) That the Ecumenical Partnership would not be an incorporated body (the PCC is an incorporated body and it might be wise in the future to consider some decisions being made as PCC decisions where protection of trustees' liabilities is a concern)
- (ii) That there could in theory be conflict of interest between the PCC and the Ecumenical Partnership and that there should be a mechanism for dealing with this

His Memorandum of understanding requires a quorum of trustees of each body who are not trustees of both.

Revd Andy Jowitt said that since Deanery Synod representatives are legally ex-officio PCC representatives this could be a step towards finding a quorum of PCC members who are not also SEP Trustees.

Bob Cross queried whether the theoretical conflict situation was real, given the several decades of harmonious working of the delegated authority of the Stantonbury & Willen PCC to (now) Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership.

It was noted that Whaddon Way had been able to get their Constitution passed when needed for their building project to proceed with pressure put on the Diocese of Oxford not to delay it. Revds John Bradley and Roger Paul are advising on revision of SEP documentation and it was agreed that Revd Andy Jowitt should liaise with them.

October Congregation Statistics

The secretary reported that results had now been received from five of the six churches (results were displayed as histograms for Trustees to peruse). Both Great Linford and Downs Barn had forwarded their results on 1 November! Analyses of figures (without Stantonbury to date) show a 6% increase of adult attendance for a 'normal' Sunday. Unsurprisingly female attendance exceeded male, retirement-age members represent the largest proportion of worshippers and 'young adults' (18 – 40 years) are least well represented in congregations.

7. Ministerial Arrangements

The Deployment Group together with the Ministerial Team, by majority decision, recommend to SEP the following congregational pairings after the retirement of Revd Chris Collinge:

- New Bradwell + Willen
- Bradwell + Downs Barn
- Stantonbury + Great Linford

Revd Liz Baker to concentrate on Willen, Revd Mindy Bell to maintain contact at New Bradwell and David Wilson to continue with work at Great Linford.

It was agreed that Church Councils/Congregational Meetings should be asked to consider the proposals and, if in agreement, to inform the Chairman by early January so that measures could be put in place to implement arrangements. SEP would be asked to formally ratify the proposals without further discussion. Revd Paul Smith asked the Chairman to prepare a written paper for the Church Councils explaining the background to the proposals and Revd Andy Jowitt offered to assist by making available his notes from the discussions. Bob Cross thanked the working parties for their work and difficult decisions.

Action: Chairman, Revd Andy Jowitt

8. Finance

Current situation

Maggie and Adrian Prisk had prepared comprehensive accounts both for the year to date and for the budget for 2012. Mission Partnership payments will be paid in full by the end of this month, but it appears likely that there will be an overall deficit of £17,000 for the year. In 2012 the deficit will exceed £20,000 unless additional income can be achieved. Total

reserves/savings now amount to less than £25,000 which is insufficient to meet two-months expenditure. It would be necessary to raise another £18,000 in order to balance the budget for 2012.

Increasing income and/or reducing costs

Simplistically each congregation would need to find an additional £3,000 if nothing is done to reduce costs. Members queried what would happen if SEP defaulted on payments to the Mission Partnership --- whilst immediately there would be no obvious effect, in the longer term the number of paid Ministers would have to be reduced. Information on how the Mission

Partnership quotas are calculated is limited. After considerable discussion the following resolutions were tabled:

1. Proposed by Revd Andy Jowitt and seconded by Gill Grant that reserves should not be allowed to fall below £20,000. Agreed *Nem. Con.*
2. Proposed by Bob Cross and seconded by Michael Kemp that the Mission Partnership be informed that in 2012 SEP can only provide 85% of their required payments i.e. £124,000. Agreed, with one abstention.

The Chairman emphasised that nevertheless every effort should be made to meet SEP obligations. Revd Paul Smith said that Great Linford and Willen would try to increase their targets. Special gift envelopes were another suggestion.

