

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN HARBOROUGH FORUM

Held on 24th November 2014

Those Present: Jadz Bower, Mike Bowers, Donald Clinton-Smith, Nick Cook, Mary Daniels, Judith Devine, Maureen Douglas, Lindy Kendell, Brian Kennard, Robert Knapp, Sue Macdonald, Jill Mann, Owen O'Neill, Barry Osborne, John Pearse, Keith Rugg, James Shakespeare, Mel Stride, David Tomlin, Peppy Ulyett, Sandra Ward and Rose Williams.

Apologies: Sheila Armstrong, Margaret Bowers, Deborah Chaloner and Angela Zemlak.

1. **Opening Prayers** – Father Owen opened the Forum with a reading from Romans 8, regarding the spirit coming to help us in weakness. All our thoughts, words and deeds were prayed for along with the relationship with CTH. The Spirit of the Living God was recited by Owen and this was followed by the Lord's Prayer.
2. **Welcome** – James Shakespeare welcomed everyone to the Forum.
3. **Minutes of Forum held on 17th September 2014**
 - i) Mel Stride to be added to the attendance list
 - ii) Various items were raised from RK (**see Appendix 1** (attached))
4. **Matters Arising from Minutes (including Vision Presentation)**

JS referred to the Vision Presentation and asked this to be sectioned into four main categories:

 - i) continue to be prayerful
 - ii) to be strong in ecumenical relationships
 - iii) to be aware of the vulnerable within our town
 - iv) to be discerning of our time and energy as CTH

YB referred to the Bower Report and advised that the fundraising was still ongoing and a plea was made for help with suggestions on ways to raise funds. A new boiler had been installed and somebody had paid for this.
5. **Credit Union Report** – DC-S gave a report - **see Appendix 2** (attached)
6. **Strategic Items**
 - i) **Town Centre Christmas Outreach Events**
 - a) **Carols Vote & Christmas Lights:** In the absence of Jeff Bonser, NC reported that this is to be held on 28th November (4 – 7pm) on the square where the HFM and HDC would be involved, 1200 Tearfund leaflets were to be given out with the WW1 Truce story inside. There is also to be a Voting Box for people's favourite carol which will then be sung at the Carols by Candlelight at the Baptist Church on Sunday 14th December. This Service is then to be recorded and broadcast on HFM radio on Christmas Day at 7pm. Singers and stewards are required for these events. Ministers are also to be interviewed at the lights switch-on and this will be broadcast on 6th December. RK asked if this is a CTH event. NC assured that it was and KR added that members of the CTH should trust in what is being presented and encouraged more people to become involved in anything which is getting CTH involved in the community.
 - b) **Christmas Fayre - 5th December (6 – 9pm)** – JS reported that individual churches are being involved in this event. RK said that the change to involve local traders this year instead of getting outside traders was good for the town and independent retailers.

ii) **Response to Homelessness – OO** reported that he had accommodated 9 people sleeping rough since this issue had been raised in the March Forum. Since then the Council had been asked and they had reported that there had not been any requests. BO reported that there was a scheme in Rugby who help homeless people. After further discussions it was agreed to set up a sub-committee (JS / BO/ YB / OO and this to be B/F to the March 2015 Agenda.

7. **Review of Past Events - Harvest** - MS reported that the involvement from the Foodbank had not occurred as it found that this was a Craft Market rather than a Farmers Market.

8. **Future Event**

i) **Holiday at Home** – BK gave a report (**See Appendix 3**). The next meeting was to be held on 29/1/15. After discussions it was decided that a sub-committee be formed to discuss the future of this important event. Prayers were said for the existing and future committee members. Thanks were expressed to Brian Kennard for coordinating this over the past years.

ii) **Sing Christmas** - This was to be held on Monday 22nd December (7-8pm) in clubs, care homes, etc. Please refer to the website for more information.

iii) **Christmas Day** - MB reported that this would be at the Congregational Church (11:30 -4pm). Preparations were well underway with enough volunteers. Waitrose had supported this year.

iv) **Peace Vigil** - To be held on Friday 9th January (4.30pm). After discussion it was decided that the committee would report back if it was decided to change the timing for this.

v) **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18 - 25th January)** - There will be a service at the Baptist Church on 25th (10am) JS asked if it would be possible to do daily one hour prayer sessions for different agencies within our town. This to be carried forward for further discussion.

vi) **Lent** - Work has started for next years Lent Groups. JS suggested Songs of Praise in the New Testament and there was no objection to this. JP encouraged all churches to split their own House Groups during this time and become involved with these Lent Groups. Judith Devine would be the coordinator for this and publicity would be circulated. It was also agreed to look at planning this item earlier in the year in future – September Agenda. Lent Lunches were also to be looked at outside this Forum but to be arranged ecumenically.

9. **Any Other Business**

i) **Town Guide Insertion** - A letter had been received as to whether the CTH would like to have an advertisement within a new Town Guide which would be 'live' for at least the next 5 years. Permission to spend the money for the inclusion into the Guide was unanimously agreed.

ii) **Christians Against Poverty** - BK reported that he would be willing to run a Money Management Course which would be for three sessions. Publicity for this to be issued soon.

iii) **Forum Communication** - The Justice & Peace Group had highlighted a problem regarding the last revised (2012) CTH Constitution and how to communicate better within the groups which are connected to the CTH. It was asked that all members read through the existing constitution and pray and reflect upon it and this would be added the the next Forum's Agenda.

10. **Dates & Venues of Future Forums:**

Wednesday	18/03/15	Evangelical Church
Tuesday	12/05/15	Baptist Church

11. **Closing Prayers** - Mike Bowers closed the meeting in prayer