

CIRCUIT MEETING MINUTES
4th December 2018
UPTON METHODIST CHURCH

1. **Welcome:** Rev Mark Kimber welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **Opening Devotions** were led by Rev. Nick Wood
3. **Attendance list** was signed by Trustees and membership of the meeting was agreed. Rev. Betto Viana arrived to chair the meeting at this point.
4. **Apologies for absence** were received from Clive Allen, Angela Bartlett, Rev. Tony Cavanagh, Denise Gibbs, Peter Cotgrove, Sue McCormick, Rev. Chris Moreton, Danny Plews, Tina Smith, Suzannah Wood, Brian Tucknott, Ian Underwood and Susan Wright.
5. **Letters of Greeting & Acknowledgement and Items for Prayer**
Prayers for Rev. Chris Moreton, his wife Liz and Rev. Tony Cavanagh and his family had been included in the Opening Devotions. There were no Letters of Greeting and Acknowledgement.
6. **Minutes of the Meeting** held on 11th September were agreed and signed following the addition of a sentence to item 10.2:- 'It was suggested that, going forward, the Poole Bay Circuit auditors be changed as we have used the same firm for many years and it would be prudent to change every 5 years or so.'
7. **Matters Arising**
Sabbatical Dates: Chris Moreton now on compassionate leave, Betto Viana – May, June, July and Nick Wood August, Sept, October.

GDPR: A shortened version of the policy will be sent out to Churches in due course.
8. **News from Churches**
Pete Smith reported that Phase 3 of the Spire project was nearing completion, the builders were expected to finish next week. This was slightly overshadowed by the increased Assessment but they are working on figures at the moment.
Andrew Creamer read a letter from the retiring Centre Manager thanking the team at the Spire and congratulating them on the success of their mission.

David Spracklen reported on a successful community event held at Broadstone, attended by some 200 – 500 people including Radio 4 and people from Frozen. The Christmas lights were switched on by Sue Gowling.

Suzy Viana thanked the Circuit for their support of Sleep Safe which is going on in Bournemouth. She also has a list of all the Christmas lunches taking place in the area for those living alone.

Sue Gowling thanked everyone who had donated money and time to help with the Broadstone community Christmas Day lunch.

9. Governance

9.1 Feedback from Circuit Review

This had been circulated to everyone. It reflected many of the struggles we are all going through. We do not yet know how the future will look but, going forward, Ministers will work as one team across the Circuit. It was hoped to have this system ready for the arrival of the new probationer in September 2019 but, as a result of Chris Moreton's situation, we need to start the team work immediately.

As of now each Church will have two presbyters allocated to their care and a list showing who would be looking after each Church was distributed to Trustees.

Pete Smith commented that a lot of work had been done on operating with fewer presbyters but not so much on how we could deal with the complexities of GDPR, Safeguarding etc. more efficiently. It is difficult to get volunteers to do all this work and we might need to group churches together in the future.

9.2 Dates and times of Circuit Roadshows

The forthcoming Circuit Roadshows will take place on the following dates:-

Tuesday 22nd January 2019, 7.30 pm at Victoria Park

Thursday, 24th January, 7.30 pm at Broadstone

Sunday, 3rd February, 3.30 pm at Wareham

Members of the CLT will be attending and everyone is invited to come to one of these for a conversation about the future.

10. Property

10.1. Reminder to churches regarding Property Schedules

It had been noted that none of the Churches had completed their Property Schedules yet and everyone was reminded that this must be done as soon as possible.

10.2. Proposal to sell Walpole Road property

The Tenants at Walpole Road went into liquidation back in August. The property is now empty and we have had to send two people to inspect it every week to meet the requirements of the insurers. Following a conversation with Bournemouth Council regarding a final demand for council tax, it was noted that if we decide to sell the building now they will charge us Council Tax of £2,300 immediately. However, if we agree to consider selling it at a later time they won't charge us until then. There are no other charities or groups interested in using the building which is not in a good area. Following some discussion it was proposed by Di Baggs and seconded by Sue Gowling that we sell it as soon as possible. This was agreed unanimously.

10.3. Ratify decision to re-let Wimborne Road property until 31 October 2019

Trustees had already agreed by e-mail to re let Wimborne Road to the same tenants and this was ratified at the meeting.

