

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Combined PCCs
of St Matthew's Harwell with All Saints' Chilton**
held on Tuesday 6 September 2016 at 7.30 pm in St Matthew's Harwell

Present

(J)Denotes Joint PCC member. There were thus 9 voting members plus the Rector at this meeting - all resolutions refer to Joint PCC votes

Jean Barton	Naomi Gibson (J)*	Alex Reich (J)
Lizi Bowerman	Gordon Gill	Pam Rolls (J)
Helen Brook	Tony Hughes (J)	Frances Taylor
Hazel Connelly	Andrew Keene	Sylvie Thompson
Phil Corbishley	Carina Lobley	Michelle Walker
Sid Gale	Carol Pigott(J)	Christina Wood (J)
Martin Gibson	John Pigott	Jane Woolley (J)
Mel Gibson (J)	Jan Radford (J)	The Rector (J,Chair)

By Invitation: Peter Shields, Children and Families Worker (CFW) Present until item B 2.7.

* Present until item B 2.11 (CAP)

A Preliminaries

A1 Opening & Prayer

The Rector read Psalm 133 through twice, which focuses on unity, and the meeting spent a short time in silent contemplation.

The Rector then led the meeting in prayer

A2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Peter Barclay-Watt, Juan Bowerman, Stuart Gibson, Steve Hale, Hazel King, Liz Morris, and Peter Cox (CPCC Secretary) and Vicky Johnston (Church Administrator).

A3 Minutes of the June 2016 meeting

There were no corrections. The minutes of the CPCC meeting in June 2016 were signed as a correct record.

A4 Actions / Matters arising

Paper B refers – Matters Arising had all been dealt with.

C6 (23) Harvest 2016 and Benefice Barn Dance.

The meeting agreed to take this item at this point in the meeting.

Harvest offerings are usually tinned and dried goods (which go to Didcot Foodbank), monetary gifts (to Tear Fund) and perishable produce. These have always been sold at Harvest events following the Harvest Festival Services in both churches, and the money donated to Tear Fund.

As there will be no Harvest Lunch in Harwell on the Monday, and Chilton will have the Barn Dance the night before the service, the meeting agreed that these perishables should be made available in both churches, following the Sunday services, for people to pop in and help themselves, with donations being left in the wall safes. This money would also go to Tear Fund.

The wall safes would need to be emptied prior to the service by those responsible for them, and the food remaining in church would need to be cleared Wednesday evening.

Publicity would need to be given to these new arrangements via the noticesheets, Broadsheet, and social media.

Tickets for the Harvest Barn Dance were for sale from Alex Reich, Vicky in Church Office, and the Rose and Crown pub in Chilton. 31 of 100 had been sold so far. Event to be on Saturday 1st October in Chilton. Sylvie Thompson would organise the purchase of food, but help was needed cooking, and also setting up the Hall. **Offers of help to Alex and Sylvie please.**

B Mission Strands

B0(5) EU Referendum Campaigning

Paper circulated by Rector refers.

June 23rd saw a National Referendum on our membership of the European Union. Campaigning both to leave, and to remain, had been carried out with a certain level of animosity on both sides. The result, with 52% in favour of Britain leaving the EU, and 48% in favour of remaining, was close enough to cause continuing upset, disquiet, and considerable distress, even within families. Demonstrations are still occurring, even three months after the event, and communities have been polarised.

Peter Shields has always been concerned with the political debate (and has stood for election as an Independent MP in a previous General Election) so, in the run-up to the referendum, Peter asked Jonathan about campaigning on behalf of the "Leave" campaign. Jonathan confirmed that he was free to hold his own political opinion, and to campaign at his own expense as an individual, but could not speak for the church. Peter subsequently produced and distributed flyers advocating a "leave" vote.

It now transpires that a number of people had been offended and hurt by the content of a flyer, and misconstrued this to such an extent that they now believe Peter and his family to be racist or xenophobic. (This belief is also hurtful and offensive to Peter and his family, of course.)

Some families in Chilton were known to have been affected, with a few no longer attending Fledgelings or church. Chilton School are also no longer welcoming Peter to take assemblies, etc., following representation from some parents, although the Head is supportive of Peter, and wishes to maintain strong links with church. It was established that the clergy and two members of CPCC present (those who had contact with the families) had been aware of this situation prior to receiving Jonathan's paper, as had Gordon Gill.

