

**Churches Together in Harborough**  
**Minutes of the Forum Meeting on Monday 6 September 2021**  
**7.15 for 7.30 pm at Market Harborough Baptist Church**

**Attendees (21):**

**Christopher Brown, Maureen Douglas, Stephen Haward, Theresa Kendrick, Jill Mann, Jackie Melhuish, Andy Murphy, David Nixon, Chris O'Connor, Barry Osborne, David Palmer, Keith Rugg, Janet Smith, Dave Tomlin, Derek Williams, Rose Williams, Angela Zemlak, Elizabeth Tubb, Jeannie Brightwell, Peter Arnold, Tom Grant, Dawn O'Connell**

**Welcome and Opening Devotions:**

Janet welcomed everyone to our first in-person meeting since lockdown started. She introduced Tom Grant, the new Anglican Church planting Curate and Jackie Melhuish from the Methodist Church to the meeting.

Christopher Brown led the devotions starting with reading from Isaiah 41 v 10 and Matthew 11 v28.

"As we meet for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in-person there are many who are labouring in one way or another; with different circumstances; different results; some able to rest while others labour.

Through all this we are reminded that God is with us and speaks the words 'Fear not for I am with you' 'Fear not for I will give you strength', 'Fear not for I will help you'.

God gives us both strength and rest. We never labour in vain whether we are successful or not."

Christopher then played the song Your Labour is Not in Vain and led the meeting in prayer.

**Renew Wellbeing @ the Baptist Church (Christopher Brown)**

The New Horizons Café closed just before the lockdown but the Church had already been looking at a Christian Charity, Renew Wellbeing which started in Nottingham. Its motto is 'It is OK not to be OK'. It will be a space in the community for those struggling mentally, socially and spiritually. No one will be labelled and people will not come to be fixed. The Five Ways to Wellbeing will be followed.

The sessions will include activities and hobbies which people can bring. The space will be a simple layout with tables / chairs and sofas and refreshments provided by the Church

The sessions will be run by volunteers but we have arranged for partnership support from specialist services e.g., surgeries and counselling. It will be a community space providing peace and acceptance.

We are open with our partners about this being a Christian Charity. We will follow a rhythm of prayer where we don't pray for people but with people, but joining in with us is optional.

The Café space is currently being refurbished and we plan to open with two sessions a week starting on Tuesday 21 September 9.30 am to 12.00 noon then Thursday 23 September 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm

**Elderberries / Tea @ Three Initiatives (David Palmer)**

Based at Lenthall House, Elderberries started in 2017 where David saw the loneliness of residents and with his background in horticulture the aim was to help residents and lonely seniors. The strap line is 'With People of All Seasons: age / gardening / faith or none.

The team includes people including residents aged between 21 and 70 but mainly men in the late 30s and early 40s. There are usually 9 to 12 people some of whom travel from as far as Fleckney. The project involves sowing seeds, pruning and harvesting. All the produce is organically grown and some used by Lenthall House.

We have time for reflection and prayer using Celtic liturgies. We partner with various local organisations; local businesses come to spend time on their staff team days. A local nursery has been regularly involved.

We have received funding from various sources. We are also developing partnerships with other groups in Leicestershire.

You can help in various ways, if you:

- Are people who understand a community pioneering vision
- Have gardening skills and can mentor
- Can run a workshop based on gardening
- Have accountancy skills or could help with fundraising and promotional work

- Are able to lead a fortnightly informal Bible / Christian course (introductory) to 2/3 of the team  
Please inform friends / neighbours / unchurched or de-churched.

### **Apologies for Absence (10):**

Fr Thomas Recce, Barry Hill, Mandy Gays, Chris Davies, Ceriann Kelly, Dee Quinn, Patricia Gibbard, John Pearce, James Pickersgill, Dee Quinn

#### **1. Minutes of Forum and AGM from 20 May 2021**

The minutes had been circulated previously and were accepted by the meeting and signed by Janet.

