

Minutes of the Circuit Meeting of the Sutton Park Methodist Circuit Held on 18th September at Streetly Methodist Church

I. PRELIMINARIES

1. Welcome and Introductions

Revd Malcolm Oliver chaired the meeting and thanked Streetly for acting as hosts. The meeting welcomed those attending for the first time. Deacon Rachel Thomas-Prasad new to the Circuit, Rachel Moss who is candidating for the ministry in Dudley Circuit, Louisa Haynes on placement from Queens College at Kingstanding and Helen Hickson working at Erdington and in the urban cluster. We also gave a warm welcome to the District Chair, Revd Ian Howarth.

2. Opening Devotions – Revd Stephen Willey

Rev Stephen got us thinking about shepherds and how in Ezekiel that meant leaders. What kind of shepherds are we? We sang The Lord is my Shepherd (481) and were led in prayer.

3. Membership of the Meeting

Attendees were asked to sign the attendance sheet. By signing the sheet, you are confirming details held by Steve Buck are correct. Steve reminded the meeting that visitors were unable to vote on any items during the meeting.

4. Apologies for Absence

There were 41 members present, 4 visitors and 9 apologies were received.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11th June 2019

The Circuit Meeting Secretary explained why a revised version of the minutes had been issued, as section 3 and 6 had been updated. A sentence was removed from section 4 as John had not taken away an action to review the assessment. The minutes were then agreed as a true and accurate record and signed accordingly.

6. Notice of extra matters to be discussed

Two items were submitted.

II. GDPR and Safeguarding – Rev Stephen Froggatt

GDPR:

1) Circuit Directory was due to be published this month but still awaiting submissions from a number of churches (Four Oaks, Falcon Lodge, Kingstanding, Stockland Green, St Chad's) please ensure information is sent as soon as possible (any 2 of email, telephone number or postal address). It is not a public document, so only those who appear in the directory will receive a copy.

2) Confidential Waste - District confirmed that confidential waste needs to be disposed of properly and not shredded at home but collected by secure commercial shredder and costs will be met by the Circuit.

3) Registration of children for activities (junior church, messy church), need to ensure update annually and dispose of all old records. Baptism/Cradle Roll keep for 5 years only, electronic or paper records.

Safeguarding:

1) Had been very encouraged by the response to meet with Young People Representatives for the District on behalf of the circuit, resulting in a 14 page report being produced.

2) Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance Document had been updated this year, Safeguarding Officers need to keep a digital copy. The meeting was reminded that electrical socket covers are now banned in Methodist premises, make sure any are removed and destroyed.

3) First Aid trained volunteer is needed in every church, ideally someone who is there most weeks. A named person is needed, please send to Stephen, £150-£180 each for training (1 – 3 day course).

4) Safeguarding Foundation Training will take place at Kingsbury on Tuesday 15th October at 7pm. A minibus will be available with pick ups from Nechells and Stockland Green. Sue Holder will be doing an Advanced Training Course in March / April 2020 at South Parade.

5) Recommended that we do the Certificate in Prevent Training, which is being alert to radicalisation, involves videos and a multiple choice exam.

6) Website – a lot of out of date /expired information had been deleted by Stephen. Everyone should know who their website contact is at their church. Website looks very exciting now and thank you to everyone.

7) Circuit Safeguarding Officer – pleased to update the meeting that Nikki would be picking up the administration side of Safeguarding (records, training renewals etc) in conjunction with church safeguarding

officers, There was still a need for a Circuit Safeguarding Lead and pleased to say that Gerald Peel (Erdington) had agreed to take on this role. The meeting was asked to agree to this appointment. All voted in favour and we thanked Gerald. Gerald would feed back to Sue Holder (District SGO) and Rev Ian Howarth added that he would also attend District Safeguarding Meetings.

Our thanks were given to Revd Stephen for all the work he does on GDPR and Safeguarding.

