



**Churches Together in Harborough  
Forum Meeting after the AGM, Monday 16th May 2022, 7.15 for 7.30 p.m.  
at the Methodist 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.

**The Opening devotions were led by Andy Murphy at the start of the AGM**

**Attendees (20)**

Janet Smith (MHBC), Andy Murphy (MHMC), Maureen Douglas (OLOV), Derek Williams (Anglican), Jackie Melhuish (MHMC), Angela Zemlak (MHBC), Ceriann Kelly (The CUBE), Peter Arnold (MHMC), Jan Turner (MHCC), Mandy Gays (Street Pastors), David Nixon (MHMC), Elizabeth Tubb (Anglican), Keith Rugg (MHBC), Dave Tomlin (MHMC), Theresa Kendrick (OLOV), Dee Quinn (Anglican), Stephen Haward (MHCC), Chris O'Connor (OLOV), Stephen Jack (HCC), Alison Iliffe (Anglican)

**Apologies for absence**

Christopher Brown (MHBC), Cara Thompson (Bower House), David Palmer (Elderberries), Tom Grant (Anglican), Barry Hill (Anglican), Jeannie Brightwell (Anglican)

The new chair, Andy Murphy led the Forum meeting. He reiterated (as at the end of the AGM) his considering the role of Chair as an honour which he doesn't take lightly.

**Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 10 March 2022 held by ZOOM**

There were no matters arising and the minutes were signed by Janet (who chaired the meeting) and Andy (as current chair)

**Matters Arising:**

**It's Your Move Booklets**

The 'It's Your Move' books for the Year 6s were all allocated at the meeting to the appropriate people for onward distribution in our primary schools. Janet does have a small number of spare copies - 6. We know that children come and go, so please contact Janet if numbers in the schools change and you require one or two more.

**Main Business**

**(i) Recent events:**

**a. Good Friday Service on the Square**

A good discussion took place on how the event went with feedback and comments.

1. Good feedback about youngsters who had taken part.
2. Great witness of faith.
3. The company who hired the screen to us will be thanked.
4. Sound system was excellent.
5. Some people couldn't see the screen. This will be considered by the Steering Group with the possibility of moving the position of the screen (outside No. 53 facing memorial this year) or even having two although the cost is likely to be prohibitive.
6. It was appreciated how well the event was put together.
7. Good that multiple generations were involved.
8. Given the short lead time it was remarkably good.
9. The screen worked well but content could have been better and more effectively used.
10. Council staff were extremely helpful and very impressed.
11. Large number of people attended.
12. It was decided beforehand not to have Charity stands.

13. A Steering Group needs to start work early to provide ideas and start preparations. Maureen, Derek and Elizabeth all offered to form a Steering Group. Stephen J will talk to fellow Ministers and HCC members regarding joining the Steering Group
14. There is a financial commitment to hire the screen (approx. £1,200). It was agreed that Andy is authorised to get a price for the same screen and to send information to the Churches regarding their willingness to cover the cost between them. The decision to book the screen is needed in order to secure for 2023.

Andy thanked everyone who took part. He will be writing to the schools whose children were involved.

A question was asked about whether there is any CTH events at Christmas. It was the consensus that Churches ran their own services and opened their churches for events such as Christmas Fayre. Previously there had been a CTH leaflet giving details of all services for all churches. The Forum Reps should inform Derek of dates when known.

b. Christian Aid Week 15 – 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022

Peter thanked those churches who had delivered envelopes around town and St Dionysius for being the collection point. Today, the first day of collecting, the count of monies received was £103. The Christian Aid online link for Market Harborough has not been working. CA are looking into solving this problem. NB update from Peter: payment issues with the website designed for Market Harborough are now resolved. Please promote this link at Church and on any social media pages you have. <https://envelope.christianaid.org.uk/envelope/market-harborough?channel=status>

**(ii) Communications**

Derek had nothing to report except he would like to know if any Churches have events planned for the Platinum Jubilee. Let him know so he can get the information collated. Derek was thanked for his work for CTH.

**(iii) News or points for prayer from our Churches and Associated Groups**

Andy thanked the groups for their updates for the AGM reports.

The following groups and Churches provided the following information and requests for prayer:

- Bower House CTH Rep has been Janet for the past 2 years and she has offered to continue, thank you.
- Street Pastors – please pray that they find another meeting place whilst the Bower House is closed.
- Harborough action for Justice and Peace – Alison Tomlin and Janet had met to discuss the way forward for the group and will meet with Andy and Dave Tomlin to discuss the way forward. Justice and Peace would be the focus of the next Forum meeting.
- St Dionysius had interviewed four candidates for the position of Vicar.
- Congregational Church members were visiting their partner Church in Romania next October. This Church has been impacted by the events in Ukraine.
- Andy will find out more about the Living Rock event, Love Harborough, and circulate information to the Churches.

**(iv) Supporting Refugees**

Andy reported that

- The refugee situation in the UK has changed dramatically in the last year, with the removal of British and American troops from Afghanistan, and of course the War in Ukraine.
- CTH has been actively supporting one particular Syrian family as CTH, with financial donations from individuals and various other types of support. Janet and Andy have been to visit them on a number of occasions.
- Andy made the meeting aware of various initiatives in Market Harborough to support the rising number of Ukrainian refugees, including a weekly coffee event for them here at the Methodist Church every Saturday 10 am to 12 noon; people offering to host; a coffee social at the Theatre with 56 people attending recently; and HCC have a social group meeting Tuesdays at 10 am.

- Because of the great need at the moment, Andy was proposing that CTH setup a **Refugee Support Team**, not to reinvent the wheel, but to connect with all of these organisations and families on our behalf. This Support Team, through specific donations, could also administer financial support to refugee families in need, or give additional support to host families where needed. Money collected would be given at the discretion of the team, within the bounds of the money raised. This would enable us to continue supporting the families we are supporting, but also widen our scope and share the load of pastoral care and contact to more people not just those from Ukraine.
- After much discussion and various points raised, it was clear that there was little support for the proposal as it stands, and further work is needed to consider a response that is sustainable, appropriate and not simply adding another layer to the work being done by churches, charities and secular/voluntary organisations. Stephen Haward suggested that CTH might uniquely be able to give some theological thought to the matter and offer some reflections which could help us discern what should be doing
- It was suggested that the Justice and Peace group consider connecting with other groups working with refugees (secular) and look into what can be done uniquely compared to secular groups.

**(v) Coming Events:**

- Torch Trust Coffee Morning this Thursday 19 May from 10.30 am with worship from 11.30 am
- Bower House Coffee morning at the Harborough Theatre on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May
- Big Brekkie for Christian Aid on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2022 being held on Zoom with Brekkie packs being distributed on the Friday.
- Thy Kingdom Come 26<sup>th</sup> May – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022; an Ecumenical event from Ascension Day to Pentecost

**(vi) Any other Business:**

There was no other business.

**(vii) Dates for future Forum meetings, venues to be agreed:**

- Monday 26 September 2022
  - Thursday 24 November 2022
  - Thursday 2 February 2023
  - Monday 22 May 2023 – AGM
- Church Reps will check dates with the Leadership of their churches and offer venues for the various meetings as they are able.

The next meeting will focus on Justice and Peace as its theme. Dates of forthcoming events will also be confirmed with discussion on activities at those times. These include:

- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- Lent

Andy asked that the Forum bring ideas and thoughts about these events to the next meeting.

Andy closed the meeting with prayers including a prayer of thanks for Janet's service over the past four years.

The meeting said the Grace together.