#### **2. Matters Arising: none**

#### **3. Main Business**

##### **a) Appointment of Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer**

Rose Williams is moving away from Harborough. She was thanked for her amazing work for many years as Treasurer and for the last three years as Secretary in addition to her Treasurer role; as well as her work as the Christian Aid Rep. She was presented with a card.

James Pickersgill was also leaving to become the Bishop's Chaplain. His last service will be on 19 September. Janet will be sending a card from the CTH Forum.

James had sent a note to all the members of the Forum:

"It has been a pleasure to minister with you and joining together in different ways over the past four years. Every blessing to you all as you continue to witness to Christ and his amazing love in and around Market Harborough. Love, prayers and blessings, James!

We are very grateful that Maureen Douglas from Our Lady of Victories has offered to become the Honorary Secretary. As a former Chair of CTH she will bring a lot of experience and knowledge. Maureen was nominated by Janet Smith, seconded by Stephen and the vote was unanimous.

We are also very grateful that Jackie Melhuish from the Methodist Church has offered to become the Honorary Treasurer. Jackie has a book-keeping background. Jackie was nominated by Andy Murphy, seconded by David Palmer and the vote was unanimous.

##### **b) News of new members and associates**

Father Tom Reece, from the Society of Traditional Old Catholics is being invited to the November meeting. He is enquiring about membership of CTH. He holds masses at the Congregational Church on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month with about 12-15 people attending. He works with travellers as a chaplain with the Margaret Clitherow Trust <http://www.margaretclitherow.org/> and is Chaplain of the Waterways based at Foxton.

Father Matthew Pitham is taking weekly mass at St Mary's Husbands Bosworth and part time Chaplain at the Warwickshire Hospitals. He is not looking for membership but would like to be kept in touch.

Elderberries and Tea @ Three have become Associate Members of CTH with unanimous ratification by the Forum

##### **c) Update on the Review of the Constitution**

A copy of the current CTH Constitution had been distributed prior to the meeting. It continues to be reviewed by the review group and any proposals for change will be brought to the November Forum.

##### **d) Change of focus for Harborough Action for Justice and peace Group**

This is a statement from Rev Alison Tomlin the secretary of HAJP.

"The Harborough Action for Justice and Peace Group has continued to consider what might be the best way forward in this post-pandemic world. We would like to meet for 'Worship' in some form, using a variety of Scriptures and other writings as appropriate, to share and discuss and be silent/pray together, possibly every 4

to 6 weeks, or every other month. It has been suggested that the bi-monthly suggestion might be best, or even quarterly, rather than more frequently. We must never lose sight of the fact that from our inception we have been committed to taking action, so we will need to use our time together to plan and agree that as well.

We believe we need to be open to the "grouping" of all those concerned with the relevant issues - Eco; Fairtrade Town; Climate Crisis; Justice and Peace. It is no longer enough to simply sit and hear from all those involved, since we believe that it is now time to make sure we have the opportunity to get together and share our thoughts and actions. This would, we hope, lead to a greater awareness of each group's particular focus, and enable greater collaborative working.

We think it might be right to have a specific name for this gathering together, and suggest something like 'Journeying Towards Justice and Peace' would be good. We felt that this might be acceptable to all the groups concerned, and seemed to us to underline our concerns; make it clear that we are about action; and remind us all that this continues to be a process.

The Group would continue to use email to update each other, as we have during the past year and a half, perhaps every 3 months or so"

The following comments were made which will be taken back to the group:

- It was agreed that there was never a more pressing time for us to engage with like-minded people who are passionate about justice and peace.
- The group needed to be promoted as an ecumenical group and there needs to be more articles on the website and in Church notices / newsletters
- People should be encouraged to attend the meetings as they are open to all.
- It was suggested that the worship element should be at different venues each time.
- Look at reinstating 'What's On' not just for J&P, but to promote events

#### **4. Reports of recent events**

##### **Holiday @Home 2021**

The theme was Food Fun and Fellowship. The Methodist Church were thanked for hosting. There had been enough volunteers. Janet had visited and taken part in Creative Writing and listening to an ex Naval Officer giving a talk about 'breaking into Buckingham Palace'. The event was very popular.

