

MINUTES OF CIRCUIT MEETING
1st December 2020 via Zoom

1. Rev Tony welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Opening Devotions were led by Rev Nick Wood.
3. **Agree Membership of meeting**
A list of members had been circulated previously and was agreed. The secretary recorded the participants.
4. **Apologies for absence** were received from Rev. Betto and Deacon Suzie Viana, David Howe and Danny Plews.
5. **Letters of Greeting & Acknowledgement and Items for Prayer**
Eileen Osgood requested that a letter of thanks be sent to Rev Sue and Colin Gowling.
6. **Agreement of the minutes of the meeting held 15th September 2020**
The Minutes were agreed and signed as a correct record.
7. **Matters Arising**
There were no matters arising.
8. **News from Churches**
Upton pre-school will be presenting their nativity in the garden each day.
Victoria Park pre-school has been open since July and they are pleased to be able to support the families whose children are attending.
9. **Life of the Circuit**
 - 9.1 **Circuit Invitation Committee**
As of this moment we are still in the process. In the first round we rejected the person we were matched with and we have not been matched with anyone in the second round. There is a further round in January so we may still get someone.
 - 9.2 **Local Preacher's Report**
At the recent meeting thanks was given for the life of Ron Sparling who had passed away.
Julian Tawn had passed all his modules and his accreditation was unanimously approved. An Accreditation Service for Julian will take place in due course.
Nicola Dunn, from the Christchurch and Wimborne Circuit, is about to receive a note to preach and Naomi Shrimpton, from Victoria Park, is progressing well.
Two new trainees from the Channel Islands maybe joining us soon.
 - 9.3 **Next Quarter Plan**
Rev. Tony reported that the next plan is proving to be a challenge and each church may have 5 or 6 local arrangements. If this plan were being made this would equate to 86 shortages due to the services that are not currently on the plan. If we don't get another presbyter that could rise to 100. We must give priority to morning services and Maidment Court.

The average age of local preachers and supernumeraries is increasing, and some feel unable to contribute to the Plan at this time. Nick is leading Zoom services, so he is unable to take any services in churches. We need to think creatively about the way forward as churches may not be able to cope with so many local arrangements.

Wool have been using the Circuit service provided when they don't have a preacher. It was suggested that congregations who still having evening services could stop these. Some congregations might be able to join together for worship or use their screens to broadcast services. It was agreed that on-line worship should continue on Zoom although it was noted that, for Nick, this involves considerable work, and he would appreciate any help that local preachers could give. Live streamed services are another option that could be considered.

It was pointed out that even without the pandemic we would still have been in this situation eventually. In the new year there will be a follow up course to help churches decide their future. The Leaders of Worship and Preachers meeting and the CLT and Senior stewards will meet to discuss and report back to the next Circuit Meeting where a further discussion will take place.

10. Governance

10.1 Circuit Review update – Mission Folder / Course in New Year

As Deacon Suzie was not at the meeting it was not possible to give any update on the Mission Folders but Deacon Gill reported that intergenerational services are to be held on the first Sunday of each month, January to March, on Zoom. All generations will be included and there will be breakout rooms for craft, quiet space and discussion.

There will be a course in the New Year to continue the conversation about moving forward. There will not be as many questions to answer but we need to think creatively about what we can do. Publicity will be sent round soon.

10.2 Safeguarding Officer's Report

There was nothing new to report, but Churches were asked to send their signed Safeguarding policies to Rev. Karen. Dates for foundation training on Zoom will be sent out in due course.

11. Finance

11.1 Update on Grant to cover café losses at the Spire & Broadstone

These grants have now been paid. The CFG has not been able to meet but will discuss further Covid Grants to Churches in due course.

12. Property

12.1 Update regarding sale of Wareham Church

The Purbeck Gateway Church had been told that we had accepted the offer of £335,000 from Mr Littlefair, the developer. They immediately responded with an offer of £336,000, but they have yet to put their property on the market. Our surveyors report that they have no parking space and strongly recommend that we stick with the original offer.

The meeting agreed that we should continue progressing the sale with the developer.

12.2 Update on Letting of York Road Manse

Rev. Sue Gowling is still living in the York Road manse but she is hoping to move out on 16th December. She sends her thanks for allowing her to stay there. Once she has moved we can then decide whether to let or sell the property.

13. Any other business

Everyone was feeling the weight of all the work involved with risk assessments and the restrictions placed on worship. There is so much that we are not allowed to do and we need to focus more on what we **can** do. Rev. Tony explained that we are trying to manage Government guidelines that are not made for churches. It was confirmed that if risk assessments need to be amended, it is only necessary to notify Church Councils of the amendments when requesting approval to re-open.

It was suggested that now is the time to get our pastoral care in order for 2021.

There are some good news stories around the Circuit and we need to share them to keep our spirits up.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.45 pm with everyone saying The Grace together.

Date of next meeting

9 th March 2021	Circuit Meeting	7.30pm	TBC
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