**Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

**of the Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership**

incorporating

**the Annual Meeting for the election of Churchwardens** and

**the Annual Parochial Church Meeting**

held on

**Thursday 20th April 2023 at 7.30pm at Christ Church Stantonbury**

**Present:** 47 members were present.

Sharron Marland (Chair), welcomed all present and explained that as the meeting was not quorate it was suggested to continue the meeting then send out the minutes to all 323 members giving two weeks for any comments and amendments followed by a meeting of the new trustees to ratify any decisions made.

Sharron asked for any comments or disagreement on this, none were given.

1. **Opening Worship** led by Revd. Dr. Paul Smith
2. **Apologies for absence:** Eight apologies had been received.
3. **Notification of Any Other Business**
* Citizens:MK, report from Mary Kennedy.
1. **Annual Meeting for the election of Churchwardens** *(chaired by the Anglican Team Rector)*

Paul reminded that this was a meeting for the whole Parish, not only church members.

Nominations received:

Mary Kennedy, Graham Crisp (St J), Penny Miller, Adrian Prisk (CC), Gill Grant, Ken Brine (C&S), Brad Stone (St MM), Alan Potter (BC).

Paul explained that four more were allowed, two per congregation.

There were no further nominations at the meeting and so those named were duly elected.

St Andrews would send in their nominations following a congregational meeting.

Paul reminded that all elected churchwardens need to attend the Archdeacons Visitation.

This meeting was closed.

1. **Annual Parochial Church Meeting** *(chaired by the Anglican Team Rector)*
2. Election of PCC members *(PCC only)*

Nominations:

Ken Brine, Sioux Redwood, Robert Llewellyn.

Duly elected to serve as PCC members alongside ex-officio members.

1. Nomination of Deanery Synod members, to be elected at the first Deanery Synod meeting:

Adrian Prisk, Stephen Fletcher

At present, based on congregational membership numbers, the Partnership is allowed six lay members. Adrian is currently questioning whether this is based on the whole membership, or Anglican only, which would reduce the number to four.

The Deanery strongly encourage the allocated number to be filled. Please consider if you could take on this role.

1. Delegation of powers of Parochial Church Council to the Partnership Council

Proposed Ken Brine Seconded Penny Miller

**Agreed**

1. **Annual General Meeting of the Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership** *(chaired by the SEC Lay Chair)*
2. Current Membership numbers 2023:

Bradwell Church 88

Christ Church 32

St Andrews 75

St James 45

Cross and Stable 40

St Mary Magdalene 43

Total 323 A reduction of 8 members from the AGM 2022.

Sharron explained that only the numbers of members are needed for the AGM.

Membership forms should be kept securely in each church.

1. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday, 28th April 2022

Proposed Diana Stammers Seconded Mary O’Neale

**Agreed**

Reflecting on the minutes and those present last year, Chuks reminded the meeting of the sad loss of Carol Rocket from St Andrews and from the Partnership Council. A prayer was said for Carol.

1. Matters arising not covered elsewhere:

There were none.

1. Annual SEP Report - Team Leader

A written Team Leader’s report from Paul had been circulated.

A question was raised on the combining of the partnership Leadership Team with the Standing Committee, forming the Leadership Committee. There followed some discussion:

The Partnership Leadership Team meetings had been poorly attended and there had been no provision for a Standing Committee under the new Operating Procedures.

After careful thought and discussion on the functions of the groups it had been agreed, at the last Church Meeting, to combine the two. The initial trustees had also discussed the roles and responsibilities of the groups and had made some suggestions for the structure of groups. Conversations were ongoing.

1. Appointment of Anglican minister

There had been a delay in the advertisement going out but this had now happened, 20th April, closing date 10th May, although an extension to this had been sought.

Interviews with Bishop Alan are planned for 31st May, shortlisting via Zoom at a date not yet confirmed.

The interview panel of thirteen are:

Bishop Alan, Mike Duff (Church Pastoral Aid Society), David Thom (Chair of MK Local Ecumenical Partnerships), Sharron Marland (Chair, SPC), Derek Watson (St A), Revd. Dr. Sam Muthuveloe, Penny Miller (CC), David Preston (Trustee), Peter Green,(Treasurer), Stephen Fletcher (Deanery Synod), Rose Hunt (C&S), Revd.Chuks Iwuagwu, Paul Brookman (BC) or if unavailable Diana Stammers (Trustee).

