



## **Minutes of the CTH Forum on Monday 10 January 2022 by Zoom**

### **Present:**

Janet Smith, Andy Murphy, Maureen Douglas, Derek Williams, Jackie Melhuish, Angela Zemlak, Peter Arnold, Mandy Gays, Jan Turner, Christopher O'Connor, Stephen Haward, Margaret Bonser, John Pearse, Dave Tomlin, Andy Giles, Dawn O'Connell, Alison Iliffe, Elizabeth Tubb, Christopher Brown, Theresa Kendrick, Tom Grant, Barry Hill, Emma Tayler

### **Welcome**

Janet welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Jan Turner, a new Forum Rep from the Congregational Church, also Emma Taylor, Head of MH Church of England Academy who will be talking re Volunteers in Schools.

### **Opening Devotions:**

Andy Murphy started by expressing sympathy on behalf of the meeting to Janet for the loss of her mother just after Christmas

Andy began the devotions by reading from 1 Corinthians 12 vv 1-11. He focussed on the verse '*No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit*' (verse 3) and spoke of his narrow vision of "who was a proper Christian" in his younger days, and how God has worked through his mistakes to bring him to a broader understanding of a God who uses the different gifts and expressions of faith of all who follow Christ.

Andy stated we should rejoice at the Churches Together movement, whether in MH or world-wide. God is working through us all despite our different schools of thought, our different versions of the Bible, even our mistakes. We have so much to learn from each other. God is working to bring about unity.

Then Andy used a prayer from the Iona Community to close the devotions.

### **Presentation by Emma Tayler, Head of MH C of E Academy**

Dawn introduced Emma by explaining that St Dionysius had been considering what could be done to help the primary schools by providing support to children who have struggled during the pandemic and Emma had decided to work with the church. Emma went on to say that she had been talking to head teachers of other local schools and would like the support of the local churches to ask for volunteers to come forward.

Leaflets are to be distributed both in schools and through the churches. These would direct people to an on-line application form (but forms will be available off-line). There the possible volunteers could offer their services in a variety of ways eg listening to readers, crafts. Some people may want to volunteer at a specific school and that will be possible.

Emma stated that this was not a quick fix as there would be application forms to be looked at and safeguarding to be put in place. There is also the ongoing COVID situation to be considered.

The meeting welcomed the idea and a discussion took place on how and what information needed to be provided.

### **Apologies for absence:**

Sally Stobart, Ceriann Kelly, Hils Corcoran, Stephen Jack, Dee Quinn, Matthew Pittam, David Nixon, Jeannie Brightwell, David Palmer

**1. Minutes of Forum held on Thursday 18 November 2021 at Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church:**

The minutes were accepted by the meeting and were signed by Janet. Janet thanked Maureen for sending out the minutes and Angela for writing them up.

**2. Matters Arising:** None

**3. Main Business:**

**a) Review of the CTH Constitution:**

Prior to the vote a discussion took place on the definition of Church Leader(s) in section 6.1. It was agreed that this should mean Ministers in overall pastoral care of their church. This statement could be added as a footnote. Those who were Forum Reps voted unanimously for the constitution to be accepted. It was noted that the change in numbers of Reps permitted will happen within the next year as churches held AGMs or PCC meetings. This will be a period of transition.

It was noted during the meeting that the Executive is looking for a Vice Chair (lay person), and a Minutes Secretary to stand for election at the May AGM. There is also the immediate need for a Christian Aid Coordinator for the town, in readiness for this year's Christian Aid week in May. Please prayerfully consider whether you could take on any of these roles. For further information about them please contact either Janet [chair@harboroughchurches.org.uk](mailto:chair@harboroughchurches.org.uk) or Andy [vicechair@harboroughchurches.org.uk](mailto:vicechair@harboroughchurches.org.uk)

**b) Youth Survey Update:**

Andy thanks all those churches who had responded. The results had not yet been analysed and reflected upon. He hopes to present the results at the March meeting.

**c) Prayer Events during the week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

Andy M was thanked for generating a Zoom link to cover all the sessions. There is one evening and four day-time events.

Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> , 7.00 pm	Leader: Mrs Janet Smith (MHBC Baptist Church and Chair, CTH)
Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> , 12.00 noon	Leader: Revd Alison Iliffe (Team Vicar, St Hugh's and St Nicholas)
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> , 12.00 noon	Leader: Revd Andy Murphy (Minister, MHMC and vice-chair, CTH)
Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> , 12.00 noon	Leader: Mr Tim Jeffery (Chief Executive Officer, Torch Trust)
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> , 12.00 noon	Leader: Revd Hils Corcoran (Team Vicar, St Peter & St Paul)

The CTH Forum members were asked to ensure that the dates and times were promoted within the churches.

**d) Lent Friday services**

It was agreed that there would be no ecumenical groups this year but there could be Zoom Friday services 12.30 pm to 1.00 pm. Janet and Derek would arrange for information regarding the themed services to be sent out. The churches were asked if they could put forward one or two lay people to lead the sessions on the following date: 11 March, 18 March, 25 March, 1 April, 8 April

Please contact Janet as soon as possible.

**e) Good Friday: Friday 15 April**

A discussion took place on whether or how this day should be planned. There is still a credit note with the company providing the big screen which was booked for 2020. CTH had paid in full but not many of the churches had sent in their pledged contribution. HDC had provisionally booked the Square for us.

Various comments were made including:

- Not a lot of time to do a public event well.
- Some were keen on the idea but could not commit to being involved.
- Put an event on without the screen. However, the credit note may not be used in future, this needs checking.
- Produce an event using the screen.

There was not a lot of enthusiasm within the meeting and a vote was taken as to whether we (a) want the executive to take a couple of weeks to look into whether we have the time and resources (ie people) to put on an event or, (b) postpone the event until 2023. By a small majority of Forum Reps it was agreed to take a couple of weeks to see if there was a chance of putting the event on for 2022.

**4. Reports of recent events:**

- a) Mothers' Union Global Moment against gender-based violence.  
Despite a wet and windy day, the meeting by the Old Grammar School went well. Jill Mann was thanked for organising.

**5. Communications:** Derek had nothing to report

**6. Brief Headlines from our organisations**

**a) Street Pastors**

Mandy reported that the team were going on patrol on alternate Saturdays. They are still short of numbers so Mandy would like to give a presentation to the Forum and plan a series of presentations in the Churches to promote the work of Street Pastors. Janet will contact Mandy to arrange the Forum presentation. Janet had been out on patrol to see the work. There is good work being done by the Prayer Support team based at the Bower House.

**b) Cube**

Dawn reported that they now have a new Wellbeing Co - Ordinator Melissa, who is working with the Bower House to ensure that all the necessary structures are in place before counselling sessions begin at the Cube. They have a weekly presence in WPA and RSA; and they are working with 6 of the primary schools to support transition skills.

**c) Bower House**

As we write we are just re-opening after a two week break for Christmas. We felt that with growing rates of infection we needed to close for a longer period than usual and on our return, we are facing many cancellations both from volunteers and clients. Since March 2020 we have been committed to keep all the Bower House team and those who use the service as safe as possible. It is our intention to remain open.

Despite the challenges we face and the current uncertainty we are looking ahead and planning for a busy 2022. Our building project is gaining momentum and we are now at the stage of seeking funding to help with level access improvement to the building. We have plans to develop practical and helpful ways of managing our increasingly growing waiting list. We are looking at improving our website to include podcasts, links to mental health well-being, links to local and national resources. And, having cancelled our Christmas events in December we are looking forward to becoming more active within the community when opportunity allows.

Our team at the Bower House remains strong and we have welcomed more members to the support worker and counsellor team. We are blessed to have a strong team of committed volunteers.

Thank you for your prayers and support. Cara Thompson and Trish Gibbard, Service Co-ordinators

**d) Jubilee Foodbank**

We are very thankful for the many donations from individuals and organisations in the run up to Christmas. This will help us on the next few months when there are normally less donations. In 2021 Jubilee Foodbank supported 329 households, which was 12% lower than 2020 (due to Covid) but 14% higher than 2019. Referrals increased in the run up to the Christmas, many citing wages or benefits not going far enough as a reason. We also supported some people who are isolating due to the Omicron wave. The committee has been preparing paperwork and we hope to apply for charity status and seek more trustees this month.

Jubilee Foodbank is hoping to work with all referral agencies more closely so that people can be supported by multiple organisations where needed. The Eco Village and Beacon Care have shown an interest in supporting people in poverty and we will follow this up in 2022.

Prayers please for:

- Support for people in poverty as the cost-of-living increases
- Finding the right people to be trustees and volunteers in 2022

All the groups were asking for prayers for their work.

## 7. **Coming Events:**

### a) **Peace Vigil:**

This will take place on Friday 14 January on the Square 5 – 5.30 p.m. All welcome. Wrap up warmly and bring a candle or light.

### b) **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** – see 3c above

### c) **Fairtrade Fortnight**

This year it runs from 21st February – 6th March 2022. The Market Harborough Fairtrade Town Group is planning various activities. Plenty of resources available on the Fairtrade Foundation and Traidcraft websites <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/> and <https://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk/fairtrade-fortnight>

### d) **Youth Alpha Course**

Prayers are requested for the Youth Alpha Course which started on Monday 10 January at Harborough Community Church. It will run until 14 March (except for 14 February), 6.30pm to 9.15 pm. It is for young people in years 9 to 13 from any church.

## 8. **Planned Mission headed up by Living Rock, June 2022**

Andy Murphy informed the Forum that Living Rock were planning to participate in Mission 24 for a week in June, led by Jonathan Conrathe. Living Rock, who are associate members of CTH, have invited other churches to consider joining them in this mission, and are asking for prayer for this event. Some of the CTH ministers were attending a breakfast meeting to find out more.

## 9. **Any other Business:**

### Syrian Family

Andy M reported that the family had been well supported by CTH in the form of cash and goods which were paid in irregular instalments at the discretion of Janet and himself. Around £3,000 had been given in the last 4-5 years via the CTH account with few further funds remaining. They now need help with the renewal of their Visa.

He asked the Forum to consider the way forward:

- Does the Forum wish to continue with helping this family?
- Does the Forum want to help other families, including this one?
- Would the Forum consider some different way ie via a hardship fund?

It was agreed to discuss the ideas at the March meeting. Andy will send a letter to the Forum giving more information.

Dave offered a fund-raising concert by Old Friends. The idea was welcomed if the event was not a public appeal for a specific family.

It was explained that this refugee family came to the town 4-5 years ago under a UK government scheme to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees, but they exist only on basic benefits and state support. There is another refugee family who live in the Harborough District who are supported by a community support scheme. Harborough District Council had recently agreed to take two families from Afghanistan.

### **Dates of next Forum meetings:**

Thursday 10 March 2022

Congregational Church or ZOOM if necessary

Monday 16 May 2022: AGM / Forum

Venue to be confirmed

Janet closed the meeting with prayer, and everyone said the Grace