

**Churches Together in Harborough**  
**Minutes of the Forum Meeting**  
**on Monday 2nd March 2020 at Our Lady of Victories RC Church**

**Welcome and Opening Devotions**

Stephen welcomed everyone to the meeting. Father Owen led the devotions and the singing of a hymn together, “Whatsoever you do” with the refrain:

“**Whatsoever you do to the least of my people, that you do unto me**” based on **Matt 25 v 35 – 46**. Father Owen reminded us that during this period of Lent we are, **to be Christ** in all and any ways we can be in His name.

**1 Apologies for Absence** – were noted on the sign in sheet along with the attendees.

**2 Minutes of the last Meeting** were approved by and signed by Stephen.

**3 Matters Arising**

a) **Good Friday Update**: Planning notes from 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb had been previously circulated. Stephen reported that plans are well advanced and that between the main churches, enough money (£3026) has been pledged. With still a few loose ends to tie up, it is anticipated that not all the total pledged monies will be required. The screen we are hiring is slightly smaller than first thought, however, an additional cost of speakers will be required. A guestimate is £1800. We have taken out additional insurance against bad weather because in such circumstances the event could not happen. The usual public liability insurance has been purchased too. Derek’s one sentence summary was quoted from the planning document. We are all encouraged to promote the event in our churches.

**The Event starts at 11 o’ clock and will finish by 11.45.**

A short discussion focused on whether there could/should be a contingency plan in the event of bad weather and the event being called off. Stephen confirmed that at very worst, “we will praise and pray in the public space under umbrellas.”

**Action: Contingency plan to be considered and left with the council when Stephen and Janet next visit Sairah Butt.**

b) **Report from Homelessness Group**: Andy Giles not present. Rose presented figures, stating that there is £559.53 currently in the Homelessness account. Vouchers continue to remain **only** with Street Pastors and the Foodbank for distribution.

**Action: Stephen to ask Andy for the report.**

c) **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity:** it was reported that more people had attended the lunchtime prayer times this year, which had been thematically structured, with churches choosing their own topics for prayer, which worked well.

Thinking ahead, it was acknowledged that midday is not a good time for those who work and that in future one event in the evening should be offered. Thanks, were expressed to Stephen for hosting and leading the super service for the WPCU. Thanks, from Stephen were expressed for the commitment from member bodies.

A question arising for next year was raised concerning whether we wanted to add to the current churches (OLOV, St Di's, Baptist and Congregational) willing and able to hold the united service, with HCC being identified as 'a fair size.' The Methodist Church has a maximum capacity for 200 people and so remain cautious in offering the church as a venue, however, their generosity in offering premises for other church meetings of all kinds was acknowledged. St Di's would be the logical venue for 2021, however we will keep our options open bearing in mind the extensive work that is about to begin in the church.

**Action: We will decide by the summer as to the venue for 2021**

#### **4. Communications:**

**Signage:** Derek reported that signage for the meetings during the WPCU had not always been effective, so new ones have been printed to make things easier and give a welcome to CTH events in future. The signs have a space beneath the new logo to add individual items.

**Action: Churches invited to take signs for their own use or to contact Derek for signs.**

**Prayer pointers:** Derek made a request at the meeting for Spring church prayer pointers.

**Action: Rose to send out an email to churches requesting them with a tight deadline.**

**Good Friday:** Information from the churches concerning Easter Day services is required for the map/leaflet which will be given out on Good Friday.

**Action: Stephen to follow up with Living Rock and Christchurch, as no details have been received from them to date.**

Andy suggested with regards to Christian Unity that it would be good to show which churches are members of Churches Together on correspondence and publications. Member churches could display the logo on their church magazines for 'joint branding' as a unifying symbol for example. The logo is available and can be adapted as required.

**Action: Derek will send a link to the logo again to the churches.**

## 5. Finance

a) **Budget:** the proposed budget was circulated at the meeting and presented by Rose. Points highlighted focused on the, 'It's Your Move' booklets where Stephen will aim to reduce costs if possible, by exploring best offers. Thanks, were expressed to Dave Kennard for maintaining the CTH website.

Income – subs for the main churches remain the same. Living Rock's subs will be increased to £30 following two years as an associate member of CTH.

John Pearse asked about membership of Leicestershire Churches Together. We haven't been invoiced or received any service from it for a couple of years.

The budget proposed by Rose was accepted by the meeting. Thanks, were expressed to Rose for her hard work in preparing it.

## 6. Organisation Reports

Stephen reported that letters of thanks had been received from the Bower House and the Cube for the donations received from the joint WPCU service.

### The Cube

Charlotte reported that 5 'wonderful sessions' with the young people taken place at the Cube, so successful that numbers have had to be restricted. Future events planned include the Lions Club coming to 'do popcorn', Becky a presenter from HFM visiting with her guide dog.

**Action: Contact Charlotte know if anyone has known contacts, suitable speakers, places to visit to help with the planning for future events with the young people.**

Recent additional funding received will allow someone to come alongside and work with Charlotte soon. A great working partnership with Robert Smyth Academy has been established. This includes a work experience partnership.

The Cube awaits significant funding news from the National Lottery and Children in Need. Charlotte reported that it was good to see that in both groups, young people are attending with church connections as well as those with none. Parents' comments indicate that they are pleased with the services being offered.

Charlotte has passed her probation – well done Charlotte!

Stephen brought an open question to the Forum inviting comments concerning how the Forum views the relationship between CTH and The Cube, and how that relationship could be further strengthened in the future. Support from CTH may be possible through the future appointment of an ex - officio non - voting representative to sit on the Cube's board of trustees, however, more thought needs to be given to this.

