

## West Swindon & the Lydiards Ecumenical Partnership

### Meeting of ECC on 13 November 2007 at St Mary's Church Stable Room

<b>Present:</b>			
Chair:	Chris Scarisbrick	St Mary's:	Lesley Franklin
Treasurer:	Dick Gray		
Secretary:	Ed Poole		
Ecumenical Team Leader	Stephen Skinner		
All Saints:	Eileen Sawyer John Halstead David Tapscott	Toothill:	Mark Dowling Rachel Dowling
Holy Trinity:	Jane Skinner	Westlea:	Peter Gilder Steve Pearce
Staff	Jan Partridge		
In attendance:	Claire Beaton (Minutes)		
<b>Apologies:</b>	David Ratnam, Angela Mak, Tudor Roberts		
<b>Not Present:</b>	Debbi Fleet, Pat Watson,		

#### 1. Welcome, Opening Prayers

Opening Prayer was followed by a reading from 1 Peter Chapter 4 verses 7 – 11.

Council formally welcomed Revd Tudor Roberts and his family to the Partnership and extended thanks for his ministry so far.

#### 2. Partnership Goals for 2007

Prayer Goal: Partnership Preaching theme, feedback from worship teams, Retreat day, linking prayer chains (Staff team).

- Progress report from Janet Gray.

Janet Gray had sent a written report, read by Dick Gray. Janet apologised for not being able to attend. 16 had attended the Prayer Day and all feedback received so far had been positive. She felt that the prayer chains in the different churches should not be linked together. There were thought to be some concerns about confidentiality. This was noted but a wish was expressed that when there were items for prayer that did not relate to church members these could be prayed for through all chains. It was also felt that 'In Partnership' could include some items for prayer throughout the Partnership. There was a request that answers to prayer be published too. **(DG)**

The Lent course is being organised on the basis noted in the minutes of the last meeting. Since the AGM and Ash Wednesday would interrupt the series of 6 meetings, Janet proposed arranging meetings for Thursdays. This was agreed.

The idea of a preaching theme would be referred to the Wider Staff team, meeting later this week. **(WS team)**

Ministerial team Goal:

- To review the Induction programmes (SS)

The induction programme with Tudor is proceeding to plan. The report he has sent to ECC confirms he feels he is settling in well. Ed Poole asked for the opportunity to review the generic plan before Anne Carter's induction. He asked if there had been any input from Toothill or Holy Trinity, Shaw. **(SS)**

Dick Gray asked ECC to convey their thanks to Sue Green, Rebecca Kershaw and Ivan Gilmore for the work they had put into decorating the manse. This was wholeheartedly endorsed.

- Fellowship Goal: social events in 2008

It was confirmed that the first partnership social event, the Bunko Night, was being arranged with details as shown on the poster and not as printed on the programme card. The remaining programme was reviewed, highlighting several gaps in planning. ECC representatives were asked to contact the Administrator with more details, when available. The meeting was reminded that the original vision for this goal was for a mix of events, including 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday services, social events and training opportunities. Churches were asked to consider what events they would like to organise for next year. **(All)**

### **3. To discuss an outline budget for 2008. (DG)**

Review of proposed budget in light of parish share required by Bristol Diocese.

The treasurer did not have a revised budget to propose. He had talked to all the church treasurers.

St Mary's have pledged £37k and HTS £18k. John Halstead, as treasurer of All Saints, reported that the All Saints leadership team had agreed to pledge £52k, a 10% increase on last year's giving. This was subject to an agreed formula being adopted for future years that would 'take into account the total contribution of each church to the partnership, not just to the general funds'; membership and attendance and a weighting given to the income survey. This pledge would leave All Saints with a negative budget for 2008.

The treasurer's first response was that it would be useful to have an agreed formula but it would need to be reviewed regularly to keep it up to date. There would be an annual income survey, essential to avoid Anglican penalties. It would need each church to have a 'fixer' to ensure that the maximum number of surveys was completed.

ECC members were concerned that the Anglican parish share had the highest rate of increase required of any parish in the diocese. Without the cap it would have been 16%. It felt like a penalty for not losing too many church members. They were reminded that the share was not a tax but the diocese's best effort at an equitable distribution of the actual costs of running the diocese. The total number of clergy was being reduced and administration cut wherever possible. Could a letter be drafted, to the Diocesan Board of Finance? It should explain the impact of the increased share on the partnership finances and how the sacrifices being made this year to satisfy it would be financially impossible in later years. It would be imprudent to keep less than 3-6mths value of outgoings as reserves. Stephen Skinner agreed to send something similar to the Area Dean, for representation at Diocesan Synod, to be drafted by himself and Ed Poole. **(SS/ EP/ Stand Cttee)**

Report on Stewardship Programmes at local churches. (ECC Reps)

A brief update was given of the status of the Stewardship Programme. At St Mary's most of the pledge forms are for the same amount. All Saints will be sending out letters this Sunday. Standing Committee will discuss how to focus the request for increased giving. At Toothill, no action will be taken until after Anne Carter's induction. A request for an increase in pledge will be sent from HTS shortly. Westlea members will be meeting this weekend and will be asked to review their pledges at that meeting.

