

MINUTES OF CIRCUIT MEETING
10th March 2020, 7.30pm
SWANAGE METHODIST CHURCH

1. Rev. Tony Cavanagh welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **Opening Devotions** were led by Rev. Karen James.
3. Jean Bettles introduced the Wave Team who gave a presentation about the work of the Wave Children's and Youth Ministry in Swanage.
4. **Agree Membership:** The attendance list was circulated and agreed.
5. **Apologies for absence** were received and noted from the attendance list.
6. **Letters of Greeting & Acknowledgement and Items for Prayer** – None requested.
7. **Agreement of the minutes of the meeting held 3rd December 2019:** The Minutes had been circulated previously and were agreed and signed.
8. There were no matters arising.

9. News from Churches

Rev. Karen reported on Café Church at Swanage, Church Anniversary on 21st June at Lytchett and the first Messy Church at Upton.

Rev. Sue reported that Broadstone would be hosting a 'Death' Café on Sunday.

Deacon Suzie reported on the opening of the Welcome Inn cafe at Victoria Park. It opened to the public on Monday for the first time and would be open on Mondays and Wednesdays from now on.

Eileen Osgood reminded everyone that Wool services now start at 10.30 am. This was to make it easier for ex Wareham members to attend.

Christine Snape reported that Upton had a very soggy garden which the children can't play on so they are going to have a paved area with raised beds for the children to plant vegetables and do watering. A Willow Tunnel and Arbor will be built to help with drainage and other trees will be planted.

10. Governance

9.1 Circuit Review update & 10 Year Risk Management Policy

The Circuit Review was postponed due to the Marriage and Relationship Meetings. The 10-year Risk Management Policy was recommended by the Circuit Finance Group to help with planning for the future.

9.2 **Marriage & Relationship Report discussions Update**

Anyone wanting to send feed back into the discussion process should put comments in writing to a Synod rep from this Circuit (CLT members, Jane Shipton Ashwell, Gerald Beddard). They will then get passed on.

9.3 **Safeguarding Officer's Report:** Nothing to report

9.4 **Circuit Staffing**

At the request of the Connexion Deacon Sarah has been released from her appointment here in our Circuit to serve in a new appointment this summer. A process of prayer, discernment and consultation between the MDO, Connexional Stationing and Matching Group, the District and the Circuit has brought us to this point and Sarah's new appointment in the West Herts and Borders Circuit has now been approved. There will be a further process that happens over the coming weeks and months to discern the possibility of our receiving another Deacon outside of the normal stationing process, as has happened with Sarah, to take up post from September. This process still has to begin and there are no guarantees that a replacement will come. There will be opportunities nearer the time to say goodbye to Sarah in the usual way. We are grateful to her for all that she has brought to us, and been willing to share with us, and of course wish her well on her onward journey in ministry in the Summer.

10. **Life of the Circuit**

10.1 Local Preacher's Report: Had been circulated previously but it was noted that the number of local preachers may need amending.

10.2 **Mission Folder update**

The Mission Folder is now ready for printing and churches will receive a copy in due course.

10.3 **Support for Free Church Chaplain – Update on progress**

Tony Cavanagh had attended a meeting but not a lot had been achieved there. We have since written to Bishop Karen who has responded and hopes to have all the information by the next meeting. At the moment there are no paid chaplains at either university.

10.4 **Application for Dispensation for Rev Karen James to Celebrate Holy Communion**

An application had been made for Karen to take Holy Communion. However, we didn't quite meet the criteria, but the process is moving forward. The Trustees unanimously agreed that the application should go ahead.

10.5 **Circuit Office Staffing – Resignation of Full Time Admin Role**

Both Lilian and Jane have resigned which means that the Circuit is in crisis. In view of this we need 6 Circuit Stewards, ideally two from Bournemouth, two from Broadstone/Poole/Upton and two from Purbeck. This is crucial for the

continuation of the Circuit and everyone was asked to consider this prayerfully in their local churches.