III. Circuit Mission Priorities CGK “Living and Growing God’s Kingdom”

Rev Stephen Willey reminded the meeting that we now had 5 mission goals:

- A. Understand the Needs of and Value the Uniqueness of each community within Sutton Park Methodist Circuit.
- B. Ensure each person is empowered and Encourage/Equip everyone to enrich their faith.
- C. Continue to encourage Linking of congregations within Sutton Park Circuit churches.
- D. Speak out for justice in tangible and measurable ways.
- E. Bring young people to a knowledge and love of Christ.

An easy way to remember it is JUVELY! (Justice, Understanding, Valuing, Empowering/Encouraging/Equipping, Link, Youth). Goals can change, they need to be measurable and achievable, something can do as a Circuit at a practical level (asylum seekers, refugees). Spent time discussing with our neighbours the goals.

Need to understand and value our communities, take time to walk around your local area and value it.

Rev Ian Howarth gave update on marriage proposals, God in love unites us. At the Conference held in June, a consultation paper had been set out by Connexion. Need to read the report and understand what it is saying, man, woman or any 2 people in love. Need to understand and debate the paper. Will be a process of consultation, Conference said provisional legislation, will be voted on again, need to listen to people’s views. Each Circuit to organise conversations and out of those a 500 word report to be sent to synod for inclusion in handbook, do not have to vote can be advisory, can also send memorials to Conference. Advised to look at online, think about the paper. There is also a video and study guide, can be used in church or study groups. CLT have ordered some booklets. Will have a circuit meeting on 10th March and synod meeting on 25th April in Sutton Park Circuit, so information needed by then. Any memorials need to be raised by 31st March.

Make sure we all know who our link church is.

Young people feel very encouraged by the Circuit, feel God’s church will survive, not sure how Methodist church will fit in, but very encouraged by our young people.

We need to engage with the real world and everything we do should fit into our mission priorities.

Our thanks were given to Revd Stephen.

IV. Outworking of Circuit Mission Priorities CGK – Rev Ian Howarth took over as Chair of the Meeting at this point. Letter had been issued with the agenda.

1. Stationing 2020 confirmation of known details and arrangements and Stationing 2021. Revd Ian Howarth / Marion Watts

Huge thank you to Marion, Chris H and the Circuit Invitation Committee for all the work they have done.

The circuit Invitation Committee recommended that Rev Alan be invited to stay in the Circuit for a further 5 years from 2020 as a Circuit Minister. A letter had been sent to Circuit members and as no responses had been received, Rev Ian was pleased to announce that a vote would not be needed and Rev Alan was duly re-appointed. Rev Alan would be stepping down as Superintendent of the Circuit from 2019, with the proposal that Rev Malcolm Oliver is appointed Superintendent in his place.

The following proposals were put to the meeting:

PROPOSAL: (2) The Circuit Meeting thanks the Invitation Committee for its work thus far regarding Stationing 2020 and endorses their suggestion: (A) To request through the Stationing Process a probationary Minister to have pastoral Charge of Boldmere (Hub); Kingstanding and Nechells. (B) That Revd Dr Alan Smithson take Pastoral Charge of Falcon Lodge Methodist Church. (3) That Revd Malcolm Oliver be formally appointed as Superintendent of the Sutton Park Circuit until August 2021.

The meeting agreed unanimously to all of the above proposals.

Our thanks were given to Revd Alan for his time as Superintendent and all that he has achieved in the Circuit and wish him well as focusses on his churches.

A probationary minister was considered, as this will be an ideal placement for them, a varied ministry with lots of support, working with Malcolm and Rachel. A very good profile has been produced.

Rev Malcolm becomes Superintendent and Rev Ian wished in well, as did the meeting. For confirmation his 5 year term does not start again, but keeps to the original term.