### **4. To agree the revised 'Safe to Grow' Policy and Procedures (documents on Web site)**

ECC reviewed the changes proposed to the Safe to Grow policy. Page 7 was amended so that strangers are never allowed to be alone with children.

ECC were concerned by the onerous responsibilities the policy spelled out for the churches in terms of the recruitment of volunteers and the new section on transport. ECC affirmed their support for the policy and formally adopted it. They would require the individual churches to implement it. **(ECC reps)**

The church committees would be asked how they would implement the policy, in particular the implications of page 10. Implementation may need to be phased in. Progress in doing this should be reported in the churches' annual reports, to demonstrate compliance, for consolidation in the Partnership report. **(All)**

ECC extended their thanks to Jane Skinner and Rebecca Kershaw for their work in preparing it.

### **5. To consider the Partnership plans for Growth in 2008 (EP)**

Ed Poole reviewed some work he had completed for the Standing Committee based on the Bristol Diocese Growth Model. Together with the material to be expected in the Growth Workshops being held in Toothill church at the end of November this might help the Partnership develop some strategy and goals for 2008. It was hoped that all churches in the Partnership would wish to develop goals within this

framework. It was noted that URC requirements were more tightly defined than the Anglican. (**Stand Cttee**)

**6. To ratify the decisions at Standing Committee about a partnership with nCounter: 'Emerge' strategy. (CS)**

ECC were asked to review the four points contained in the Standing Committee minutes of 10 October. These were approved. Chris Scarisbrick gave a brief overview of the 'emerge' strategy and the progress with the questionnaires. He has also held various discussions with Brian Senior about the composition of a Steering Group, to draft a formal agreement. He had agreed it could be formed of five people; Brian Senior, Claire Camm, Jane Skinner, Julie Scarisbrick and Jane Haslam. There would be a further management group organised by Claire Camm which would control the day to day progress of the project.

Dick Gray was unhappy about the composition of the Steering Group. The paper presented to the standing Committee had specified the composition of the Steering Group and Standing Committee had agreed their propositions on the basis the group included the Partnership Treasurer. Stephen Skinner took the chair for the remainder of this item to allow Chris Scarisbrick to contribute. Debate ensued.

After reiteration of various points, ECC agreed that they ratified the propositions as drafted by standing Committee and noted in the minutes and that that included the composition of the Steering Group as contained in the paper before the committee. Chris Scarisbrick was to return to Brian Senior and present the view of ECC that the Steering Group should include Dick Gray to protect Partnership financial interests.

To note timescales for the development of a full proposal.

Chris Scarisbrick would try to arrange that a Steering Group would meet within the next 14 days.

**7. Team Leader's report. Business at Deanery and Diocesan Synod.**

Deanery synod have received: a presentation on the diocesan budget, news that Pinehurst mission zone have employed a Christian youth worker and taken part in a tour of the food bank. In October there had been a presentation on the opportunities for churches within the Schools Extended Services programme. The deanery were also offering £500 grants to assist churches with their growth plans.

Diocesan synod in July received a presentation on the budget and 'contextual' training.

There has been an interesting meeting of Swindon Churches Together. Copies of the minutes from 2 October 2007 were circulated. There had been a process of re-visioning, of finding ways to make the group more relevant to church members. There was a proposal that a levy of £1 per member be introduced, with various proposals for its use.

**8. Partnership Secretary's report (attached)**

The secretary spoke to the various parts of his report. The end is in sight on the process for the agreement of a new constitution by the sponsoring bodies. [Churches Together in England have agreed to meet the Constitution Group to review this on 14 December 2007.] Standing Orders will be worked on next. He asked for questions on his report.

**9. To approve Minutes 12 September 2007.**

The minutes of 12 September 2007 were approved. The minutes of the extraordinary meeting 5 August were read and approved.

To note minutes from Standing Committee meeting 10 October 2007

The minutes of 10 October 2007 were approved. Attention was drawn to the additional church representatives who had joined the group.

**10. Matters arising**

'Signs of Healthy Churches' (SS/DG)

This item will be held over for the January agenda.

**11. Planning for 2008 AGM (EP)**

The secretary will reissue his paper from last year drawing attention to the headings required by SORP 7 regulations to be in the annual reports.

**12. Closing prayers**

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm