

Minutes of the Circuit Meeting of the Sutton Park Methodist Circuit Held on 28th November at St Chads LEP Church

I. PRELIMINARIES

1. Welcome and Introductions

Revd Malcolm Oliver chaired the meeting and thanked St Chads for acting as hosts. They are doing incredible work here, wonderful people, real kingdom of God. We were asked to remember them in our prayers as they look at redeveloping the site and awaiting a feasibility study report. The meeting welcomed those attending for the first time. Noreen Marshall, treasurer from Blackwood Methodist Church and 3 visiting student ministers, Graig Gaffney, Helen Hickson and Louisa Haynes.

2. Opening Devotions – Revd Alan Smithson

Revd Stephen F had been delayed, so Revd Alan led the meeting in opening devotions. John ch 11 - Story of Lazarus was a powerful one, phrases in the story were if only, couldn't you, don't you, in the life of the church we hear the same phrases and we are challenged by Jesus to "come out, untie and be free", words that we need to hear and not don't, can't, couldn't. We were then 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. The meeting reminded visitors that they were unable to vote on any items during the meeting. Steve advised there are still number of vacancies for churches to attend the Circuit Meeting and it is our duty to make sure they are filled.

4. Apologies for Absence

There were 36 members present, 3 visitors and 17 apologies were received.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 18th June 2019

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record and signed accordingly. The outgoing Circuit Meeting Secretary was thanked for all the work she had done and given a card, gift and flowers. Many thanks to you all, very unexpected and much appreciated.

6. Notice of extra matters to be discussed

The Filing Cabinet used by the Circuit PA (Nikki) would be stored in the Phoenix Room at the Four Oaks church for three years until the end of August 2022.

II. GDPR and Safeguarding – Rev Stephen Froggatt

Safeguarding:

Revd Stephen handed out cards for each church to take back with them. The district safeguarding officer is Sue Holder. Over 100 people in the Circuit had now received Safeguarding training via two training sessions. Revd Stephen would do one foundation training session per year going forward. Those who need to attend the advanced training course, will be completed by Sue Holder, the next one on the 2nd April, which presbyters, worship leaders, lay people and local preachers need to book on to. Training is offered across the district, if can not attend circuit training and is needed to be completed every 4 years. Also, reminded that need to be DBS registered and should not be in post until it has been received.

GDPR:

Revd Stephen advised the meeting that training was originally completed in 2018, when GDPR was introduced. However, since then, no church is yet to have returned a data audit. Revd Stephen will be visiting churches to help get them completed. GDPR needs to be taken seriously and every church should have a lead GDPR person.

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

III. Circuit Mission Priorities CGK "Celebrating God's Kingdom: 'Emerging Church' - Revd Stephen Willey

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.

CLT had recently held an away day to talk about mission. Falcon Lodge was doing some great work, holiday clubs, messy church, open book, Jolly Whatnots, nursery and many more. Can see mission happening there, but there are issues that Falcon Lodge also have to look at in their area, mental health, drugs, gambling, sexual abuse, family instability. The emerging church in Wesley's day also had issues that needed to be addressed, hunger, neglect for example. So, what is church? Fellowship, singing, praying, communion, talking, commitment – can we see that at Falcon Lodge? A family have 4 children, lots of connections to Falcon Lodge and will now have the children baptised at the Covenant Service. The children asked Revd Stephen to pray for their ill granddad, who is now out of hospital. Revd Stephen had not seen Falcon Lodge as an emerging church as had been too engrossed. We are all involved to some extent and need to see if there are emerging churches by us. Common factors are fellowship, prayer and baptism. Is it time for traditional mission at Falcon Lodge? It is not a coincidence that we are rooted in Christ and need to challenge families.

IV. Outworking of Circuit Mission Priorities

1. Responses to Worship Consultation; Revd Stephen Willey

There had been a lot of questions from the Circuit Worship Consultation Meeting, Superintendent working very hard but do not expect a response on everything raised!

Revd Malcolm updated the meeting about Witton Worship, once a month young people and parents go to Witton, so appears to be a younger church. Everyone is welcome to attend but will focus on the younger people at the monthly service. Deacon Rachel looking to do a contemporary style of worship with Fitzroy, seems churches have 1 or 2 younger people and they feel isolated, good to join together and last week had met at 3Generate. This is a different form of emerging worship at Witton and could encourage those younger people to restart attending church.