2. Coordinating Circuit Stewards – Marion, John, Naomi - report was issued with the agenda.

PROPOSAL The Circuit meeting warmly accepts the Circuit Stewards report and gives thanks to Marion, John and Naomi for all their ongoing work. The meeting unanimously agreed with the proposal.

3. Financial Report from Acting Circuit Treasurer – John Rutherford - report was issued with the agenda.

Questions were asked about circuit assessment amounts,

- It was too much for the smaller churches and not fair compared to that paid by some of the bigger churches, could it be done a membership basis? Rev Alan confirmed that Methodism does not allow assessments to be done on membership alone, which is why we had tried different schemes over the years.

- Could churches offer what we feel is right for our church, so not paying over the odds? Could do, but would be consequences as have a commitment to staffing levels, when Rev Malcolm's position comes up next year, would have to review staff costs and see what staff we could have.

Rev Stephen W said justice is a priority, what is justice, remember the Good Shepherd.

Rev Alan reminded us of the amazing generosity of people's time, like John for all the time he spends, we should be as generous as we can be, could be in time or compassion, not just money.

Other comments made were:

- Should be generous but needs to be base lined, if know expenses could divide across the churches?

- If member based, a church who has a large number of new members (30 people at Stockland Green) would be wanting them to made members elsewhere so does not increase the cost to the church, we need to think and pray about the situation, we will not be producing our wallet when we get to heaven!

- The assessment figures were based on the previous year's figure, a rough guide is that offerings cover the assessment and know it is difficult when that drops.

- A previous Circuit Rev Stephen F had been in, had used 4 variables (lettings income, membership, reserves and offerings) but very complicated, should be about generosity.

- One church's treasurer had produced some schedules and sent to John, comparing membership and average income in the areas i.e. Witton would not pay as much per head, should be sharing information about what churches are paying.

- Rev Malcolm, we should be showing sense and need to keep our eyes focussed on Jesus and not on wallets, sorry if it feels unfair, happy to mediate and meet outside of this meeting with church representatives to discuss, as long as meeting is specific in what it will cover.

- John confirmed CPD says cannot be based on membership, a lot of income comes from lettings, giving is an individual thing, we do an offer system and individual to churches. All systems are imperfect, was worth listening to David Mills, previous treasurer with 22 years' experience who said previous system too complicated, we also need to remember to listen to Christ even more so.

PROPOSALS: *The Circuit meeting accepts the report and thanks the Acting Circuit Treasurer for his work.* The meeting unanimously agreed with the proposals.

4. Property Report – David Allen – report was issued with the agenda.

PROPOSALS: *The Circuit meeting accepts report and thanks the Circuit Property Secretary for his work.* The meeting unanimously agreed with the proposals.

5. Local Preachers Meeting – Rev Stephen Willey

A verbal update was given at the meeting: Some LPs have retired or moved on, have several people on trial and on note and others wanting to become worship leaders. Diana and Kirsten progressing well, Peter awaiting exam results and final trial service, will then be on full plan, Clive T returning to his studies.

Rachel is also on trial as a preaching deacon. Two people received a note to preach (Julie and Elsie) and two worship leaders in training (Tracey and Peter).

There is a requirement for mentors and tutors to offer support.

Also need a LP Secretary, it is a pastoral role, any member can do it, can anyone help, as Stephen can only do next meeting.

Consequence of a letter from John Taylor, there will be a Circuit consultation of worship at South Parade, Sunday 29th September at 4pm, everyone is welcome.

PROPOSAL: The Circuit meeting accepts report from the Local Preachers meeting. The Circuit Worship Consultation on 29th September, 4pm at South Parade Methodist. The meeting unanimously agreed with the proposals.

6. Refugee Support Group Update

The third Fun Day had been held in Sutton Park in conjunction with Restore. 39 adults/children had attended with a mixture of nationalities. A wonderful day, despite the rain and had not cost that much. There is still money in the fund. It is one of the few circuit projects that have representatives from each church. Do need to have more meetings, is there an opportunity to collaborate with Birmingham? Could we support a family in the Circuit? Need someone to help organise, there is a heart for the work in our Circuit.