**Action: Contact Stephen with any views on this. Views and comments would be very welcome.**

It was established that there is not enough space now at the Cube for the 'It's Your Move' booklets to be stored. A discussion centred around the most effective time in the schools for distribution of the booklets and a question asked about whether it would be pertinent for the Cube through Charlotte to be present when the booklets are distributed. Charlotte is thinking of promotional parties at some of the schools and planned activities for the summer holidays.

**Action: Find another space for storage of the booklets.**

**Church contacts who give out the booklets are to contact Charlotte if they would like her to be present when they give the booklets out. Church**

**Bower House Report** – was read by Maureen as the CTH rep for the Bower House – see report attached.

**Action: Another report/presentation from the Bower House service managers at their convenience will be requested in due course.**

### **Street Pastors**

Mandy reported that new recruits and prayer support for Street Pastors are still needed, however, slow but steady recruiting is happening.

March 14<sup>th</sup> sees a SP Prayer Morning at St. Di's from 10 – 1. Julie Fagan is leading it.

Matthew 9 v 35 – 38 was quoted as a relevant verse to illustrate the need for further 'harvest hands' - <sup>35-38</sup> **Then Jesus made a circuit of all the towns and villages. He taught in their meeting places, reported kingdom news, and healed their diseased bodies, healed their bruised and hurt lives. When he looked out over the crowds, his heart broke. So confused and aimless they were, like sheep with no shepherd. "What a huge harvest!" he said to his disciples. "How few workers! On your knees and pray for harvest hands!"**

Recent training at MH Police station has reflected a renewed level of interest from the police officers in the town with an aim to rediscover the relationship between the police and Street Pastors.

The Street Pastors AGM is on 28<sup>th</sup> April at HCC at 7.30 at Harborough Community Church.

### **HJJP**

Janet reported that The Peace Vigil on 10<sup>th</sup> January had been a well - attended event, with 30 plus people gathering on the Square – the biggest gathering for a number of years.

There had been opportunities with the giving out of the prayer cards for some significant conversations with passers – by.

Janet brought to the Forum some initial thoughts about a new worship and prayer group based on and around issues of justice and peace after meeting with Andy to talk through the ideas he had. The ideas were presented to the J and P Group at their latest meeting, where the ideas well received, the group feeling that it is something it could take forward

as an additional 'worship' experience linked to HAJP but grounded in Churches Together. So far in this initial stage it is envisaged that this new group would be:

- grounded in CTH and ecumenical
- based on **worship and prayer around issues of justice and peace** (maybe sometimes with a speaker).
- A specific focal point /issue for each meeting
- A time and an opportunity for like – minded people to come together on a regular basis.

It will also help think through what HAJP is doing now and the future direction of the group.

Janet asked for the Forum's blessing on the idea, to take it further forward with a group of interested parties who would come back to the May Forum with some concrete plans.

**Action: Janet and Andy to take the idea forward and report back in May.**

## **7 Current and Coming Events**

a) **Lent Lunchtime Services** are in hand. They have been well publicised and begin this Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March with follow - up lunch at the Methodist Church.

b) **World Day of Prayer Service** and Follow-up Event on 24th April follow up at 3 o' clock at HCC to put commitments into action. Service is on 6<sup>th</sup> March at the Community Church at 4 p.m.

c) **Good Friday Event** – see previous notes.

d) **Christian Aid Week** – 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> May. Rose brought report. All reps have contacted. Computer sign up will be in operation soon. Also, other events to fundraise – **Action - let Rose know of other events so that they can be publicised.**

e) **Our AGM** – Nominations are being sought to fill two specific vacancies, namely the vice – chair and executive secretary roles. Job role descriptions are available on the CTH website.

**Action: Nominations by email to Stephen as soon as possible.**

## **8. Any other business**

**Dave Tomlin** updated the Forum on the ongoing campaign to save Naseby Square reporting that the first planning application concerning Naseby Square made on 2/07/19 had received a record number of objections. The second application made in January 2020 had received even more! There is a need for affordable housing in the town. 'Affordable' is officially defined as 80% of market value. Services are being increasingly accessed by clients i.e. the foodbank and counselling services. Locally there are many people 'in need.' Since the public meeting in December, Platform Housing has stripped heating, plumbing and metal work from all those properties earmarked for demolition.

The Forum was asked to pray for those making decisions made at the next planning committee and for those affected by them. The meeting has been moved back from 3<sup>rd</sup> March to 7<sup>th</sup> April at the earliest. Decisions will be challenged on a number of fronts by the campaign group. Thanks, were expressed to Dave for his continued commitment to and involvement with the campaign.

**Tea @ Three** – David Palmer has asked to explore becoming an associate member of CTH. The Forum was in agreement that any formal application would be supported. It is expected that this will be brought to the next Forum.

James asked a question about commemorations for **VE DAY on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2020** and whether as churches together we are going to do anything? The consensus was that we await the Council's lead on this.

**May 2020 – 'Thy Kingdom Come' prayer initiative** from Ascension to Pentecost. Alison Iliffe is planning a 24/7 prayer event from 24<sup>th</sup>– 31<sup>st</sup> May and Pentecost.

**Action: individual churches participating in this are to let each other know what is happening through Derek and CTH communications.**

#### **9 Date of next meeting and AGM**

Monday 18th May at Our Lady of Victories

September meeting - on Anglican premises. Exact location TBC.

The meeting closed in prayer for one another, the CTH ministries, our concerns and an inspiring Lent season and the saying together of the last verse of the hymn, 'Take my life and let it be.'