PROPOSAL (a)The Circuit meeting accepts that until the beginning of the next Connexional year the preaching plan will be issued on a monthly basis containing both traditional and emerging (E) church services. The Circuit Magazine without the quarterly plan will be issued: Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. The traditional quarterly plan in draft will still be available electronically. Revd Stephen said that Plans had stayed in a similar format since 1891! Advised that by having a monthly plan it would be more responsive and inclusive and detailing more information that was happening at churches each week. Would also be more accessible as paper and electronic versions, can also have large print.

PROPOSAL (b)The Circuit Meeting supports the Emerging Church work at Falcon Lodge and in other circuit churches and encourages the CLT to explore the use of additional support (e.g. Frontier Youth Trust or YMCA) to develop this work and enable individuals and families to make a commitment to Christ. Giles thanked Rev Stephen for promoting Falcon Lodge and all that they are doing, however although harvest is great, workers are few! What resources would be available? Meeting suggested whether the 4 students could be challenged to come and do a mission at Falcon Lodge, they did not think this was possible as had already done their mission module and missional day. Feel Falcon Lodge need someone else to come and talk to the families about Jesus, could be very exciting. Emerging churches may need a different model, other churches already do Places of Welcome, Open Door Lunch which provide fellowship to the local community. Revd Stephen asked that we keep thinking about it and ask any questions.

PROPOSAL (c)The Circuit meeting hears the concern of churches about closure to enable CLUSTER services. The Circuit Meeting supports the concept of cluster services and would encourage as many as possible to attend including Preachers, Worship Leaders and Stewards. The Circuit meeting recognises that some people consider that it is wrong to close a church building on a Sunday morning and believes that those who wish to open their building for worship should not be prevented from doing so.

PROPOSAL (d)The Circuit meeting supports a venture to create fresh expressions of worship and therefore supports 'Witton Worship' and encourages Circuit support especially by children, young people and their leaders on the first Sunday of the month at 11am.

PROPOSAL (e)The Circuit Meeting encourages churches to celebrate and publish the variety of worship taking place around the circuit especially during the week (EG Falcon Lodge; Blackwood; Four Oaks)

The meeting agreed to all of the above proposals.

2. Update on Stationing 2020 – Marion Watts

A profile had been submitted for a probationer presbyter to cover Boldmere, Nechells and Kingstanding. The panel had agreed the appointment was suitable for a probationer and although not a guarantee, it was good news that it would be an appropriate appointment. If we were not successful, could submit a request for a presbyter from another country. The outcome would be heard in January, following which meeting attendees would be informed.

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

Marion advised the meeting to take special note of the final paragraph in the report, that there were vacancies that needed to be filled. A question was asked as to whether we have reached the point of having to pay for a circuit treasurer as John had been doing the role on a temporary basis for a long time and also had a lot of other role within the Circuit and has had to give up some of his preaching to fit in the treasurer work. Marion confirmed that CLT had considered paying someone, but it would have an impact on church assessment as would need to come out of the budget. It was mentioned that if the reason was explained as to why churches would be impacted, it may encourage up giving within the churches.

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.

4. Matters from the Circuit Leadership Team – Marion Watts

PROPOSAL The Circuit Meeting endorses the importance of all congregations discussing the Methodist Report ‘God in love unites us’ and is committed to producing a 500 word statement for the District Synod on April 25th 2020. The meeting encourages all churches to be represented at a circuit discussion on the report: 10.30am on Saturday 8th February 2020, Erdington Methodist Church Centre. Marion encouraged all churches to attend the meeting on the 8th February, where outside speakers would also be present, from Methodist Evangelicals Together and Dignity in Worth. Revd Stephen F was welcoming questions in advance of the meeting, but could also give them in on the door on the day and would include responses into the 500 word document, which needs to be owned by all. Revd Malcolm Oliver advised he had drafted a document on sacred relationships as opposed to marriage and would will send a copy out. **The meeting agreed to the proposal to encourage attendance at the meeting on the 8th February.**

PROPOSAL The Circuit Meeting encourages all churches in the Circuit to support and help the CLT in making the arrangements for the Synod to be held on 25th April at Stockland Green Methodist Church. The Circuit are looking to make this a family day. **The meeting agreed to the proposal.**

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

PROPOSAL: The Circuit meeting accepts the accounts and authorises the signing of the relevant schedules and the thanks the Acting Circuit Treasurer for his work. John advised that the Report and Accounts had been sent to church treasurers today and would be presented for signing at the meeting this evening. He was also pleased to report that the sale of 2 Four Oaks Road had now completed and all funds received. **The meeting unanimously agreed to the proposal.**

