

**West Swindon and the Lydiards Church Partnership**  
**Partnership Council Meeting**  
**on Monday 20 May 2013 at 7:30pm (prayer) 8:00 pm (agenda)**  
**at Holy Trinity Church, Shaw**

**Attendees**

|                                |                   |                      |                    |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Pete Gilder                    | Janet Clarke      | Gill Ganley          | Rev Clive Deverell | Mark Dowling      |
| Rev Dick Gray (chair)          | Sue Green (treas) | Rev Tudor Roberts    | Jaqueline Kirwan   | Rev Jan Partridge |
| Julie Scarisbrick              | Steve Kershaw     | Jill Winson          | Tish Vass          |                   |
| Chris Scarisbrick (sec, notes) |                   | David Tapscott (obs) | Mike Watson        |                   |
|                                |                   |                      | Pat Watson         |                   |

**Apologies for absence**

Mary Poole, Brenda Hicks (admin)

Missing presumed absent - Gerry Hambridge, Nicola Hoar

**Opening Worship**

Dick read from John 17: 6-19 We are disciples living in the world, but seeking to change it.

**1. Welcome**

Dick welcomed the revised team, and especially Jaqueline, and welcomed back Steve.

**2. Good news.**

Westlea: some new people coming regularly, a couple of new members. One of our regular visitors came to the joint service, which was a big deal for him. One of our three big donations went to emerge...and it turned out to be just at the right time.

Toothill: business as usual. Many people interested in starting up groups, craft, toddler group mums bible study, leading worship. Jan ran the Ascension service at OT – this was fun

ST Marys: have some new members. Lots of baptisms lined up and the usual crop of weddings, but more and more people connected with the congregation.

HT Shaw: Brookfield school came to view the building, and the baptistry. Many interesting questions were prompted. Repair work and cleaning up after the break-in provided an opportunity to involve the wider church family.

All Saints LM: 24 hour prayer session was filled, every slot. Lots of praying, and many had a very enjoyable experience. Some children from the school came into church to look at symbols of Christianity. At the monthly church coffee meeting, Nigel brought many old photos of the village and community

**3. Elections****3a. Chair:**

Chris Proposed Mark Dowling. There were no objections. Mark was elected unanimously.

Mark took the chair.

Mark promised never to deviate from the agenda again (!), but stated we will be subject to differences of opinion and maybe bitter disagreement. What sets us apart is how we deal with our issues.

We read out together Section D5 “The Mission We Share”, from our vision statement ([http://wswinlyd.org.uk/council/constitution/c11\\_d05mission.html](http://wswinlyd.org.uk/council/constitution/c11_d05mission.html))

Because the unity of God’s People was at the centre of Jesus’ passion, we wish to work and pray towards achieving this unity in partnership too. This spirit of unity is a gift from God that we intend to celebrate in worship and fellowship, to the glory of God. But above all, we desire that this unity will enable more effective Mission amongst the people of West Swindon and The Lydiards.

We pray that God’s Spirit will pour out upon us this spirit of love and unity, and empower us as we strive to make it visible to all. We will seek not only the best interests of all of the five partnership churches, but also try to build God’s Kingdom in a selfless manner with the other churches of our district. We commit ourselves to all play our part in this mission, as equal members of the ‘priesthood of all believers’.

We affirm, together with Churches Together in England, that our understanding of the practical outworking of our shared Mission is

- to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom;
- to teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
- to respond to human need by loving service;
- to seek to transform unjust structures of society; and
- to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

### **3b. Secretary:**

Chris was willing to stand. There being no other candidates and no objections, Chris was duly elected

### **3c. Vice-Chair:**

Pete Gilder was not willing to stand. But will continue to consider it. No other candidates. Post vacant

### **3d. Vote of Thanks to Treasurer** elected at AGM:

We thanked Sue for her work, and for being willing to serve again.

