





H. Safeguarding Report

A written report had been circulated.

A Safeguarding lead was needed for St Andrews.

A question was raised on which level of course was required for authorised preachers.

To be taken forward to SEC.

I. Elections of SEC reps (*two from each congregation*).

Sharron Marland, Hilda Kirkwood (*St MM*), Mary Kennedy, Helen Rouse (*St J*), Penny Miller, Patricia Collins (*CC*), Rose Hunt, Peter Green (*C&S*), Paul Brookman, Diana Stammers (*BC*)

**All duly elected.**

J. Nomination and elections of SEC Officers:

(i) Chair of SEC

Sharron Marland

Proposed David Preston

**Elected**

Seconded Hilda Kirkwood

(ii) Secretary

Irene Farr

Proposed Helen Rouse

**Elected**

Seconded Mary Kennedy

(iii) Treasurer

(iv) Expenses Coordinator

(v) Gift Aid Secretary

Adrian Prisk

Proposed Peter Green

**Elected** (Treasurer, expenses co-ordinator and gift aid secretary.)

Seconded Mary Kennedy

(vi) Safeguarding Officer

Maggie Prisk was continuing as locum safeguarding officer.

K. Appointment of SEC Standing Committee

Revd. Dr. Paul Smith, Revd. David Lewis, Adrian Prisk, Sharron Marland, Irene Farr: all ex-officio.

Paul Brookman, Patricia Collins, continue to serve. Carol Rockett invited to join.

**Agreed**

L. Nomination of representatives to the MK Methodist Circuit:

Peter Galsworthy, Wendy Allen Campbell, Alison Read, Mike Morris

7. Closure of MK Mission Partnership and future Churches Together

Adrian reported that the trustees had tried to keep Mission Partnership going on less funding from the denominations and had tried to keep John Robertson's role of Director of Ecumenical Mission viable but were unable to do so. This had been a very difficult time for all involved. It was hoped the role of administrator, held by Ann Harris, would continue to be funded by the LEPs and this would be a question for the SEC.

The MP Reps. had been at a meeting to close the charity.

Looking forward, Tim Norwood had asked for the formation of a small working group to move towards establishing Churches Together in Milton Keynes, involving a broader grouping of churches, such as the Quakers, Salvation Army and other independent churches.



Unfortunately, due to illness and other adverse circumstances the report was not available for either the November or January meeting of the SEC and only just in time for an additional meeting in February.

**Neil Popham's review** During the past year the SEC has met more frequently to consider the implementation of Neil Popham's review. We were aware that Neil was on an extended contract from January so we had to make use of the time available to decide how his recommendations would work and how to integrate these with the operating procedures of the CIO when we eventually achieve registration! There was an underlying awareness that after Neil's departure, there would be a further reduction in the Stipendiary ministry which would have an impact, particularly on the Bradwell congregation.

Neil's review contained several innovative ideas but the most radical was that the replacement for his post would be what he called a 'team midwife' but which has been changed to a 'Mission/Vision enabler' and now more settled as a 'Vision Enabler'. This post has been agreed by the Deanery and Diocese, but it has been recommended that the person appointed will not have any direct ministerial responsibility for a congregation although would be available for 'Sunday' ministry across the Partnership.

### **The archdeacon's review recommendations (summarised)**

- 1) The new post should be as envisaged in Neil Popham's report without a Sunday focus with a particular congregation. He recommended a three-year post and that Bradwell should be given an early priority for development.
- 2) Staggering service times to make better use of limited resources and to foster good relations across the partnership.
- 3) Willen – the use of non-stipendiary ministry along with existing connections with Sam Muthuveloe and Cross and Stable.
- 4) Bradwell – Paul Smith would take on the role of lead minister along with support from David Lewis and some early input from the new post.
- 5) Team Leader – The person appointed to the new post should have the capacity to take on the role of Team Leader when this position falls vacant.
- 6) Bridge-building – There should be some external facilitation to help improve relationships and effectively manage conflict.

At the February meeting, representatives expressed their views about the recommendations of the report. The principal concern was around whether the pastoral cover of the 6 congregations could be met by the existing team if the new appointee did not have a direct pastoral role. It was decided that a smaller group should look at the comments from the reps and report back to a further extra meeting in March as we had not had sufficient time to consider the report and its implications.