10.4. Ratify decision to re-let Headswell Avenue property until 27 Nov 2019

Trustees had also previously agreed by e-mail to re let Headswell Avenue to the same tenants and this was ratified at the meeting.

10.5. New Tenant for 103 High Street, Swanage

Val Wells proposed new Tenants for 103 High Street on behalf of Swanage. A company called Littlebirds who provide cleaning, gardening and home catering services for domestic, commercial and holiday let clients throughout Purbeck. They have requested a three year lease with an eighteen month break clause and accepted an annual rent of £5,000. Jane seconded the proposal and the Trustees agreed unanimously.

11. Closure of Wareham

A three point proposal was read out and circulated regarding the closure of Wareham Church.

Terry Holloway reported that he had been in conversation with the Baptist Church at Stoborough who would be interested in sharing the church with Wareham. Their congregation is 30, and Wareham's is 20.

Chris Fry responded that this was not initiated by Wareham Church Council. They had never had a joint service with just the Baptists and any discussion should be between the Methodist and Baptist Minister. However, it would be great if the church could still be used as a place of worship.

It was noted that Wool has a Baptist minister in their congregation who often takes services there.

It was pointed out that we should respect Wareham Church Council's decision to close and we needed to move quickly with our decision if it was to happen by July 2019. It was decided to vote on the first two points of the proposal namely:-

1. To close the Society known as Wareham Methodist Church, and
2. To implement the process for the cessation of worship by July 2019.

Thirty two Trustees voted in favour and two against.

It was decided to postpone a vote on the third point, that as a Circuit Meeting we move to close the building, and place it on the property market, until the March 2019 meeting.

12. Life of the Circuit

12.1 Local Preachers' Report

Had been circulated to Trustees and was agreed.

12.2 Chrestos System

This is a new system to produce the Plan which is website based for an annual fee. Each church will receive a link to access it and will be able to enter their special services etc. while Ministers and Local Preachers can enter their availability. The next Plan has had to be amended due to Chris's absence.

13. Finance

13.1 2017/18 Draft Accounts

The draft accounts had been circulated earlier for information. If Trustees have any questions they should e-mail Jane who will respond and then circulate the questions and responses to all. The Accounts will go to audit now and a final set of accounts will be returned by February ready to be circulated and signed off at the March meeting.

13.2 Auditor for 2018/19 Accounts

We have used PKF for a number of years now and their quote for next year is £8,550 so we will take the opportunity of seeking another set of auditors. Our Banks have been instructed not to release any information to PKF beyond the end of the last financial year.

13.3 Fund for Circuit Office Salaries

Each year we budget for Circuit Office salaries and sometimes changes of staff occur resulting in underspending, so it was suggested that we set up a Fund so that money budgeted can roll forward to the next year. This would allow for temporary help to clear any backlog of work. The Fund would be a designated one so we would be able to decide to use it for another purpose should there be too much money in it. The creation of a new Fund was proposed by Jane and seconded by Alison Sclater. The proposal was agreed unanimously with 1 abstention.

13.4 Adopt Policy on Reporting Suspicions of Financial Crime or Abuse

Jane reported that CAF bank have given notice that they will close our account if we do not answer a number of questions relating to how we ensure that we do not become involved in money laundering or subject to bribery. A draft policy dating back to 2016 had been found which she had updated for the meeting to adopt.

David Spracklen asked whether there was a Connexional policy to cover this and Jane said she would check on that.

It was proposed by Jane and seconded by Alison that we adopt the policy as circulated, all agreed.

13.5 Related Parties

Trustees have to prove that they are not related to any parties doing work for the Circuit. Anyone who has received money from the Circuit must complete the appropriate form at the end of the meeting. This includes all Ministers, any Supernumeraries who are related parties i.e. Ric Fellows, Jane Shipton Ashwell, Di Baggs and Mike Glassey all need to sign the form for the auditors.

14. Any other business

14.1 Shoeboxes

Judy Holloway reported that 376 shoeboxes had been sent to Romania as a result of the Churches collections.

Date of next meeting

12th March

Circuit Meeting

7.30pm

Poole