#### **5. Communications**

Derek would like any news of key events and prayer pointers from the churches to be sent in the next few days. Subjects like what churches are doing now they are open. Once again, he asked us to support HfM and the Harborough Mail as they support us.

#### **6. Brief Headlines from our organisations**

##### **Bower House**

"For all the right reasons many volunteers took the opportunity to catch up with family, friends and have a change of scenery over the summer months. Despite our predictions that we would become very busy, the past few months have been quiet, however we do have a growing waiting list but feel confident that with the return of counsellors we will be able to manage this effectively.

We have a team of 40 counsellors (eleven in training) and 18 support workers. We are in need of recruiting more support workers as a matter of urgency. It was the role of support workers that enabled the Bower House to re-open and function over the past 18 months. While the role fulfilled by support workers has changed considerably over the past few years it is a rewarding and vital job. We are re-writing the volunteer role and hope to distribute details through Churches Together in the next week or two. (This was handed out at the meeting.)

While the house is being used for face-to-face work, and has done since April we have not changed any procedures since the restrictions were eased on July 19<sup>th</sup>. We feel confident that we are as Covid free as possible but are not complacent and at the time of writing feel that we will continue our sanitising routine for the next few months. We still meet for supervision remotely, some of our meetings are still on line and our assessments are by phone. Some remote counselling is still being offered". Trish Gibbard and Cara Thompson, Service Co-ordinators

### **The CUBE**

The CTH Forum members were encouraged to go online to see the latest Monthly Newsletter.

<https://thecubeyouth.uk/>

### **Street Pastors**

Before she read the report Janet informed the members that Liz Howe, who sent this report in a couple of weeks ago is seriously ill in an induced coma at Kettering Hospital. Andy Murphy led a time of prayer for Liz.

"As is well known, the night time economy has taken a real dip. This is particularly so in Market Harborough where two of the venues for late night 'fun' have closed or changed their clientele and closing hours. It had been our intention to try different times and places to patrol, with I am afraid to say little success. Because the Bower House was closed, we operated from the backs of cars meeting in The Commons car park, with prayer support via mobile phones. We were able to offer some Caring, Listening and Helping support - and that was well received and much needed.

The board has met via zoom on several occasions, and the last time was in person - a real joy!

Along with other Street Pastor colleagues I am increasingly concerned about the rising, perpetual numbers of youngsters in town. They are drinking alcohol quite openly; they tell us they take drugs and are continually asking where can they go. They often mention The Cube as a venue that could be used. Also of concern is that these 'children' seem to be out all day and I am concerned about lack of parental guidance. A place for parents to discuss problems and seek advice would be admirable!

There are so many folks, often hidden, with problems that we do not reach. As chair of MHSP - with dwindling numbers of volunteers, it is increasingly more difficult to stimulate and encourage fellow pastors to go out on the streets where there is little contact. I try to point out that we are being seen doing menial acts and that we do not know who is seeing us do Our Lord's work or indeed when we will be needed.

Please continue to pray for all involved in MHSP and that we may find new volunteers to join us." Liz Howe, Chair MHSP

### **Jubilee Foodbank**

"The Jubilee Foodbank committee has drafted a Constitution for a Charitable Incorporated Institution. We are getting ready to invite people to apply as trustees but the paperwork is not quite ready yet. Once the trustees are confirmed and in place, we will apply to be a charity by submitting all of our documents.

Please look out for information about becoming a trustee over the next month or so.

We hope to be at the Community and Volunteer Fair on Saturday the 18th September at the Square.

We are low on stock at the moment. Generous monetary donations mean that we can buy food. However, this is sometimes difficult as we need to bulk order. We are usually able to get what we need but there is some impact due to the disruption to supply chains. Please take a look at our shopping list for what we

need: <https://jubileefoodbankmh.uk/shopping-list/>

We hope that Harvest donations can boost our stocks from the end of September but please donate food now too, if you are able. Thank you for all of your support." Liz Mills

## **7. Future Events**

### **Prisons Week 10-16 October 2021. Publicity material**

24 partner organisations enable Prisons Week to happen – now running for over 40 years and this year running from 10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> October.