We need to re-evaluate how the Circuit will go forward in the future. Some things may fall by the wayside and some things may have to be done by the churches. The Leadership Team have looked at all the work in the Churches and at who is going to do what. The Staff team is in a very fragile state at present and going forward with fewer staff we are not going to be able to do everything. With Sarah leaving, Nick off sick and Sue retiring it is difficult to say what will be happening in September.

This would be Jane's last Circuit Meeting and thanks were expressed to her for all she has done in the past.

10.6 Hosting Synod at the Spire

On Saturday 25th April The Spire will be hosting Synod for the day. Help is needed from the Circuit as we must provide tables for registration, hospitality to include cake and refreshments, help with parking etc. There could be as many as 250 delegates attending so lots of volunteers will be required, ideally teams of 8 - 10 people from each church. Di Baggs will be writing to senior stewards shortly. Thanks were expressed to Di and the Stewards for all their work on this.

11. Finance

11.1 Acceptance of 2018-19 Accounts and Reports

Final Accounts and comments had been sent to everyone. All present agreed that these be accepted.

11.2 Request for loan of £80,000 to the Spire

Poole Methodists at The Spire are requesting a loan from the Circuit of £80,000 to be used as a 6-month reserve to facilitate the Church work and mission. The Church, as a new endeavour, currently has no reserves but expects to be able to grow its reserves as the project establishes itself.

It is proposed that this loan will be paid back within 5 years (before August 2025) with no interest, by an annual Direct Debit of £16,000.

It was noted that we would need to draw down the £80,000 from the CMTF which requires the approval of Circuit Trustees and the Poole Bay auditors would need to know that the Trustees agreed to this loan. The advantage of the loan to the Circuit is that no levy would have to be paid on that money if it was loaned to The Spire.

Following some discussion regarding The Spire's ability to repay the loan, the proposal was made and seconded by Alison Sclater. 29 Trustees agreed, 1 voted against and there were 4 abstentions.

11.3 Employment of Term Time Financial Administrator

We have now been able to employ a finance administrator for 12 hours per week for 38 weeks (term time only), which averages out at 9 hours per week over the

year. Her name is Tracey and she is a member at Trinity so has some knowledge of the way Methodism works.

11.4 CFG Discussions on Assessment / Budget

No discussions had taken place to date.

12. Property

12.1 Update regarding sale of Walpole Road

The sale of Walpole Road to a local nursery has now been completed. The property was sold for £210,000 but after solicitor's fees, outstanding loan repayment and TMCP levy a balance of £152,000 had been received. Jane reported that Ian Palmer at Goadsby estate agents had worked hard on our behalf to get the sale through and she would write and thank him.

12.2 Update regarding rental of Marlborough Road

The property had been completely redecorated and the garden brought up to standard ready to go on the market for letting. However, it had been decided to wait and see whether it might be needed for future staffing.

12.3 Update regarding sale of Wareham Church

Offers had been received between £200,000 and £350,000. Currently a developer was interested subject to planning permission.

12.4 Update regarding sale of Gannett's Park

The sale was going through, and the contract had been signed ready for exchange in the coming days. The key to the garage had been mislaid and Chris Moreton had been unable to clear his possessions out, so a locksmith had been engaged to change the locks.

13. Any other business

13.1 Broadstone are currently recruiting a Children and Young Families Worker to replace their previous one who had retired.

13.2 A recital will take place at Kinson on 16th March by a lady from the Welsh National Opera who was a member of the Sunday school at Kinson. Tickets £7.50, to include refreshments, available on the door.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10 with prayer.

Date of next meeting

9th June Circuit Meeting 7.30pm Victoria Park

12.3 Update regarding sale of Wareham Church (Part 2 Minute)

Initially an offer was received from another church of £200,000. Then a local builder offered £350,00 with the possibility of raising that to £375,000 providing change of use was in place. Our Surveyor agreed that price but so far, the developer had not responded. Purbeck Council will not allow any change of use until the property has been on the market for 9 months and there has been no interest from other community groups. This is a difficult situation as we are legally bound by Charity and Methodist law to accept the highest offer. The Surveyor has been asked to talk to Purbeck District Council to try to resolve the situation. Meanwhile the District Property officer says that there is a new document out advising churches on similar situations. This will be investigated.