

**West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze  
Partnership Council meeting  
Tuesday 4 Nov 2014 at 7:00pm (prayer) 7:30 pm (agenda)  
At Toothill Church.**

Prayer (at 7:00)

1. Mark welcomed everyone to Toothill

2. Attendance

Simon Stevenette Area Dean, Swindon Deanery	David Hoar T
Janet Leckie Subwarden of Licensed Lay Ministers	Jan Partridge T
Ed Poole Lay co-Chair Swindon Deanery	Tish Vass SMLT
Mary Poole Deanery Synod	Julie Scarisbrick W
Mark Dowling T (chair)	Chris Scarisbrick W
Janet Clarke HTS	Pete Gilder W
Sue Green HTS	Mike Dilly W
Stephen Kershaw HTS	

- Apologies received from
  - Brenda Hicks, who cannot easily do Tuesdays
  - Jacqueline Kirwan who is away at a work conference
  - Pat Watson
  - Clive Deverell is not well.
- Declaration of AOB
  - Janet - Diocesan Resource area on behalf of Gayle
  - Sue – Hook Cemetery (to be dealt with in finances)

3. Clive was due to lead worship, but is not well. Mark opened in prayer

4. Good news per church

Toothill had a great harvest service, the Harvest Lunch was very well attended – and many helped decorate the church.

Good parade services and another planned  
Lunch bunch is being very well attended.

Westlea Membership has gone down as Dick and Janet have finally moved on.

Held a good lay-led harvest service. Our 3 young people have gone off to Uni for the first time.

We had 2 lay people through the bereavement course (which followed on from the pastoral car course), reportedly they got much from it.

HTS Harvest lunch very well attended

Worship leaders course will be well attended – several planning to go along

Planning a big party to celebrate several birthdays, including Ivan's 90<sup>th</sup> Heros and Saints party was very enjoyable. The power tools (!) were popular with the children. Parents stayed afterwards for tea and chat.

St Marys – ABC visited. Looking forward to Trevor joining. He's beginning to be seen around. Recently enjoyed a wide variety of good visiting speakers.

Messy church can always use more helpers, usually 30-40, but had nearly 50 last time.

Many (many) advent and Christmas events being planned by Gayle for our primary schools. She can always use more assistance

## 5. Deanery Leadership Team discussion

Area Dean made a point of congratulating Bournemouth on their 8 goals... can't think why? Simon is looking forward to coming to our joint service at end of Nov to talk about prayer.

Simon and Janet presented using visual aids, the 4 sections of "We're all in this together" (by The Revd Canon Simon Stevenette and Ed Poole on behalf of the Swindon Deanery Leadership Team 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014). Text incorporated here.

## **We're all in this together imagining the possibilities**

### **Vision**

Quoting from our Swindon Deanery Strategic Plan passed a year ago in September 2013 our vision as a Deanery is 'to support Christians to live and share the good news of Jesus Christ with everyone who lives and works in or visits our Swindon deanery. Our deanery vision for mission is always inspired by the Gospel, an active and relevant faith to liberate us and not drain us. This has inspired the DLT over the last year, with our deanery colleagues, to develop the role of our Deanery Missioner, reach out to our new housing areas of opportunity including North Swindon, support our pioneer ministers in Penhill and Pinehurst and encourage a pioneering spirit through fresh expressions.

### **Growth**

Our Diocesan and Deanery focus, for many years, has been on growth. We thank God for the progress made through local parish growth plans shared with us in March 2012 at the Growth Summit. We want to resource and support you as you seek to grow in partnership, influence, numbers and commitment, (P I N C). This has been taken forward in 2014 through our diocesan focus on increasing confidence in God's story. Evangelism is an essential part of the gospel. As a Diocese we are praying for 10,000 voices and 500 new adult Christians by Easter 2015. We have

been delighted to hear many encouraging stories of faith-sharing through words and actions. Please keep this up.

**In summary** in this first half we have reminded you of what you already know, we also want to look forward inviting you to join us on a journey of new possibilities. We are known across the dioceses for our maxim, 'we are the deanery we are the diocese'. As the African proverb says, 'if you want to travel a small distance travel alone: if you want to travel a long way travel together'.

### **Sustainability**

We are meeting in the harvest season with all the ecological challenges regarding our care for planet earth, as we cut down we need to plant more, We need to prune to encourage reproduction and a fruitful yield. As a result of our away day on June 16, the DLT would like each church congregation, group and benefice within our deanery together to address the reality and implications of declining numbers. We have reached a point where churches have to grow or face the prospect of learning how to die gracefully. This will involve much prayer, listening and discussion. Local context is key, we believe as a DLT our deanery needs to close some of our 35 church buildings so we may plant some new churches. In relation to where people are no living in the light of the massive increase of new housing. The 2011 census tells us that Swindon is the 12th largest growing town in the country with a 16.5% increase in population over the last decade. Does your church building enhance or hinder your mission? Are you financially viable? Could we work and minister smarter in a new way perhaps alongside others? We want to share our thinking; we haven't got all the answers, we certainly haven't made final judgments: we want every church to actively flourish and equip disciples actively not just to survive or struggle.

### **Finance**

Please be generous when you make your parish pledge for 2015 by 30<sup>th</sup> November. You don't do this in isolation. Bishop Mike has challenged us to increase our Swindon deanery giving by £30,000 or 3.5%. Some of us can give much more than this, please be prayerful. As the Church of England we work collegiately, what we do or don't do affects others. As a diocese we are moving towards deanery targets. We are in this together financially prayerfully and practically. Again, please consider this fact prayerfully. If you divide our diocesan expenditure by the amount of stipendiary clergy, each unit needs to find £62,000 to meet our financial obligations. At the moment are you a net receiver or giver? What would it be like to be in a unit where we pay our way? As a DLT we are very aware of the different financial realities across the Deanery in terms of rental income, legacies, historic resources alongside up-to-date stewardship and giving. We repeat we are in this together, we are teammates on the same side. We must work together for the Gospel's sake.