The meeting discussed the situation at length, and points made were

- We are making good progress as churches reaching out into our communities, and opposition is to be expected.
- Peter is in the forefront of this progress, and so most likely to be "targeted".
- Whenever Peter speaks, or goes into a school situation, he experiences criticism.
- Holiday Club (where Peter had a prominent position) was oversubscribed, nevertheless.
- We have freedom of speech
- No-one should be expected to apologise for holding their own personal opinion

Further discussion ensued, concerning broken relationships, and how to heal them.

Jonathan, Pam and Peter had jointly authored the last "Rector's Letter" in the broadsheet, which had been aimed at repairing relationships damaged by the referendum.

The meeting considered the following possibilities

- Asking Peter to offer a public apology for any offence he may have caused, and to point out that he is a Christian, with no racist views
- Making an approach to Chilton School with an apology/acknowledgment.
- Approaching just the individuals concerned
- Whether this situation is simmering over, when it needs to be dealt with, or simmering down, when it should be left alone?
- Should we tread carefully in future, to refrain from sharing our views, when they are not explicitly on Christian topics?

In addition to the proposals, the meeting agreed that it was very important for us to make a more concerted attempt to reach out and to be more inclusive and welcoming of outsiders.

Jonathan said that reconciliation is important to Christians, and Peter was prepared to approach individuals to achieve this.

Peter apologised to the meeting, for the fact that this had caused such problems, and stirred up so many emotions. He didn't want to make a mountain out of a molehill, and is aware of the potential for people to take offence whenever anyone speaks from a platform. In fact, some people have expressed their agreement with his views to Melanie, but felt unable to share them publicly. It was unfortunate that Chilton School Head was caught up in the middle.

Peter was quite prepared to apologise to individuals for causing them to feel hurt, although he could not apologise for holding the views he does.

In order to come to a decision on the way forward, Jean Barton proposed:

We do not make any public apology, but all commit ourselves to pray that anyone adversely affected by the situation is able to be approached for reconciliation to be effected.

Seconded Jane Woolley.

Carried by 21 votes for, 2 against, and 1 abstention.

Tony Hughes also proposed:

This house, while regretting the situation that has arisen, are fully in support of Peter Shields, and Melanie, and their family.

Seconded Carina Loblely

Carried unanimously.

The Rector then prayed, before the meeting continued.

B 1(6) Children, Youth and Families

Peter expanded on the report he had circulated.

The children at both schools had enjoyed and benefitted from Prayer Spaces. Chilton had followed the theme of The Lord's Prayer, but this had to be changed at the very last minute for Harwell.

Peter hoped to invite Sandra North, Chilton Head, to the "Doorsteps Conference", a programme for disadvantaged children.

He drew the meeting's attention to the Bill Wilson event, 7.30 pm Thursday 3rd November at St Matthew's. Bill Wilson is a New Yorker, and it was attending one of his events that caused Peter to become a children's missionary.

Family Fridays is to be a new initiative. (See below)

Gordon Gill pointed out that the 3 children's centres in Didcot are at risk of closure.

B 2(7,8,9) Evangelism and Discipleship (adults)

7.Home Groups

Paper F refers.

Jean Barton summarised that most CPCC members belong to a home group, and she was trying to get members of the wider congregation to join groups.

8. Marriage Courses

These are organised as necessary.

9. Alpha Courses

Jonathan reported that the recent course had been completed by five attendees, who all want to continue, with a Christianity Explored course. Thoughts for the next Alpha Course include an Alpha feMale Course, following the success of the Alpha Male course, and a new one open to all, after Christmas.

B 2(10) Science and Faith

Paper H refers.

Carina had circulated this paper, and expressed her concern that no candidate had been forthcoming for the job of "Science Apprentice". Hopefully December would bring a result. However, the project now had a name "Crossing the Gap" and a logo.

The Family Science events will take place in the "Family Friday" "Fresh Expressions" slots, from 4.30 pm on the last Fridays of the month in Harwell.

A launch party will be held on 24th September.

Carina asked for cake for 24th September, and prayer for speakers, as they all fill their diaries years in advance.

Jonathan expressed his gratitude to Carina, for all the hard work she has done, and is still putting into this project.

B 2 (11,12) CAP (Christians Against Poverty)

11. CAP Money Courses

Carol reported that the next course was set to start at the end of October "Christmas on the Cards?" Lizi informed the meeting that a delegate on the last course had spoken to her very enthusiastically, about how much she had appreciated it.

