



Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership, Milton Keynes

Minutes of the Trustees' Meeting held on Thursday 28 February 2013 at 7.45 pm at Bradwell, St Lawrence's church

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1. Opening Prayer

Revd Andy Jowitt used the report in The Acts of the Apostles of the meeting of the Early Church Council in Jerusalem as a model for hope that the present meeting would also be guided to listen, think and act in furtherance of God's work in and by the Partnership.

2. Advance Notification of Any Other Business

Advent Course by Revd Dr John Robertson, Extension of Brickhills' Youth Project to MK

3. PCC Meeting

The PCC Meeting was convened at 7.55 pm

Sean Miles proposed and Bob Cross seconded the resolution "This PCC approves the application for Faculty permission from the Chancellor of Oxford Diocese for improvements to the Lime Tree Avenue at Willen Church". Agreed *Nem. Con.*

Several Trustees spoke of the dire condition of the path at present and Bob Cross said it was a potential health and safety hazard. Environmental concerns must be addressed before a specification for the work can be finalised. Revd Andy Jowitt reminded members that a DAC Certificate has to be obtained before a Faculty can be sought.

The PCC Meeting concluded at 7.59 pm

4. Minutes of the Meeting on 22 November 2012 for approval

Item 10 (ii) Confirmation Service lines 1/2 Revd Andy Jowitt said that this should read "only one of the candidates from among the young people had been baptised as an infant". Subject to this alteration it was proposed by Maggie Prisk and seconded by David Wilson that the minutes be accepted. Agreed *Nem. Con.* The minutes were signed by the Chariman.

5. Venture:FX --- a year's progress

Rob Winn added to his report already published in 'The Link' newsletter. The Milton Keynes' project is the 14th and latest of the Methodist-inspired pioneer mission movement for young people not in contact with any conventional Christian church. An experiment in what church might become. Involvement in the Local Community is best achieved through volunteering and being available at festivals and organised events. Rob is also training as a Lay Preacher and studying via Oxford University for a Masters degree. Trustees congratulated him on his energy and initiatives.

6. Matters Arising

Partnership Records and Archives

The Chairman confirmed that older documents will be sent to Aylesbury Record Office until such time as a depository is available in Milton Keynes. More recent material will be stored in the Methodist Chapel at Bradwell.

Women Bishops

A letter had been sent to the Chair of the Synod Lay Committee (Dr Philip Giddings) on behalf of SEP (*vide* Item 3) and a courteous reply was received. New initiatives by the Bishops are known to be in progress.

SEP Treasurer

The Chairman reported that a volunteer for this position is prepared to be nominated at the Annual Congregational Meeting

Electoral Roll

Stantonbury, Christ Church, have already submitted their new membership information to the Secretary. Revd Andy Jowitt reminded members that Electoral Roll details are required to be provided two weeks before the ACM i.e. before 4 April 2013.

7. Sharing Agreement for New Bradwell

(Baptist members at a Special Meeting earlier today had affirmed their intent to join with the other denominations in the Sharing Agreement)

The Chairman reported that at last there appears to be real progress with the legal formalities and that he anticipates final agreement in a matter of weeks. This news was enthusiastically welcomed by Trustees.

Revd Peter Ballantine said that overall legal fees for the agreement are likely to be of the order of £4,000. Maggie Prisk said that to date £600 had already been paid to the Baptist solicitors.

Revd Andy Jowitt hoped that once the New Bradwell agreement had been concluded it would be a relatively simple matter to adapt the legal document for the other churches in the Partnership. Bob Cross queried whether it would be better to establish an agreement for the whole Partnership rather than individual churches. The Chairman said that the first priority was to get the New Bradwell agreement in place so that monies reserved for improvements to the building could be released and utilised.

Trustees asked that a Vote of Thanks be recorded to Revd Paul Smith for his persistent and sustained efforts to achieve the Sharing Agreement and also to his predecessor, Revd Chris Collinge, for her years of endeavour.