## **4. Work of PC, PCC, co-options**

Chris briefed the new committee with reminders about our regulatory responsibilities, the relationship between PC and PCC, decision making and our sub committees.

### **Regulatory environment**

Partnership council is the main decision making body for the partnership. As far as civil law goes we are the only decision making body for the partnership. The members of the Partnership Council are jointly responsible for almost all regulated activities. We are responsible for the money, we are responsible for our employees, we are responsible for health and safety, we are responsible for child protection etc. PC provides the trustees of the charity.

The partnering denominations vary in how they see us and struggle to understand the organisation.

### **PC and PCC**

The Parochial Church Council is the decision making body of the Anglican Parish. Some Anglican appointments are ex-officio represented on the PCC eg: Synod reps and churchwardens. In most cases our local church meetings nominate such people for their own local purposes, they also have a de-facto cross-partnership role. In some cases the local churches also nominate those people to be Partnership Council reps, but not always. If they are not also specifically nominated we are in the habit of asking the PCC reps to serve on Partnership Council. We co-opt them accordingly. If they are willing to serve then the two bodies PC and PCC become to all intents and purposes coincident. This is a good thing as then we don't ever have to split meetings to meet as a PCC for Anglican only business, which would be considered rude.

Chris proposed we co-opt the ex-officio members of Parochial Church Council (Jaqueline Kirwan and Mary Poole) onto Partnership council along with honourable mentions of those who were nominated by their church committees as Anglican post holders and also members of Partnership Council (Gill Winson and Pat Watson).

With those clarifications and caveats, there were no objections and all are co-opted.

We also specifically mentioned David Burch who is churchwarden and ex-officio part of PCC, but not willing to serve on Partnership Council.

### **Decision making**

We are in the habit of trying to make decisions unanimously. If it's not agreed by us all, its difficult to see how it can be agreed AT ALL. That's why we don't really propose and second motions and vote on our decisions. If you don't agree with something, or you're unconvinced, take every opportunity to say so.

### **Sub Committees**

We have sub committees.

Much of the work of the entire partnership is best done locally through local church communities: mission, worship, discipleship, buildings would be examples. That's why we formally (if not overtly) delegate much activity and authority to local church committees leadership teams and church meetings. The local churches have subtly different traditions of church governance, depending on the relative strengths of denominational traditions. This is splendid and complex.

The Appropriate Authority for each Participating Church is:

- a) The leadership team of All Saints Lydiard Millicent;
- b) The leadership team of St Mary's Lydiard Tregoze;
- c) The members' meeting of Holy Trinity Shaw;
- d) The church committee of Toothill Church; and
- e) The members' meeting of Westlea Church

(from our Constitution, Schedule 3-5 Participating Churches

[http://wswinlyd.org.uk/council/constitution/c11\\_s03participating.html](http://wswinlyd.org.uk/council/constitution/c11_s03participating.html) )

When it comes to denominational and legal business we tend to act as a partnership through this body.

We usually form a Standing Committee, a sort of cabinet that progresses and manages business between PC meetings and prepares agenda items for Partnership Council.

Our clergy occasionally meet as a staff team

Emerge is run by a management group, who are effectively a subcommittee of PC. Julie meets regularly with Claire to perform this oversight role. Clive is also involved and acts as immediate line manager.

The Partnership Office could be considered a delegated activity of the PC.

All Saints People Puppets asked to be a Partnership based group, and so we could consider them to be a subcommittee.

During Staffing transitions we form a Staffing Consultative Group to define ministry roles, arrange denominational recruitment procedures and recommend candidates. With our current changes (2012/2013) having the form of radical review, the entire Partnership Council has been effectively acting as the Staffing Consultative group. We have a proposal before us to change that to a proper focussed sub-committee.

## **5. Minutes and Reports**

### **5a. Minutes of PC 21 Jan 2013**

Read and received as a true record.