Appointment of Stewardship Advisers

There was general consensus that stewardship should not be a ministerial activity. David Wilson said that appeals for money were better received when made by members of their own congregation (Dr Julian Pedley was undertaking this task at Great Linford). Gill Grant said that Revd Peter Green was also very good at explaining financial matters. Trustees were asked to report back on what had been achieved from congregations.

VentureFX financial support

The Chairman said that although there had been a proposal that SEP should give financial support to this venture of £500 annually for five years, no formal resolution had been made. In view of the present constrained circumstances it was proposed by Mike Morris and seconded by Revd Andy Jowitt that £500 should be committed for 2012 and further payments considered in due course. Agreed *Nem. Con.*

NETwork Magazine: Expenditure, income and decision on continuance

Revd Andy Jowitt explained that the two issues to date (£960 for 1,000 copies) had been heavily subsidised, but this could not continue. It was hoped that Charity Members would sponsor space (£10 or more each, and up to 4 sponsors per page) and advertising revenue obtained (rate £100 full-page, £55 half-page, £30 quarter-page). It had been intended that the next issue would focus on Christmas and the redevelopment of the Stantonbury complex, but in view of planning delays it would now be more appropriate to plan for an Easter issue. How much subsidy would SEP offer? It was agreed to defer a decision on costs or continuance until the February 2012 Trustees' Meeting.

Independent Inspection of Accounts

Maggie Prisk reported that Gary Farns has agreed to undertake the inspection for one more year. He will donate his honorarium of £150 to Milton Keynes Youth Choir.

9. Citizens:MK

Revd Brian Howden said that six SEP delegates had attended the meeting in Newport Pagnell on 2 November 2011, which entitled the Partnership to have a vote on future actions. Projects finally approved were for the Safer Neighbourhood scheme (beginning with Fishermead; adoption of the Living Wage target; creation of safe places for young people to meet. SEP had agreed to bring at least 15 delegates to the Assembly at Christ the Cornerstone on 6 December 2011. MP's and local Councillors are expected to be present.

10. Reports

Team Leader

Revd Andy Jowitt presented his written report (attached) and proposed that SEP endorse the recommendations that fees should remain unchanged in 2012. This was seconded by Bob Cross and agreed *Nem. Con.*

Chairman of Trustees

In his report (attached) Mike Morris said that it was his intention to stand down as Chairman after the AGM in April 2012. Members expressed gratitude for all that he had done.

Creative Arts

Revd Chris Howden was unable to attend the meeting, but attention was drawn to the Christmas exhibition of angels at Stantonbury.

Evangelism Enabler

The written report (attached) includes some ideas for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations next year. Proposals include 3 June, Lunch with Neighbours; 4 June the lighting of Beacons; 5 National Service at St Paul's Cathedral. Revd Paul Smith said that MK Council are arranging an event in Campbell Park and he had reserved a stand for SEP (selling cakes, jams etc.)

Children and Families

Nothing to report.

11. Any Other Business

David Wilson reported that Revd Peter Ballantine has been appointed an Honorary Canon of Oxford Cathedral, his installation will be on Saturday 14 January 2012 and coach transport will be available to take anyone wishing to attend --- fare will be £6 if the coach is filled, notification to David ASAP. Trustees asked that congratulations be conveyed to Revd Canon Peter Ballantine.

Action: Secretary

12. News from the Churches

Leaflets giving information on Christmas Services are now being distributed around the Partnership.

Photovoltaic panels have been fitted on the south-facing roof at Downs Barn.

New Notice Boards have been installed at Willen

13. Dates of Future Meetings

Trustees' Meetings are scheduled:

23 February 2012 at Great Linford, St Andrew's church

19 April 2012, ACM at Stantonbury, Christ Church

14. Forward Dates

Standing Committee meeting to be arranged.

15. Closing Prayer

Mike Morris closed the meeting with prayer that the deliberations and decisions this evening would be acceptable in the sight of God.