Our thanks were given to Rosie and the Refugee Support Group.

7. Eco Circuit

PROPOSAL: The CLT have asked Revd Alan Smithson to oversee a group of people who are interested in developing Sutton Park Circuit in being an Eco Circuit.

The meeting unanimously agreed with the proposal and anyone interested is asked to contact Rev Alan.

Rev Stephen F had been at Synod and was a joy that our District approved to seek to be an Eco District, requires 14 churches to set up to bronze level, every church should be capable of this. Rev Ian needs to set up a district eco group and hoping churches with silver status will offer representatives to be at the meeting.

8. District Mission - Including Church without Walls

PROPOSALS: The Circuit Meeting supports the appointment of Deacon Marilyn Slowe to the District Council. The Circuit Meeting is keen to engage with the District 'Church without Walls' initiative. The meeting unanimously agreed with the proposals.

Our thanks are recorded to Jim Hart for all the work he has done, having now retired from the role. Letter to be sent to Jim from the Circuit Meeting.

9. Wider Mission Matters - Thy Kingdom Come, Global Mission

PROPOSAL: We Request Nikki Murcott to coordinate the prayer event 'Thy Kingdom Come'. We request the CLT to discuss a budget for the Circuit's involvement in 'Thy Kingdom Come' and Church Without Walls. The meeting unanimously agreed with the proposals.

Nikki explained that Thy Kingdom Come was set up by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 2016. Takes place between Ascension and Pentecost (21/05/2020 – 31/05/2020) 5 people to come to know the love of Jesus, during that time. Trey Hall had been on Songs of Praise about it this year and a video featuring Justin Welby is available. Going to move the District Initiative to later in the autumn, so can focus on Thy Kingdom Come.

10. CGK Youth and Junior Report - Revd Malcolm Oliver

Monthly youth worship held in different churches across different Circuits, always feel blessed by the services the young people are leading, assisted by intern and Fitzroy. 30 places available to attend Regenerate in

November, looking to support as a circuit and district and to redo the Pioneer Centre trip. Young people attract young people and we can learn from them.

John R thanked Rev Malcolm for all the work he is doing with the young people.

11. Circuit Mission report - Deacon Marilyn

Next meeting is at South Parade on the 30th September at 7pm, all churches should be represented.

V. Other Business and Appointments

We took time to pray for Rev Stephen W as he prepares to leave the Circuit and for Deacon Marilyn and Rev Stephen F who are preparing for their sabbaticals.

a. Sabbatical Support Groups

Deacon Marilyn Stowe – January to March 2020, convenor to be Chris Higgs.

Rev Stephen Froggatt – June to August 2020, convenor to be Naomi Jones.

b. Letters of Support from the Circuit

Jim Hart (for work at district), Rev Bill Anderson (previous district chair, daughter is ill), Rev Keith Webster (recently retired at 91, needs to slow down), Rev Colin and Margaret Gardner (following a serious car accident).

c. Appointments

- Circuit Steward – only have 3 circuit stewards, need more, please think about it.
- Circuit Treasurer – still needed as John only doing in an acting capacity.

The meeting was reminded of the roles that need filling, to hold in our prayers and let God speak to you.

AOB

1) A holiday club report from Falcon Lodge was issued with the agenda.

2) Concert at Darlington Street Methodist Church, which is closing, (Wolverhampton) on the 21st September 6.30pm-9.00pm and the knife cross was being taken to it as International Peace Day. Earlier in the day, the knife cross was going to be at Kidderminster College.

VI. FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of the next 4 meetings were planned for:

- Thursday 28th November - St Chads
- Tuesday 10th March 2020 - Boldmere
- Wednesday 10th June 2020 – Witton
- Thursday 17th September

V. Closing Devotions

Rev Malcolm thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Signed.....Dated.....