### **5b. Draft minutes of AGM 28 Apr 2013**

The draft of minutes from our AGM was examined. Chris pointed out the yellow parts for correction. Sue agreed the financial summary should be inserted as shown in the slides at the meeting. **Action Chris**

Tudor clarified the quiz subject matter and suggested we add that we listed the values of the partnership. This was enthusiastically supported. **Action Chris**

The minutes were accepted given those changes.

Matter arising - We missed out on appointing Vulnerable Adults coordinator at AGM

Our existing Vulnerable Adults Coordinator Julie was willing to stand, and there being no objections, she was elected.

### **5c. Notes from Standing Committee 11 Mar 2013**

The error in the agenda was pointed out. Chris apologised. The notes are correct, it was the 11<sup>th</sup>

Accepted and noted

### **5d. Report of All Saints Peoples Puppets 2012**

AGM minutes were noted. Tudor informed us that external gigs are increasing. The group meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays.

### **5e Matters arising and other reports not on agenda already**

Bible Track theology course is now finished. A representative from St Pauls Theological college - Mrs June Williams is coming to give out prizes Wed June 26<sup>th</sup> 7:30 at LM School

Foundation governor at All Saints LM: Mrs Sharon Bentley Thomas. (re)-appointed with no objections

LM churchyard was closed for burials in 20<sup>th</sup> C. Even scattering of ashes is not allowed. We have had a request from the family of Beryl Cole who served as churchwarden to All Saints LM. The Archdeacon has agreed, as a special dispensation, that we can bury the ashes in a wild part of the churchyard, not planned for development. There will be no memorial stone. We will enter

the name in the book or remembrance. We believe the family will be happy with this arrangement. This will not set any precedent.

14 children went through the communion before confirmation course at All Saints, and have been taking communion. Noted. Details circulated to Partnership Council by email.

## 6. Committees

### 6a. Standing Committee

Recognising the nominations from some churches, and the desire for wide representation but a small number, Sue Green, Mark Dowling, Tudor Roberts, Tish Vass, Chris Scarisbrick were appointed.

### 6b. Staffing Consultative.

Clive suggested a group gets together to start the process of looking at what the churches with no full time pastoral cover, need. There were concerns about how far the group could get in analysis of needs and roles, before the review reports. It is possible that to save time some considerations could be on parallel tracks. Is bringing in more clergy a solution? The churches in interregnum have a certain menu of measures in place. These need monitoring,

It is clear that we could consider what ministry is actually required, in the near term, and long term. It will probably also be necessary to seek repentance and healing.

Instead of setting up another group, it was agreed that the PC should meet specifically on this issue. Each church should express their vision and their expectations of pastoral oversight (though this may take a little time to settle the existing arrangements)

We MUST be careful not to second guess the review process. **Action Chris** to find out from Simon Topping what dates will happen.

We set aside some slots for Partnership Council to meet on this issue alone. As soon as feasible.

- 24 June 7:30 venue TBA,
- 25 July 7:30 venue TBA.
- Expectation of an August meeting if needed

Information subsequent to meeting:

Simon Topping requests - The review team would like to receive and comments/reflections from church members relating to the present life and future development of the partnership. Such comments should be sent to him by Mon 10 June at [simontopping@ccisr.org.uk](mailto:simontopping@ccisr.org.uk), or at

ISR – Churches for Work and Social Justice  
162 Pennywell Road  
Easton  
Bristol BS5 0TX

This request was sent to PC list and secretaries with the intention of Sunday notices and notice sheets.

We are also attempting to arrange a “big cross-partnership” members meeting for a Saturday morning at the end of June of the beginning of July, for feedback from the reviewers. **Watch this space**

### 6c. Methodist perspective on the future

Dick has tentatively approached the Methodist senior steward and circuit superintendant. They said a half-time post would be tricky if you want a presbyter (minister). A deacon might be available. A Deacon is more of a community pastoral worker and would not be able to preside at communion. Further information is available on Methodist order of Deacons. **Action Dick** to provide a link, which is <http://methodistdiaconalorder.org.uk>

If we decide to go with a Methodist Deacon, and if it's a new role, the District will put in £5000 p.a. for 5 years.