The smaller group wholly supported the concept of the independence of the 'Vision Enabler' and proposed that there could be a number of options to provide additional support for Willen. It was suggested for instance that clusters be established. In the first instance there might be an Eastern cluster of Gt Linford, Christ Church, Cross and Stable and Willen and a Western cluster of Bradwell and New Bradwell. This might change in the future to two clusters, each of three churches. We have to be aware that both David Lewis and Paul Smith will retire in the next 2 – 3 years so the whole plan will need to be re-written then in any case.

### **Recommendations of the group to be considered by the SEC:**

- 1) A review of the ministerial cover at Willen is a priority.

- 2) The appointment of the Mission/Vision Enabler should go ahead in its 'pure' form, with the appointee not having any particular congregational focus, but would have a role in expanding lay ministry in the partnership.
- 3) One way forward for seeking to ensure that pastoral ministry covers the six congregations in the partnership might be the development of clusters of congregations and making more use of the lay ministry that already exists in the partnership.
- 4) That we continue to explore with the Deanery and the Diocese the possibility of other SSMS/NSMs coming to share in ministry in the partnership.
- 5) We provide information to our congregations regarding the cost of ministry in the partnership.
- 6) We consider how help can be given within the partnership with building issues faced by individual congregations. Items 5) and 6) came up in discussion and are not directly related to the Archdeacon's recommendations. SEC decisions so far: At the March meeting it was decided to go ahead with the appointment process and that the Job Title should be 'Vision Enabler'. Much of the work on this had already been done by David Preston, Paul Brookman and Rose Hunt in consultation with Rev Gill Lovell the Diocesan Parish Development officer but was on hold pending decisions on the Archdeacon's report. This process with a timeline for the appointment is now under way.

#### **Further SEC decisions:**

- 1) Confirmation of Paul Smith's role as lead minister at Bradwell.
- 2) Development of clusters to ensure proper ministerial cover of the whole partnership with a particular focus on pastoral care at Willen.
- 3) Discussion of the 'Bridge-Building' recommendation

David Preston and Adrian Prisk (co-chairs) April 2022

#### Appendix2

#### **CIO Progress report for SEP AGM – April 28th 2022**

The CIO steering group has continued to meet approximately monthly throughout the year. The online application using the Governing Document has been ready to submit since January, but the EOG have advised that Watling Valley LEP submit their application first so that others can avoid some of the pitfalls to ensure a smooth application process. We have kept in regular touch with them to follow quickly when they have had their application accepted.

- a) Application – we have been advised that the Charity Commission has not accepted Watling Valley's and the EOG's proposed approach to initial (interim) trustees, which matches our own current proposal. The Charity Commission has advised that the initial trustees must meet the minimum number of Trustees specified in the governing document. Therefore, we will be required to name a minimum of 9 Trustees. We expect this should include seven who are not ex officio to meet the elected and nominated minimum numbers and SEC agreed that six of these should be found by asking each congregation to nominate one person to serve as an interim trustee. These could include officers of the SEC.. Alongside the seven, there should be a minimum number of ex officio Trustees, drawn from the ministers team. There was no minimum number of ex officio Trustees in our current draft constitution but we are required to include this and the Steering Group recommended a minimum of two and a maximum of six. All initial trustees will resign at the first AGM after the CIO is registered but may stand for election at that point.
- b) Statement of Faith – Another change is required, following advice from the Watling Valley experience, to the Statement of Faith to update this in line with Churches Together in England.
- c) Operating Procedures – We have received comments about the current draft procedures

which we are using to modify the existing draft document. We will present the new draft Operating Procedures as a whole for the SEC to approve at its first meeting after the AGM.

d) The Baptist Pension scheme – arrangements are not sufficiently resolved to be ready for the process of transferring assets and liabilities once the CIO is registered. The CIO application can be made without resolving this, but the new charity could not be fully established without resolution. I am pleased to say that there have been substantial falls in the debt recently and in March 2022 this now stands at £24,000 (£44,000 in March 2021). This may be because there has been a rise in interest rates which improves the yields of investments particularly bonds. We are not expecting to submit the application until we know the Watling Valley registration has been accepted and initial trustees have been determined.

Diana Stammers, Paul Smith, Adrian Prisk, Peter Green – CIO Steering Group