The theme for this year rooted in the idea of 'A Journey from Despair to Hope,' with a very powerful video of a poetry performance entitled 'Consider the Ravens' which is the title of the prayer leaflet this year, which has prayers contributed by different people involved in the CJS in a different format to usual. Opportunities for **each of us to encourage our churches** and individuals to pray during Prisons Week and for us as churches together to promote it in a fitting way. We said that as CTH we would incorporate Prisons week into the calendar, so can I please encourage you to take some prayer leaflets for your church and maybe consider playing the powerful video – both available online at [www.prisonsworld.org](http://www.prisonsworld.org). PLEASE REMEMBER in your prayers, especially Fr Chris who is RC chaplain at HMP Gartree, Rev. Brian Kennard, Jeanne Moore and Rev. Barry Osborne who also work in the chaplaincy there, for Emma Higgins, the C of E chaplain who is currently on maternity leave, for Hussain the managing chaplain and for Maureen and myself, as we patiently await the call to be allowed to go back into HMP Onley to resume Sycamore Tree. The last time they were there was on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

### **Remembrance Sunday 14 November 2021**

Janet has been invited to speak at the Civil Service at St Dionysius Church.

### **The Big Green Week 18<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> September.** From Julie Fagan

The **Harborough Big Green Week** will be running from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2021. It will be a celebration of everything people in Market Harborough are doing to improve our local environment and tackle climate change, as well as a call for our government to do more. We would very much like you and your organisation to be involved in some way, and we know some local groups already have events planned. How can you get involved?

**On Saturday September 25<sup>th</sup>**, we will be taking over The Square in Market Harborough, with various groups and organisations being invited to have a stall of their own.

**During the week of Saturday September 18<sup>th</sup> to Sunday September 26<sup>th</sup>**, we would like to encourage businesses and organisations in and around the town to organise their own 'Green' events.

**Between now and September 25<sup>th</sup>**, we need more people to help with the overall planning and management of the event.

**Already have something planned?** Let us know and we will add it to the Harborough Big Green Week Calendar to celebrate and publicise your event.

### **8. Any Other Business**

- a. Andy Murphy informed the meeting that they had appointed a lay person, Melissa Wheeler. He also stated that the Pizza Club for school years 4-7 (ages 8-12) had re-opened this Sunday 5pm and would continue weekly.
- b. Stuart Allen was the new leader at Christchurch
- c. Hils (Hilary) Corcoran is the new vicar at St Peter and St Paul's Great Bowden
- d. Stephen mentioned that there was a movement to write welcome letter for refugees. This would be investigated.
- e. Janet informed the meeting that HDC had offered to relocate two families in the district, and she had responded positively to HDC's request for support and help.

Any Other Business to be sent to Janet by Noon on Thursday 18 November

#### **Dates:**

Prisons Week	Sun-Sat	10-16 October
Remembrance Sunday	Sunday	14 November 2021

#### **Forum meetings:**

	Thursday	18 November 2021	7.15 for 7.30 pm	Our Lady of Victories, Octagonal Hall
	Monday	10 January 2022	7.15 for 7.30 pm	tba
	Thursday	10 March 2022	7.15 for 7.30 pm	tba
AGM:	Monday	16 May 2022	7.15 for 7.30 pm	tba

#### **Links:**

Prisons Week	<a href="http://www.prisonsworld.org">www.prisonsworld.org</a>
The Cube	<a href="http://www.thecubeyouth.uk">www.thecubeyouth.uk</a>
Jubilee Food Bank shopping list	<a href="https://jubileefoodbankmh.uk/shopping-list/">https://jubileefoodbankmh.uk/shopping-list/</a>

Janet thanked everyone for attending and led prayers for Rose Williams and James Pickersgill as they move on and for Maureen Douglas and Jackie Melhuish as they start their roles as Secretary and Treasurer.

**The meeting closed with Janet leading prayer and the meeting saying the Grace together**