There is still the communion issue. Perhaps some of us may have to rely on the somewhat more accommodating Baptist model, an option that is not available to our (other) denominationally recognised folk.

Pete Gilder notified the meeting that Westlea have changed communion to 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in month. It doesn't solve the problem of the shortage of clergy to preside, but spreads it out a bit.

We might investigate some of our lay ministers and local preachers getting special dispensation for presiding at communion. **Action Mark**

## **7. Charity Issues**

### **7a. Trustees for 2013**

Chris pointed out the few folks who ought to be trustees and have not yet given him their details (for identity checks by the Charity Commission). Please consider the CC publication "The Essential Trustee" and let Chris have your information as soon as convenient.

### **7b. 2012 report to Charity Commission**

The report and audited accounts are duly uploaded, but not published yet as it is convenient to update the finalised list of trustees for 2013, as the 2012 report is completed.

## **8. Finance**

### **8a. Letters from Bishop Mike**

The two letters from Bishop Mike, one noting our shortfall on our pledge in 2012, one thanking us for our pledge for 2013, were noted.

### **8b. Financial status report**

Sue presented a financial summary. All as expected and no concerns.

SMLT payments are now up to date

There was a question on the insurance policy the partnership has. Sue will investigate the extent and conditions of trustee cover. It is clear we should not break the law!

## **9. All Saints Memorial Bond**

All Saints have a memorial bond. It is now worth so little that it costs more to administer than to keep. We unanimously decided to sell the bond.

## **10. Chancel Repair**

Chris explained what chancel repair liability was, and referred to [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chancel\\_repair\\_liability](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chancel_repair_liability). We have a legal obligation and public duty to maximise the use of our assets, which might include repair obligations on others. There is a timescale for registering charges against property at the land registry. If this is not done by 13 Oct 2013, the "over-riding interest" claim of chancel repair no longer exists.

Chris explained that Tina Wheeler (and Andrew Bourne) have done extensive work tracing the documents relating to tithes and rent charges relating to All Saints Lydiard Millicent. It appears all tithes affecting lands were in control of the rector until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, when the rent-charges that replaced the tithes were extinguished by bonds issued to the Diocesan Board of Finance. The total amounts tallied so the upshot is we can be fairly certain there are no outstanding chancel repair assets that we can claim for ASLM.

Tina's list of actions and history of relevant issues was circulated, along with copies of the 6 August 1979 letter from Church Commissioners that explains the extinguishing of the tithe rent-charges relating to ASLM and SMLT.

By general acclamation, the meeting gave a vote of thanks to Tina and Andrew and those who helped.

The following prepared resolution was handed out and discussed.

Following extensive investigations and consultation with the Diocesan Registrar by the Leadership Team of All Saints Church Lydiard Millicent:

No 'lay' person has ever been paid tithes for All Saints glebe land and there has been no reduction to the tithe-able area as a result of an Enclosure award.

All the investigations have led us to believe that all tithes were collected only by the incumbent therefore no Chancel Repair Liability is unaccounted.

We understand CRL would have been passed to the PCC (as trustees of diocesan trust property acting on behalf of the Diocesan Board of Finance and the Church Commissioners) by

- the Dilapidations Measure act 1923,
- the Repair of Benefice Buildings measure 1972, and
- the Endowments and Glebe Measure 1976.

The results of these investigations have been inspected by PCC and are on file

The Diocesan Registrar believes they are sufficient for the purpose of charity law to satisfy the PCC that All Saints Church does not have the benefit of Chancel Repair liability.

