



Churches Together in Harbourough Minutes of the Forum Meeting on Monday 1 March 2021 at 7.00 pm via Zoom

Attendees:

Janet Smith	Rose Williams	Andy Murphy	Derek Williams
Angela Zemlak	Margaret Bonser	Barry Osborne	Dave Tomlin
Elizabeth Tubb	Tim Jeffery	Dee Quinn	Jill Mann
Quentin Appleton	Philippa Oliver-Dee	James Pickersgill	Keith Rugg
Maureen Douglas	Christopher Brown	Mandy Gays	Stephen Haward
Patricia Gibbard	Christopher O'Connell	Peter Arnold	Dawn O'Connell
Andy Giles	Barry Hill	John Pearse	David Nixon
Barry Osborne			

Welcome and Opening Devotions:

Janet welcomed Tim Jeffery, from Torch and Philippa Oliver-Dee from the Bower House

Father Chris led the devotions based on Psalm 51 the Miserere prayer of David in contrition for when Nathan had admonished him for committing adultery with Bathsheba and killing her husband Uriah using the story of the rich man killing the poor man's lamb when a guest comes to visit.

Guest speaker: Philippa Oliver – Dee, Service Co-ordinator at the Bower House, "**Maintaining wellbeing for ourselves and others.**"

Philippa led starting by talking about resting in God and how life has become more difficult during the pandemic resulting in isolation and lack of connection.

There were several opportunities for open conversation on how we as individuals cope and what we are doing during the pandemic to keep engaged with others and how we do relationships.

On behalf of the meeting Janet thanked Philippa for speaking today and wished her well as she moves onto lecturing. Andy M led us in prayer for Philippa.

1. Apologies for absence

Alison Iliffe	Chris Davies	Liz Mills	Theresa Kendrick
Ceriann Kelly	Alison Tomlin	Mel Stride	

2. Minutes of Forum held on 7th January 2021

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting and Janet signed them.

3. Matters Arising

None arising

4. Budget 2021 - 2022

The summary of the annual budget for 2021-2022 had been distributed prior to the meeting. There were no queries or questions but Rose highlighted some points:

- As an Executive, we are checking into whether to contribute to the National Churches Together rather than Leicester CT, and we will report our findings about this at a future meeting
- Website costs had not yet been paid.

- c. The Executive had agreed to give Dave Kennard an honorarium gift of £50 for his work keeping the website up to date and his expertise in helping in other IT areas.

The accounts and budget were accepted by the meeting.

Rose was thanked for her hard work on preparing the budget and looking after the accounts.

5. Report of meeting convened by HDC on helping the homeless and those in need in the Harborough District.

This is a short report of the community meeting held on 19th January, convened by Rose Forman one of HDC's Housing Officers with the aim of establishing the services that are being offered to the homeless and those in need in the Harborough District. Janet attended as Chair of CTH alongside a range of people representing the council, other statutory bodies, charities, and churches.

What clearly came out of the meeting across those bodies represented is the strong desire to help those in need in our local community in a variety of ways going forward, especially as the community emerges from lockdown - not just with homelessness, but with mental health, wellbeing, food poverty, advice, help for addictive behaviour. There were many ideas placed in the melting pot. Clearly the key to moving forward successfully is to bring together **information, resources, and personnel** in ways to be further explored with HDC taking the lead on this.

Key actions from the meeting include the following:

1. There is a need for **information on services to be shared** and HDC will pull together a list or find out if there already is a directory where we can list what help is out there.
2. It is apparent that in simplistic terms there are 2 types of households we are looking to help:
 - I. **singles** who are most likely "**hidden homeless**" (sofa surfing, struggling with additional issues such as mental health difficulties and/or substance misuse),
 - II. **families** who are struggling with issues such as debt, rent arrears and other complex needs, so links with schools to identify and offer help families in need would be useful.
3. Representatives at the meeting were keen on the idea **of developing a communal space for hot food provision**; however we would need to work out a location, food provider, volunteers etc. HDC aim to coordinate between the different services who would want to be involved.

Obviously as CTH we are already involved in offering community services in a number of ways through the Foodbank, Homeless/Asking for Help project etc and new projects are in the offing. HDC are planning further meetings with dates tbc.

6. Report of Recent events:

Online Peace Vigil

Attendees shared half an hour online; some finding it a productive time for prayer more than on the square where they were distracted by carrying the banner, handing out leaflets and the people around.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

All online – daily prayer sessions led by different people (around 16 people attending); with a night prayer service (30) and the united Zoom service (60). Derek W was thanked for preparing and organising the week. More people attended Zoom sessions than in-person previously and the evenings were welcomed. These changes may be considered for next year.

