



## Minutes of the Meeting of the United Church Council Held on Monday 13 January 2020

**Present:** Buzz Coster, Jane Earl, David Edney, Petra Hedges, Rob Kay, John Payne, John Rhodes, Adam Shiels, Revd Deborah Snowball

**In attendance:** Helen Swain

The meeting was chaired by the Vicar, Revd Deborah Snowball.

**1) Opening prayer:** Led by Deborah.

**2) Apologies for absence** were received from David Carruthers, David Gilbert, Martyn Gowing, Judith Haigh, David Hibbert, Sue Hillier

**3) Minutes of meeting held on 11 November 2019:**

It was noted that Revd Richard Lowson's name had been misspelt (item 12c) and this was corrected. The Minutes of the meetings were then agreed and signed as a correct record.

**4) Matters arising**

- a) *LINK (item 5c):* Deborah reported that, to date, one person has expressed an interest in assisting with the publication of LINK. She suggested that a core team of five people would be ideal in order to share the workload of producing the magazine. She further suggested that a survey of the congregation be conducted to ascertain what people would like to see in the magazine.
- b) *Monday Morning TLC (item 11a):* The preliminary meeting had been very helpful and it is planned that this new activity will commence in March 2020.
- c) *Roof alarm (item 11b(i)):* A survey will be conducted in the next week.
- d) *Fire alarm (item 11b(ii)):* The insurance company (Ecclesiastical) has reviewed the quotes and their preferred supplier is Octagon. This quote was circulated to those present at the meeting. It was unanimously agreed to accept and proceed with the basic quote (£6867.60 inc VAT) by Octagon. The quote also proposed an additional roof beam at an additional cost of £1,190 exc VAT. The meeting voted 7:1 against installing this additional facility. John Payne will contact the DAC and ascertain whether a faculty is required for this work or just an Archdeacon's Letter of Authority. John was thanked for his hard work on this project. **Action: John Payne**

**5) Vicar's remarks**

- a) *Advent & Christmas 2019:* Deborah thanked everyone who had contributed to the wide range of activities over the Advent and Christmas periods.
- b) *Christmas cards:* Deborah reported that a substantial number of Christmas cards had not been picked up and invited everyone to give careful thought to the sending of cards in the future.
- c) *Lent 2020:* Deborah suggested that Lent groups use 'Saying Yes to Life'. The #LiveLent booklets will also be available. Copies of the latter will also be ordered for the pupils at the school.
- d) *Holy Week services:* Deborah reported that the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evening services are not usually well attended. Discussion followed which also included the security implications of holding services when not many people attend. It was agreed not to hold these services this year and to note any feedback.
- e) *Thy Kingdom Come 2020:* It was agreed that some activities will be scheduled. Included in the week will be the 750 Minutes of Prayer.
- f) *Correspondence from a visitor:* Deborah had received an email from a visitor to St Mary's who had attended with small children; she has replied and will meet with the sender. The visitor reported that she had found people extremely unwelcoming, particularly when her children made any noise and she had eventually left before the end of the service. Deborah said that whilst this was a

particular event, it must prompt us to attend to the more general matter of what we offer to the children and families who attend our church. **Action: DJS**

## 6) Safeguarding

- a) *DBS checks*: Three checks remain outstanding.
- b) *Training*: No local training courses are currently scheduled.
- c) *Health & safety risk assessments*: Helen needs to know when these have been completed by groups. It was noted that some groups may not know that they are required.
- d) *Policies*: Some minor amendments had been made to the policies. These had been circulated prior to the meeting and it was unanimously agreed to adopt the revised versions.

## 7) Mission Action Plan (MAP)

- a) Deborah reminded the meeting of the Reaching New People Vision Day on 8 February and exhorted everyone to attend. She will re-circulate the details. **Action: DJS**
- b) Deborah suggested we avail ourselves of the services of a MAP Accompanier to work alongside us as we draw up our new MAP.

## 8) Financial report

- a) *Current financial status*:

	9/11/2019	12/1/20
Current & Deposit accounts	119,023	80,573
Epworth (Myers & other bequests)	188,467	228,467
CBF	6,492	6,492
CBF Plate Fund	74,958	74,958

## 9) Reports from sub-committees

Minutes from the recent meetings of the sub-committees had been circulated prior to the meeting.

- a) *Community & Outreach*: Community hog roast (item 6c(ii)2): This will be coordinated by the C&O sub-committee with assistance from the UCC.
- b) *Fabric & Churchyard*:
  - i) *Electrics*: Martyn Gowing had sent an email regarding some outstanding electrical work. This needs to be discussed by the F&C Committee first before the UCC can consider it. **Action: F&C**
  - ii) *Contract with new nursery*: A draft contract had been circulated prior to the meeting and this was agreed subject to alterations to the times stated due to other regular activities already taking place.
  - iii) *Hand wash basin for Church Centre kitchen*: A quote of £592 had been received to replace this damaged item and it was unanimously agreed to accept this and proceed with the work.
- c) *Stewardship & Finance*: There was some disquiet at the agreed reduction in Charitable Giving to 15% of Planned Giving in 2020. It was generally agreed that additional fundraising to meet our previous levels of giving was not appropriate.

## 10) Diocesan, Deanery and Circuit news

- a) *Deanery*: John Rhodes reported on a recent meeting at which Revd Canon Dr Tim Bull had talked about 'Working Together', the need for a common understanding of what we are doing and the need for mutual respect. This had been an extremely good session.
- b) *Diocesan*: A retirement service had been held for the Archdeacon of St Albans. Deborah will invite the new Archdeacon to preach at St Mary's during the coming year.
- c) *Circuit*:
  - i) The Chair of the District will be coming to preach on Aldersgate Sunday (24 May 2020).
  - ii) Revd Ruth Eldridge is taking early retirement. No replacement has yet been secured and the Circuit is considering appointing a minister from overseas.
  - iii) *'God in love unites us'*: This report contains recommendations to do with relationships and marriage that will be voted on at Conference in 2020. Discussion events had been organised around the District prior to debate and District Synod in April and Conference later this year.

**11) St Mary's 750**

- a) The programme of events is almost complete and the leaflet will be going to the printers very shortly.
- b) *Finance*: There will be some need for upfront finance but this will not be huge.

**12) Any other business**

- a) *Annual Church Meetings*: These will be held on 26 April 2020.

**13) Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the UCC will take place on Monday 9 March 2020

The meeting ended with the Grace.