PROPOSAL The Circuit Meeting agrees that the CLT explore possibly purchasing a minibus A number of questions were asked about the proposal of a minibus, a diary would need to be in operation to take bookings and who would look after this, who would look after the keys, where would it be parked, how accessible would it be, who maintains it (MOT, petrol), drivers need suitable driving licence to drive minibus (D1 on licence), safeguarding issues, DPS registered? Had recently hired 2 minibuses for a trip to Southport at a cost of £360 each, so it is an expensive option to hire. The minibus from Witton is no longer usable as cannot find replacement parts, but has been a lifeline for the youth and elderly. **The meeting agreed to the proposal that CLT look at the possibilities, but have asked to refer findings back to a future circuit meeting for further discussion.**

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

David updated the meeting about access at Nechells. There are a number of steps at the front of the building and also inside, currently causes issues for attendees. If there were any practical ideas people had or any companies that others have used to see what practically can be done to help with access, please let David know. Could not have moveable ramps as the steps are too steep, a stair lift could be looked in to. The meeting agreed that CLT and David to review how this can be progressed as our buildings need to be accessible.

PROPOSAL: The Circuit meeting accepts the report and thanks the Circuit Property Secretary for all his work. The meeting unanimously agreed.

7. Local Preachers Meeting – Rev Stephen Willey & Rev Stephen Froggatt

The circuit felt very blessed that Liz Topliss had put herself forward to be the Local Preachers Meeting Secretary. The meeting proposed that Liz become the secretary and was voted unanimously, with our very grateful thanks.

Liz presented the Local Preacher report following their recent meeting. The meeting was asked to agree to the proposal that Peter Cashmore be accepted as an accredited Local Preacher in the Circuit, following satisfactory results, with a recognition evening service to be held in March 2020. The meeting unanimously agreed.

Memorial to Conference allowing local preachers to preside at Holy Communion, is currently on hold for a year, whilst further discussion takes place.

PROPOSAL: The Local Preachers Meeting to provide necessary equipment and technology to enable training for worship leaders and local preachers. The meeting was asked to consider providing laptops to those who needed them, whilst in training. Revd Stephen F said a laptop should be loaned to them for their training and then returned. If issues with WiFi at home, could use the library. **The meeting unanimously agreed.**

PROPOSAL: The Circuit meeting accepts report from the Local Preachers meeting – meeting unanimously agreed.

8. Refugee Support Group Update

Rosie and Hugh were leaving the circuit to move to Norfolk, a huge thank you from the circuit was given to them both for all of the work they had done for the Refugee Support Group and organising events. A refugee group co-ordinator was now needed and a volunteer to organise the events for next year.

9. Eco Circuit

Revd Alan would set up a meeting in the New Year for an eco circuit meeting, anyone interested to let Alan know. Will meet at Streetly, the most eco friendly church in our circuit. Blackwood had reported, following their church council the previous evening, that they were seeking bronze status, which was not too onerous and would look to encourage all churches to be involved, with a reminder that you do have to reapply to keep the status (Boldmere had bronze award 10 years ago).

10. Any Matters from District Council and District Mission in UK: Deacon Marilyn Slowe

At the last District Council, had talked about our probationer profile and they were very hopeful and to hold in our prayers. District only had 2 candidates, to hold in our prayer. Prayers were also asked for the communion chaplain. The Easter Offering Service would be held in May, date and venue to be confirmed, will add details to the Newsletter and would like all churches to be represented at the service.

11. Any Matters pertaining to Global Mission:

Report was issued in advance of the meeting, nothing further to add, other than our thanks to Alison and the Circuit Mission Committee. The meeting was reminded that all churches should send a representative to this meeting.

12. CGK Youth and Junior - Revd Malcolm Oliver

Next Youth Worship Service to be held on the 15th December at Erdington, to encourage our youth and young people to attend. There will be monthly Youth Worship services on different Sundays, which Fitzroy helps with. Justin is also involved at Falcon Lodge.

V. Other Business and Appointments

a. Sabbatical Support Groups

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

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

b. Letters of Support from the Circuit

Rev Dr John Taylor and his wife on the occasion of their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

c. Appointments

- Circuit Meeting Secretary
- District Synod – meeting agreed to the proposal of Peter Le Brocq, Carolyn Humpherson, Tom Watts and Liz Topliss be appointed for one year to attend Synod.
- Circuit Stewards
- Circuit Treasurer

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

VI. Dates of Future Meetings

The dates of the next 4 meetings were planned for:

- Tuesday 10th March 2020 - Boldmere
- Wednesday 10th June 2020 – Witton
- Thursday 17th September – Nechells
- November – date to be confirmed at next CLT meeting

V. Closing Devotions

Rev Malcolm thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

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