Bishop Alan will write to each to explain roles as interviewers.

Paul S has had to withdraw from the interview panel as he will be on sabbatical.

The advertising for the post is on Pathways, CPAS website and SEP website, which are free and if no applicants this time will be re-advertised.

1. Appointment of Baptist minister:

Approval of the initiation of the process to appoint a Baptist minister from early 2024.

Proposed Maggie Prisk Seconded Penny Miller

**Agreed**

1 abstention

The Pastoral Vacancy Summary will need to be signed by two of the elected trustees and returned to Lisa Kerry.

A question was raised, would the Baptist appointment need to wait until the Anglican appointment had been made.

No, this was not the intention. If the Anglican post is not filled by early 2024 the Baptist appointment will still go ahead.

1. CIO Report

It was suggested to add the constitution to the SEP website.

Diana referred to Appendix 1 at the end of the agenda explaining the transition to the new governance and management structures.

*Please see Appendix 1.*

Revd Nicola Martyn-Beck suggested the newly elected Anglican Churchwardens may find it useful to have a meeting outlining their responsibilities to fulfil requirements of other denominations for an equivalent role; Baptist Deacons, Methodist Stewards and United Reformed Church Elders.

1. Treasurer’s report
2. Financial Report and Consolidated Accounts for 2022

Adrian had provided a written report and accounts, which had been circulated.

Sharron drew attention to the last paragraphs where Adrian had thanked the congregational treasurers for their care and attention in providing accounts and highlighted Adrian’s work, in the service of God, for the partnership drawing spontaneous thanks and applause from those present.

Adrian continued, the Baptist Pension Scheme had been a long challenge hampered by the lack of advice from the Baptist Pension Service; in July this was bought out by an insurance company and the debt was removed leaving only the administration fee to be paid.

Adrian expressed concern that in 2022 gift aided regular income had fallen by £17,000 across the partnership.

There was an increase of £10,000 in plate giving as things returned to normal following the pandemic.

The declining income is a worrying trend when planning to appoint ministers.

From the amounts offered by the congregations for the coming year there should be an increase in reserves of about £12,000, however, the offered amounts may not be possible with greatly increased energy costs.

A part-time Anglican post is still being paid for.

1. Adrian thanked Adrian Yardley as the independent inspector of the consolidated accounts for his prompt work and explained that next year each set of congregational accounts would need to be inspected.
2. Safeguarding Report

A written report had been circulated.

Maggie Prisk was thanked for continuing to fulfil the role of Safeguarding Lead for the Partnership.

**A pause for worship and prayer** led by Revd. Nicola Martyn-Beck.

1. **Nominations and elections:** Revd.Dr. Paul Smith took the Chair at this point.
2. Election of Partnership Council reps *(two from each congregation)*

Penny Miller, Adrian Prisk (CC), Rose Hunt, Peter Green (C&S), Mary Kennedy, Helen Rouse (St J), Sharron Marland, Hilda Kirkwood (St MM).

**Elected unanimously.**

Trudy Hutchings, Jackie Williamson (St A), co-opted following the meeting.

1. Election of Trustees *(six plus one)*

Diana Stammers, Adrian Prisk, David Preston, Michael Williamson, Anne Slee, Stephen Fletcher.

**Elected unanimously.**

All must have DBS checks.

1. Nomination and election of Partnership Council Officers:
* Chair of SEPC Sharron Marland

**Elected unopposed**

* Secretary Irene Farr

**Elected unopposed** and was happy to continue for one year.

* Treasurer (Including Expenses Coordinator and Gift Aid Secretary)

**Nominated to be elected by the trustees.**

* Partnership Safeguarding Officer

Maggie Prisk

**Elected unopposed** and thanked for continuing in this role.

* Partnership Newsletter Editor

John Porter

**Elected unopposed** and thanked for allhe was doing to keep the Newsletter running and circulated.

At this point Sharron Marland resumed as Chair.