8. Standing Orders for Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership

The Chairman said that because the Mission Partnership standing orders could not be adapted for SEP purposes, he had contacted other MK SEP's to see whether their SO's might be used as a basis for creating the SEP documents. Responses are awaited from Woughton and Watling Valley. Revd Andy Jowitt said that he had some draft documents that he would make available. SO's are not a legal document, but are the actual working arrangements for the day to day conduct of the organisation.

9. Finance

Maggie Prisk presented the Consolidated Accounts for 2012, the Balance Sheet for the year to date and the Budget for 2013 (all attached). In 2012 income was approx. £10,000 less than budgeted, although against the reduced payment to the Mission Partnership a notional small 'profit' of around £1,700 is indicated. For 2013 the Mission Partnership requirement is £179k, a target that will be difficult to achieve.

Trustees thanked Maggie and Adrian Prisk for their clear and carefully presented financial information.

Ways of increasing income were discussed, including asking Dr Julian Pedley to give further talks on Stewardship, the use of Gift Days and ensuring that up to £5,000 is claimed from sundry incomes as Gift Aided donations.

Maggie reported that Gary Farns is again willing to undertake the examination of the accounts.

10. Evaluation of Christmas 2012 and Plans for Easter 2013

Revd Peter Ballantine said that 9 schools had joined in the Christmas Cracked presentations and that another school would be joining the group for the Easter Cracked series. Overall Christmas congregations were somewhat reduced compared with 2011, but in that year Christmas Day was a Sunday, which makes a significant difference. It is difficult to measure the effect of the advertisements broadcast by Heart FM, but Trustees felt that the campaign was generally successful and worthwhile. Attempts to alleviate over-subscribed afternoon/evening services by adding morning time services were only moderately successful, people prefer the later times. The special Signed Service at Downs Barn clashed with the signed performance of 'Les Miserables'!

11. 'Leading Your Church into Growth' Conference: 15/18 April 2013, Hoddesdon

Whilst Trustees considered it unfortunate that this event had been organised entirely during the working week, it is likely that some seven SEP members, plus Revd Paul Smith, will attend this conference which should enable the lessons learned to be spread around the Partnership.

12. Christian Foundation

Mike Morris added detail to that given in his Chairman's Report (below) drawing attention to the severe financial constraints now imposed by cuts in Government funding. Staff reductions and curtailment of activities are inevitable, but it is hoped to continue with the Open Farm project. Decisions must be finalised at the next Board Meeting. This method of doing church through practical learning has been of great benefit. Churches are asked to remember when considering donations that 'charity begins at home'. Local MP's have been asked to intervene.

13. Reports

Chairman of Trustees

(The full report is attached). Mike Morris also drew attention to the willingness of the local choir to assist with fund-raising --- £500 had been achieved at a recent concert for the Salvation Army.

Team Leader

(Full report also attached) Revd Peter Ballantine wished to draw attention to the Advent Course led by Canon John Robertson to be held over a three-week period commencing on 27 November 2013 and the post-Easter courses on Spirituality arranged by The Well. He reminded Trustees of the invitation to a breakfast meeting at Stantonbury, Christ Church on 9 March 2013.

Citizens:MK

Revd Brian Howden reported that the organisation now was properly constituted with trustees (of which he is one). Activities are continuing especially with the Living Wage campaign that is slowly gaining acceptance by local employers.

14. Any Other Business

Revd Andy Jowitt reported on the success of the Youth Café project at The Brickhills, originated by Marco Loxley. It is now proposed to extend the idea to Milton Keynes with several drop-in centres for young people and this could include a venue in the Partnership area. The proposal deserves support.

15. Forward Dates

Standing Committee	Trustees' Meeting	Venue
13 March 2013*	18 April 2013 ACM	Stantonbury**
15 May 2013*	20 June 2013	Willen**
14 August 2013*	12 September 2013	New Bradwell**
16 October 2013*	21 November 2013	Great Linford**
* Meeting at Downs Barn		** Meeting at 7.30 for 7.45 pm

16. Closing Prayer

Mike Morris closed the meeting with prayer for blessings on the present and future activities of the Partnership.