

Partnership Council Meeting
Wednesday 1st October, 8:00pm (7:30 for prayer)
at Toothill Church
Minutes

Present:

Westlea	Peter Gilder Chris Scarisbrick (Chair)	Holy Trinity	John Ridsdale (Notes) Jane Skinner
Toothill	Anne Carter	All Saints L.M.	Tudor Roberts
St Marys L.T.	Lesley Franklin Stephen Skinner	Deanery Synod	Mary Poole
Guest	Rob Burles (Anglican Area Dean)		
Apologies	Mark Dowling Dick Gray John Halstead Angela Mak David Ratnam Julie Scarisbrick	Not Present	

1. Opening prayers

Chris S; (3 John) Walk In the truth

2. Welcome, Apologies, Adopt Agenda

3. Deanery strategy presentation, discussion,

Deanery Strategy 2010-2015, notes from Area Dean's discussion with
West Swindon & the Lydiards ECC, 1st October 2008

Rob presented a few of the factors that lead him to believe that we need a 'strategy' for the Deanery:

1. Diocesan & Deanery strategies, 2004-2010:
 - starting point was stipendiary clergy reductions & possible closure of churches
 - staffing decisions made from outside Deanery left the Deanery largely unchanged & in many ways we're still 'covering gaps'
2. Diocesan strategy 2010-2015:
 - under discussion at the moment
 - starting point is the 'growth programme'
 - enhanced role proposed for Deaneries; in deployment, finance, & directing of central resources towards growth at a local level
3. Potential Diocesan financial situation:
 - appears to be a growing gap between day-to-day income & expenditure
4. Current Deanery situation:
 - parishes differ considerably in their ability to raise leaders, respond to new challenges, cope with increasing demands wrt policies & practices, etc

- feeling that energy is being sapped
- 45 people on the 'growing leaders' course
- paid 100% of parish share in last few years

Rob explained that the 'process' being followed includes visits to PCC's & discussion of issues (*incl. those arising from PCC's*) by a small group, in order to make proposals to Chapter & Synod

Two questions were then asked (*with the answers as written by PCC members*):

1. What could the Deanery do to help us achieve our plans for growth?

Provide examples of things that work in other churches that can be shared (cross-fertilisation of ideas)

Offer / share skill sets, skilled people, planning resources

Financial & other support for building projects

All people who want to help already really busy, how do we work on projects which will work?

Recognising we have 4 denominations to work with – liaison role?

Share good ideas

Share successes

Having list of people with key gifts, eg: facilitators, trainers, missionaries, worship experts

Support / train team of deanery evangelists

Have detailed consultancy on church's growth plans

More support & involvement for Swindon Churches Together, eg: communication, community involvement

Telling stories that inspire

Creative ideas, fresh expressions, deanery initiative, eg: café church

Provide practical training

Share in prayer

Support for events (publicity)

Direction

List of things we are happy to share, eg: crockery for events, large equipment

We have able people who are 'time poor', could there be a mechanism by which we discover how to be a resource & be resourced by those who are 'time rich' but less able / skilled, etc.

Deanery offer youth committee to support youth outreach

Positive support – 'partnership for missional church'

Dialogue with other groups who have already tried / in process of a particular 'growth' issue

I want to change the question – maybe we should be thinking about giving, rather than receiving help

2. What could West Swindon & the Lydiards offer to assist other parishes in the Deanery achieve their plans for growth?

Partnership working, eg: each other, schools, n:counter

Share success & failures & lessons learned

Share some good people – skills, time?

Experience of youth work alongside n:counter

Experience of working 5 churches together, multi denominational

By helping churches think through how a growth plan is worked out & then how it is owned by the whole church

The sharing of ideas that work, being sensitive to how this varies geographically

Inviting others in to observe & gain experience from our outreach events, etc, eg: the way community café grow their staff

Buy in to Swindon-wide & other events

Share skills that are in the partnership (need to release people to help @ deanery level)

Sharing & coming together with groups in specific areas, eg: parent & toddler outreach, messy church, involving older people
Mentoring
Inviting others to join in our training, eg: John Hardwick in November
Resources can be lent, not necessarily financial – venues, marquees, equipment, computer skills, contacts
Huge use of teams of different sorts for ministry
Production & delivery of annual goals for churches & partnerships
Experience of working ecumenically closely for a long time
Rich diversity of worship (incl youth worship, messy church – coming!)
Make events / training viable by inviting others to join in
Similar problems – financial, building, share experiences / advice

A numbers of other points were made, incl. the ecumenical dimension of WS&L.

Rob thanked the PCC members for their engagement with this process, and said that he thought any 'strategy' would need to have two strands:

1. a structure & framework for the Deanery & it's decision-making, bearing in mind that it is likely that difficult decisions will have to be made in the future
2. focus areas for the Deanery in assisting / supporting / encouraging / facilitating mission & growth at local levels and across the town

Rob made the point that any further thoughts would be welcome.

His contact details are: tel: 01793 611473 email: rob@burles.org.uk

Rob Burles
Area Dean of Swindon
2nd October 2008

4. To Approve Minutes of ECC 23 July 2008

Item 9, slow progress S Skinner to report.

Look at archiving documents for up to 50 years (trying to obtain a copy of the Questionnaire.

(Action Pete Gilder, Julie Scarisbrick to share a copy of the questionnaire from Ecclesiastical Ins)

With already notified errors of fact amended, Minutes Approved.

5. To accept

a. Notes of meeting from Standing Committee 6 Aug 2008

It was held on the 6th (notes say 4th)

Westlea to hold its meeting to discuss Standing Orders on 20 Jan, other churches already arranged.

Oct dance night at St Marys plus other events see websites,

Messy Church meeting going ahead.

Notes Accepted

b. Notes of meeting from Standing Committee 17 Sept 2008

Meet with remix every 2 months.

5th Sunday, can we try an evening service? No objections, but Action Staff Team for further discussion.

6. Matters arising

a. Financial issues.

We are all behind in our quotas please can churches spread their quota giving more evenly?
(Action Reps and Treasurers)

b. Celebrate our new Vision Declaration – Joint Service 29 Mar 2009 – Organising team?

Covenant service proposed based at Oliver Tomkins. Questions about venue, maybe Shaw ?

Who should organise (Action Stephen Skinner, Pete Gilder, Lesley Franklin)
Ideas comments to the group. Clocks change?? Start with Coffee?

7. To review and approve Safe to Grow amended policy, Sept 2008

Please review and correspond via email via Chris S. (by mid next week, 8th Oct)

We see no reason not to approve the updated document once the corrections are made.

8. To receive Letter from URC Synod Pastoral Advisor

J Gray would like to come and meet the church committees please pass on dates.

D Gray ministry is up for review, meeting 23 Oct. any comment or opinions to Pete Gilder.

9. Date of next meeting 26 Nov (social)

a. **Venue** : Village Inn

10. Close