



**Minutes of the Churches Together in Harbourough (CTH)
Forum Meeting, Thursday 14th September 2023, 7.15 for 7.30 p.m.
at the Baptist Church**

Our objectives:

- to be a visible sign of the churches' commitment to one another.
- to facilitate common witness to Christ
- to respond to the needs of the community in shared service and outreach where this is possible.

Attendees (20)

Revd Andy Murphy (MHMC, chair), Maureen Douglas (OLOV, Secretary), Revd Rob Leveritt (Anglican), Angela Zemlak (MHBC), Maxine Faschine (MHBC), Revd Christopher Brown (MHBC), Peter Arnold (MHMC), Jan Turner (MHCC, minutes), Wendy Osborne (MHBC), Dave Tomlin (MHMC), Father Chris O'Connor (OLOV), Revd Stephen Jack (HCC), Sharron Brannen (MHCC).

Apologies for absence

Theresa Kendrick (OLOV), Janet Smith (MHBC), Jackie Melhuish (MHMC, treasurer), John Pearse (MHMC), Revd Tom Grant (Anglican), Revd Derek Williams (Anglican, Communication)

1. Welcome

Andy welcomed everyone to the meeting with the focus of the meeting being on worshipping together.

2. Opening Devotions

Christopher Brown led devotions centred on '**We are people of the Cross**'.

3. Minutes of the Forum meeting held on Monday 22nd May 2023

The Minutes of the May Forum which followed the AGM, having been previously circulated, were accepted unanimously as a true record of the meeting.

4. Matters Arising.

The *It's Your Move* books were distributed to all Market Harbourough school pupils of Year 6 (leaving Primary School), as well as three or four bibles (per school) for the school libraries.

5. Main Business.

a) Nomination of Vice- Chair. This has been deferred to the next Forum meeting.

b) Our Worship Together. Andy emphasised the importance of our Worship Together as Churches as a great sign of Unity in Christ, that points the Kingdom of God among us, and is a positive witness to those around us.

c) Prayer events during Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18th- 25th January 2024.

It was agreed to hold another United Service Sunday 21st January at 3.00pm. CTH would like to hold the service at the Congregational Church, especially as it may show some support to them in a time when they are between Ministers, but of course ministers from other Churches would lead if necessary. This needs to be cleared with Christchurch who have their Sunday service at 3pm in the Church Hall.

Action: Jan Turner will let Andy Murphy know asap about availability of Congregational Church.

It was decided to have 3 Prayer events, including 1 to be on Zoom:

- Friday 19th January Lunch time at the Baptist Church,
- Monday 22nd January Evening at the Catholic Church,
- Wednesday 24th Evening on Zoom, led by the Anglican Team.

Action. Rob Leveret to confirm with the Anglican Team.

d) Lent Services and Lunches 2024 (Lent begins 14th February 2024)

It was agreed that we should hold short reflective services and fellowship meals during Lent, following our long-held tradition of getting together in the lead-up to Easter. It was provisionally agreed to hold the services and lunches at the Methodist Church. The Lent services would take place for 5 weeks on Fridays, beginning on Friday 23rd February starting with the service at 12.30pm, with lunch to follow at 1.00pm. The services have traditionally been lay-led but this need not necessarily be the case, if ministers wish to do so. For the lunches, the Third World Group from the Catholic Church have agreed to provide soup and are willing to work with the Methodist Church, who would need to provide the cakes as in previous years.

Action: Andy Murphy to confirm venue with Methodist Church (including cakes).

Action: Churches/denominations will be asked to lead specific weeks (Exec).

e) Good Friday (29th March 2024)

There is a willingness for CTH to create a big event as in the past. It was commented this should be an engaging and creative Christian event, with a strong outward focus and evangelistic message. While various opinions were expressed on the merits of previous events, it was strongly felt that the vision and lead for this event needs to come from the Minister's Fellowship, and that once the vision is established, an ecumenical team can be formed around that. We were not able to move forward with much clarity on this matter, but there was certainly enthusiasm to do something. Assurance was given that there is a budget available, which could include the hiring of a screen if necessary, without necessarily needing to go back to churches for extra funds. The decision on the screen to be made by the steering group. While not wanting to take a lead, Christopher Brown offered to be involved with the music. Andy stressed that the Exec would be willing to ensure that all of the administrative and local authority matters were taken care of.

Action. To be discussed urgently at the next Ministers Fellowship.

f) Any other opportunities or ideas for worshipping together?

Christopher Brown shared a vision and offered to lead a time of regular worship together that would move between the Churches - an ecumenical evening of prayer and worship. He is going to think further about how to initiate this and will give further details soon, inviting to any such event. There was wide agreement that it was a good idea and that it would be very welcome and refreshing.

g) Reports of recent events:

Holiday @ Home. This was again a great success, enjoyed by all who attended. It is a greatly valued event for older citizens, in a church setting, with a variety of activities. Andy suggested that after the weeks activities we instigate a service to celebrate this event on the Sunday afternoon at the close of the week possible a Songs of Praise followed by Cream Teas. He is happy to lead at the Methodist Church but would be very happy to have support from all Churches.

Please see attached reports from Bower House, The Cube, Holiday @ Home, Jubilee Food Bank, Homeless and Asking for Help, Christian Aid.

h) Communications.

CTH Communications Officer, Revd Derek Williams, after many years of service is stepping down from this role for health reasons. We would very much appreciate a volunteer to replace him, and Derek is available to advise and guide anyone wishing to taking up this post, which involves liaising with external local media organisations, such as the *Harborough Mail* or radio, regarding any events and activities that we are proposing. Derek will carry on with this work while he can, but we are open to nominations immediately to replace him. The role also has a place on the CTH Exec. The meeting expressed their gratitude and prayers for Derek. A token of appreciation was made by CTH, along with a card of thanks. Andy Murphy has temporarily taken over the responsibility for checking and sending in our weekly contributions to the *Harborough Mail*.

Action. Maureen Douglas

6. AOB. Please see contribution below from Dave Tomlins.

"Good Money Sunday" is an attempt to get the various denominations to hold a service which seeks to highlight the "Good Use of Money". Sunday the 8th October (or any other Sunday as appropriate) was my starting point.

As we know, the current government is reneging on promises made, whilst at the same time creating havoc with our economy. Big business lobbyists get their way at the expense of millions of ordinary people who are struggling financially and have no voice.

Taxation is a political issue and not simply a party-political thing. It is something that has to be addressed appropriately and fairly.

Good money is that used to enable all to flourish, and not simply create more money for the powerful and rich who benefit most. The poor should not have to bail out banks and big businesses who fail to respect the impact on others and our planet.

Scripture reveals caring for 'the poor and the aliens' in our midst as absolute requirements. Greed rather than fair sharing is the problem. Anyone wishing to challenge the injustices that penalise the poor and give more to the wealthy are invited to contact me at:

david.tomlin10@btinternet.com or 01858 467644

justmoney.org.uk and other tax justice campaigns also offer information.

7. Dates of future events & CTH meeting 2023-2024 are confirmed as :

- **Prisons Week: October 8th – 14th**
- **Monday 27th November 2023: CTH Forum 7.15 for 7.30 at the Methodist Church. Focus on Evangelism & Witness**
- **January 18th – 25th 2024: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**
- **February 1st: CTH Forum - focus on Social Action and Outreach. (venue to be confirmed)**
- **February 14th: Ash Wednesday (Lent begins)**
- **1st March 2024: World Day of Prayer Service (venue TBC)**
- **29th March 2024: Good Friday. Act of Witness on the Square.**
- **Monday 20th May 2024 – CTH AGM and Forum (venue TBC)**

8. Date and venue of next meeting: Monday 27th November 2023, CTH Forum 7.15 for 7.30pm at the Methodist Church. Focus on Evangelism & Witness.

9. Closing Prayer: Andy closed the meeting with prayer.