12. CAP Centre

Jonathan said that Didcot churches were favourable, but waiting on budgets to be drawn up before being able to continue. Our October PCCs would need to consider budgeting for a CAP Debt Centre in Didcot.

B 3 (13) Pastoral Care

Pam reported that both teams were working well on the ground, and wished to thank Jan especially for her work in the hospitals. 8 parishioners received Holy Communion at home. More than 50 parishioners had attended the last Generation Gold service, which had been a celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's 90th birthday. The next service would be on the theme of "Hospitality", with food!

Pam continued to maintain links with AgeUK, and also met with the chaplaincy team at the JR hospital.

The Rector reminded the meeting, that if we became aware of any pastoral issues, we should refer them to the Pastoral team or the clergy.

B 4 (14) World Mission

Helen reported that the Sharlands, our CMS mission partners, had visited recently, and joined in the church walk. Chris Perkins had sent an up-date on the 2 pastors imprisoned in Sudan. They are still awaiting trial, and in danger of receiving the death penalty, but had been able to see their families recently. Christian Solidarity Worldwide is campaigning on their behalf.

The Missions Committee would be meeting to discuss the Missions Budget in a couple of weeks.

B 5 (15) Worship Services (Fresh expression)

Jonathan reported that "Family Fridays" would be our exploration of "Fresh Expressions" of church.

These would be 'works-in-progress' initially (i.e. not notified outside church), starting this Friday, 9th September, aiming for a launch after half-term. Starting at 4.30 pm, in Harwell Church Hall, the first half would be family-centred, followed by a food break, then a more adult-orientated second half.

("Crossing the Gap", our Science and Faith project, would happen on the last Fridays of the months)

Following a question from Martin Gibson on the similarity between Fresh Expressions and the Brunstad Christian Church, at this point there followed a short discussion on:

C 5 (22) Brunstad Christian Church

Paper G refers.

Gordon had presented this paper, having bumped into a lady from this fellowship recently, and been impressed by the way she talked openly about her Christian faith, for three hours! Investigating further, he found that they were a large community, on our doorstep, with worship containing vibrant music and in-depth bible teaching. It is a café-style church, originating in Norway.

Some present wondered if there was a connection with the Didcot House Church.

Jonathan was surprised that he had not heard of them since moving here, especially as they have bought premises on Milton Hill for their church. He would ask around his fellow ministers in Didcot for further information.

C Facilitation and Partnership

C 1 (16) Communications and Operations

Paper D refers.

Vicky had supplied Paper D on this, and Jonathan wished to thank her, in her absence. She does a remarkable amount of work, plus the individual studies she has committed herself to do on her Church Administrator's Course with St John's College, Nottingham.

C 2 (17) Stewardship and Finances

This is a standing item, with nothing to report.

C 3 (18) Safeguarding

Paper C refers.

Heather House had been very busy with the DBS checks needed for the Holiday Club, but Judy Gold (Chilton) now has her authorisation and is assisting.

C 4 (19) Staffing and Leadership

Jonathan had nothing to report, apart from the fact that we had not been able to recruit a Science Apprentice as yet. Phil Corbishley would share some ideas on advertising the vacancy with him.

C 5 The Wider Church

20. Great Western Park

Jonathan reported that Mark Bodeker was still in post, and applications were in for 7 years more funding for his position. Jonathan was in discussion with Mark, and the other Didcot churches, regarding the sustainability of the church in GWP in the long term.

21. Deanery Synod and Parish Share

Jonathan and Gordon spoke on this.

The next Deanery Synod would be soon, and we would be asking to have our Share frozen. This was not likely to be possible. The Deanery would like us to pay more, because an 'increase holiday' had been offered on the basis of a 4% cap in the Deanery Allocation, but reduced fees from the Deanery have resulted in an effective rise of 5%. The Deanery may need to under-pay as a whole, in which case the Deanery would not receive any rebate.

C 6 Any Other Business

24. Songs of Praise – Future Service

Jonathan would welcome any ideas; for the agenda next time.

25. Meetings dates for Next year

Paper E refers.

Jane Woolley proposed the PCC dates as set out in her paper.

Carol Pigott seconded,

Carried unanimously

There being no other business, the Rector closed the meeting with the Lord's prayer, at 10.00 pm.

Next meetings:

Individual PCCs Tuesday 4th October, 7.30 pm at St Matthew's Harwell
Combined PCC Tuesday 1st November, 7.30 pm at All Saints' Chilton

..... (Chairman)

Carol Pigott
(Acting Secretary)