The prayer walk went well and may be considered in future. James was thanked for leading the service on Sunday afternoon.

7. **Communications**

Derek reminded people that Church leaders are writing an article for weekly input in the Harborough Mail and encouraged us to read and pass to others. With half a page per week we are blessed to have such a prominent place in a local newspaper. The feedback has generally been very positive and Derek thanked the contributors. It was reported that seeing our leaders having articles in the paper gives a lot of encouragement to members of our Churches. Anyone who would consider writing an article should contact Derek.

8. **Brief Headlines from our organisations**

Bower House

Face to face meetings were suspended in January. Phones were being answered and the waiting list is being managed. Most counsellors are trained for online work and most clients are happy to have meetings this way. With COVID risk assessments in place based on last year's opening the Bower House is planning to reopen on 12 April.

Cube

Thanks to funding from HDC and MHBS they are planning to use a gazebo outside. They are in talks with schools regarding more vulnerable students. Jenny is returning as a p/t youth worker for our schools programme. Prayers are requested for the National Lottery bid which, if successful, will provide support for the next five years.

Street Pastors

The Management Board are meeting next week to discuss when they resume.

Foodbank

Referrals continue to be high. They are coping well, with enough volunteers and food particularly in the run up to Christmas which kept us going. Prayers for guidance when they come out of pandemic and how they will work with agencies; particularly with VASL who are currently arranging deliveries.

Rural Missions Solutions

Originally Theddingworth Congregational had asked Barry to set up Rural Missions. This didn't continue for long but Barry carried on afterwards. Aimed at rural churches, Rural Mission develops and maintains appropriate mission work for each small church. One in 6 people in the UK live in rural areas. Currently they are holding bible studies and webinars. These include online modules of 6 sessions to help churches (one at a time) to help tailor their mission strategy. There is a new book available called 'Mission can be fun' available by contacting Barry on info@rurlamissions.org.uk. They also have 2 Church Army officers working with them and they are helping with Deanery plans to build mission strategies

Naseby Square

Dave Tomlin was thanked for his passionate and tireless commitment in being a leading voice in the Naseby Square development issues. He has spent hours pouring over legal documents and being a great support to those who live in the community and who feel unable to speak to the authorities themselves.

We were asked to continue to pray for Dave, for what is to come; and to pray for the Council, housing authority and that area of the town, facing great change as the development takes shape.

St Peter & St Paul

Since Bryony had left last January a lot of work and prayer had been going on and they are planning to advertise for a new vicar in late March following further prayer and discussion.

9. **Coming Events:**

a. World Day of Prayer, Friday 5th March

Local committee met in January agreeing to postpone service this year but hoping to move to later this year. There will be another meeting in April.

There will be a YouTube service at 1.00 pm Friday 5 March, and all were encouraged to watch as well as passing the information to church, friends and neighbours.

b. Christian Aid Week, 10 - 16 May

Last year should have been the celebration of 75 years of Christian Aid. 2021 is now being designated as such. On 9 May CTH GB&I will be involved in a Thanksgiving Service and a slot in Songs of Praise and there will be a ZOOM interview on 10 March with some of the previous heads of Christian Aid

Locally, there will be no street collections but there are various ways we can replace this. More information will be sent out at a later date

c. Update on Airfield Housing Development and Ecumenical Involvement

2 or 3 years ago there was a discussion on how we should engage with the new build communities. There is around 534 new homes being built a year. As a Resources Church the Anglican team are planning a Church planting at Wellington Place. Other CTs had discovered that if a group of denominations led a church planting it didn't work as well. New people into an area seem to prefer to attend a new church.

Rob will start by working 1 day a week and build up. He will be a Community Developer (rather than being called a minister) serving around 4.5k people. Apart from Rob there are one or two Christian families moving onto the estate and the plan is to start the church. Once 300 houses have been sold, a 450 place Primary School will be built.

Following thoughts on a name for Church, several people independently came up with Harvest Road which runs through the development. This is a possible name.

10. **Any other Business**

None

Dates for future Forum meetings:

Thursday 20 May 2021 – AGM from 7.00 pm followed by Forum meeting

Monday 6 September 2021

Thursday 18 November 2021

Janet thanked Philippa for all her hard work and tonight's contribution and thanks to James for hosting

Janet closed the meeting with prayer followed by the Grace