1. Appointment of Leadership Committee

Revd Dr Paul Smith, Revd Nicola Martyn-Beck, Revd Chuks Iwuagwu, Sharron Marland, Adrian Prisk, Irene Farr, Alan Potter, Brad Stone, Jackie Williamson, Patricia Collins, Peter Green.

1. Election of representatives (3), to MK Methodist Circuit

Peter Galsworthy, Wendy Allen-Campbell

*Next meeting will be held on 14th June at Freeman Memorial Methodist Church in Bletchley.*

Peter agreed to report back to the Partnership Council meetings.

1. Names of those interested in forming the partnership Mission, Evangelism and Discipleship Team:

There was discussion on the Mission, Evangelism and Discipleship Team that has not yet started to meet, Chuks said he would be interested in joining this group.

1. **Partnership wide Service:**

It had been suggested to hold a whole partnership service in one church building on Pentecost, May 28th.

There followed much discussion:

The plan for March to May had been agreed in December.

The plan has been completed up to the end of August and the next Collaborative Worship Planning Group would be on June 21st, so any ideas would need to be taken to that meeting.

There was not enough notice for those already committed to leading worship on that date.

A suggestion to hold Partnership services on 5th Sundays in the month.

There was support for holding Partnership services if given more notice and planning.

Could there be a celebratory service at a different time of day?

It was questioned whether people would attend a Sunday morning service followed by an afternoon or evening: It was noted that the Tree Cathedral service had been running successfully for twenty years.

Closing churches on Sunday mornings was confusing and could cause people to stay away.

As an Ecumenical Partnership, how are the denominations to be represented in each service for ecumenical unity?

Do we need to draft protocols for joint services, eg time of services.

Is this something for the Mission, Evangelism and Discipleship Team to focus on?

Resolved to take this discussion to SPC meeting

1. **Churches Together MK**

Unlike Mission Partnership, representatives were not needed from each congregation.

Susan Armstrong from St Mary Magdalene is the SEP Rep.

1. **GDPR**

Sharron had completed the report for the Partnership.

1. **Any Other Business**

Citizens:MK Mary Kennedy had attended two assemblies on behalf of the Partnership and now felt that Citizens:MK is looking for activists and people willing to run campaigns and felt that people in the SEP didn’t have the energy for this.

Stephanie Laing ,Citizens:MK, community organiser, had now left.

**Note of future meetings:**

Proposed next meeting of SEPC: May 25th, 7.30pm, venue St James’ Church, New Bradwell.

Proposed future SEPC dates: July, September, November, January, March

Future Leadership Committee dates: May 11th, 10.00am on Zoom

1. **Closing Prayer** led by Dr Adrian Prisk.

Sharron thanked everyone for attending on such a bad night.

Sharron reminded all that responses to the minutes were needed within two weeks of receiving them from Irene and could Congregational Leaders encourage this.

Appendix 1

**CIO Transition**

The Stantonbury Ecumenical Partnership was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in October 2022 with a new constitution and a Partnership Agreement setting out arrangements between the four denominations in the Partnership. Operating Procedures setting out governance and management structures for the CIO have now been approved by SEC, the Ecumenical Oversight Group for Milton Keynes and the initial Trustees who are in place until the first AGM of the Partnership as a CIO on 20th April 2023.

From the date of the AGM, the Partnership will transfer to the new governance and management structures. There is greater emphasis on governance and leadership of the Partnership as a whole and a reduced expectation of formal governance in local congregations, while maintaining effective local management. The main changes will be:

* Four whole Church (i.e. Partnership) meetings each year including the AGM
* Stantonbury Ecumenical Council becomes the Partnership Council, still involving reps from each "Congregation" (i.e. local church)
* At local level, each Congregation (local church) will have a Congregational Leadership Team, replacing the Church Council where those currently exist, potentially with a reduction in size depending on current arrangements. Membership and function is set out in the Operating Procedures.
* The holders of two Church Officer/Warden positions in each congregation will now be recognised as also fulfilling the  Methodist, Baptist and URC denominations' equivalent requirements.
* A group of Trustees will oversee the operation of the Partnership and its governance. The Trustees will include six elected Trustees to be elected at the AGM.

There is an indicative annual schedule of meetings in the Operating Procedures along with detail of each group.