The Partnership Council of West Swindon and the Lydiards Church Partnership (acting in its capacity as Parochial Church Council of the Benefice and Parish of West Swindon and the Lydiards) hereby resolves

**All Saints Lydiard Millicent does not have the benefit of Chancel Repair Liability.**

This is not necessarily the case for St Marys. The 1979 letter also indicates there are no outstanding land-based rent-charges arising from tithes. However the Sir John St John's Trust (a charity registered in 1645) still has an annual income of £250 from Swindon Borough Council and has the express duty to inspect, repair and maintain the monuments in the chapel and chancel of St Marys and the family tomb of the St John family.

It is possible that we should register this interest in Lydiard House. It is more likely the Sir John St John's Trust will have to. It is possible we may not be able to (if it turns out to be more of a good-will payment) Historical papers are being investigated **Action Clive and Chris.**

Legal advice may need to be taken. Chris asked for permission to spend some small amounts, if necessary:

- Legal advice £200,
- Archive searches and copying £80,
- a small amount of archive materials for storage of paperwork (less than £100)

These possible expenses were approved.

It is possible we may take copies and lodge the historical papers with the county archive, so they are available to the public.

## **11. Reports**

### **11a. Child Protection**

We have the advantage of all of our denominations backing us up, lots of training opportunities and often many copies of similar information forwarded to us. We are in the process of rolling out the new DBS (Direct Barring Service) procedures that replace the CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checks. Essentially there are two procedures available.

- The Anglican route through the Bristol Diocese, via identity checks by Helen Toomer (or others).
- The alternative CAS (Churches Agency for Safeguarding) route which is backed by the URC, Methodist and Baptist churches. Identity checks can be performed by Jan Partridge and Julie Scarisbrick

We noted the receipt of Alana Kershaw's CRB check

Julie handed out a list of all those checked for working with children and vulnerable adults. It is important the committee members know these people, keep an eye on them, pray for them etc.

The meeting thanked Julie.

### **11b. Deanery synod meetings and strategy**

We have seen and read the latest draft. Clive will feed this back.

### **11c. Thoughts on Lent arrangements.**

The sessions were, in part, fascinating. We should try to have a theme to link the sessions together, it was a bit disjointed with everyone doing their own theme. Some topics were not so evidently Lenten. The idea of having a meal was good. It might be a good idea to have a constant host or owner for the sessions. Tudor proposed to have a more classic Lent course, but to get a working group of reps from each church to invite a good external speaker. Mid week is possibly good. Tudor needs a name from each church by end of May. **Action all, then Tudor**

### **11d. Thoughts on AGM arrangements.**

It was quick we got through lots of business and lots of good worship too. Excellent music. It takes a lot of preparation, but is worth it. The group were happy that it is extremely pre-packaged and rigid in format, with little unstructured discussion.

Date of AGM next year 23 March 2014

## **12. The Marriage Course**

Nick and Motie visited each church. Its not "marriage prep", more a marriage MOT, and comes highly recommended.

### **13. Diary dates**

Confirmation and Baptism Service 22 May. Bishop Lee to preside at confirmation.

HTS at 7:30 pm. Good selection of candidates for Baptism and confirmation. Claire and Michelle from St Marys have helped with the course, it's been excellent.

Orders of service are printed (Thanks Brenda)

Joint Service SMLT 30 June, includes Thanksgiving/dedication for Alex Dams. BBQ in the park, afterwards.

### **14. Other business**

Toothill's supply of Partnership News occasionally disappears from the office pigeon hole. Can we get Brenda to print about 20 more each month? And label them prominently for Toothill....**Action Chris**

### **15. Next meetings**

Venue rotation: St Marys is better in summer.

Monday is often Ok, Thursday is a possible choice

Partnership Council 24 June 7:30 venue TBA,

Partnership Council 25 July 7:30 venue TBA.

Expectation of an August meeting too

Standing Committee Dates: Hold fire for now, as we have many full Partnership Council meetings scheduled.

Date of AGM next year 23 March 2014

Meeting finished with prayer and the grace at 10:03 (10:03 !)