### **In conclusion**

Thank you for all your support. We have taken you on a journey in this presentation from how we have already developed to where we are now. We need to fully embrace the new reality of limited resources alongside facing up to the challenge of living and sharing the Christian faith within our contemporary culture. We do this as the Church of England together, in our Swindon deanery, alongside our ecumenical partners. We must be honest about sustainability. Please do this honestly and courageously and respond to the issues raised in this presentation by Advent Sunday, November 30th to the Area Dean so that the DLT can map a way forward.

**Please pray** for us as we promise to pray and support you let us share together in our deanery prayer:

We prayed together

**Loving heavenly father, we praise you for the vision of your son, that your people might be one in order that the world might believe. We thank you for our Swindon deanery and the Bristol diocese of which we are a part, please guide us all forward so that our deanery plan, which we are developing would increase our sense of mutual interdependence and enable us to serve the people of Swindon and the surrounding areas faithfully in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

Discussion afterwards: All our denominations have similar issues, challenges and requests.

**Action Exec** Respond to Simon on sustainability by 30 Nov.

6. Approve Minutes from PC 2 Sept 2014

1 correction - Keith Osborn has no U in his name.

- Matters arising
  - Christmas cards in progress, final details for the order to Brenda by tomorrow
  - Updated /corrected minutes from PC 30 June, done, just not yet posted. Chris apologised.
  - Worship course dates last Sunday of every month from January.
  - Audit of documents stored at home – no responses. Please send list by email.

With the 1 correction, approved.

7. Receive notes from Exec 6 Oct 2014

- Clives MDR outcome had no surprises – one visible outcome is he wants to take on the common lent course next year.
- Trevor's job description is nearly finalised

Received and duly noted, no comments

8. Review draft minutes of PCC meeting 9 Oct 2014

We finally had a PCC meeting. Mark reported it was cordial and constructive (and fast)

Minutes are draft, not yet agreed by PCC. Presented here purely for information.

We (re-)elected Mark as Chair, Chris as Secretary to PCC. Sue and Tina effectively share the treasurers role.

We constrained ourselves with standing orders ( all about sharing information and being fair to one another)

Subsequently ASLM elected Karen Johnson to be their DCC secretary.

We set date for the APCM (which is CofE only and shared with ASLM)

The Partnership multi-denominational AGM is unaffected, other than this year, NOT shared with AS)

It was pointed out the minutes should clarify what the various letters that were mentioned, actually said. **Action Chris** will clarify the minutes in the next draft

#### 9. Reports from Parent Denominational bodies

- Swindon Churches Together Sponsoring Body, Chris  
The exec have been (about quarterly, and 3 times so far) doing an email news circular for SCTSB, recently expanded the circ list somewhat to try and include more local denominational contacts. The news is distilled from minutes and the partnership news.  
Had several expressions of support, thanks and interest...So we will do this regularly
- CofE Swindon Deanery, Bristol Diocese  
ABC photos are on Diocesan website. The 10.000 voices initiative is gathering momentum. Hanna Green's article from PN made it to the Diocesan monthly news, and is one of the 10,000
- Methodist Upper Thames Circuit  
Circuit requested a written report to Bob Mawyer, for the circuit newsletter.  
**Action Chris** will get in touch and figure out what is needed and when Keith will be kept informed about plans and re-orgs here.  
Clive and Trev will be supported to apply for recognised status in the District.  
Braydon chapel building is re-furbished. Congregation is growing too...
- South Western Synod of URC  
Discussion about same sex marriage will be moderated by a visiting convenor from the SW Synod. Organised for Sun 1 Feb 2pm at HTS. **Action Leadership teams** please read the document (One plus One, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed August 2014) and figure out how to sensitively open up the issue with congregations before then, so as to come prepared.

Methodist Church are considering something similar. Jan has sent Chris the document (**Action Chris** will read it more carefully and send it out in

support). We should figure out if the questions raised are sufficiently similar that we can deal with both denominations issues at the same meeting, or not.

- West of England Baptist Association, TBC  
Re-imagining what it means to be church. Catalyst live events are being run all over the country, highly recommended.

#### 10. Finances, Sue

Fees for 2015 Occasional Offices have been calculated, one update to do then **Action Sue** will circulate the new list.

PC agreed the new list, when it is corrected.

Account for Hook Graveyard through partnership rather than St Marys. Cost of maintenance is £200 per month. This should probably be accounted via the partnership. Sue explained its revenue neutral, merely a matter of convenience. This was approved

Otherwise money is ticking along

#### 11. Day of Prayer

29 Nov. Good support from churches. Though Claire can't lead a youth event we will organise something appropriate that may appeal.

Pete circulated a draft sign up sheet for people to sign up. Needs a per-church rep by the 16<sup>th</sup> Nov, to chase filling the gaps.

All corrections and requests to Pete.

#### 12. Safeguarding, Julie

- Training opportunities - We send a constant trickle of training opportunities from all denominations to local safeguarding reps. Please ask them to make sure childrens (and vulnerable adults) workers are aware.
- Online DBS checking is started by CCPAS(CofE), and CAS (Bap, Meth and URC) will start shortly  
We still need someone who will be trained to administer the CCPAS route. Training is required.
- The Diocese has conducted a helpful audit of safeguarding to elicit training and support needs. We sent back the questionnaire. Our perceived weaknesses were recruitment of ex-offenders, audit of notice boards and web sites. **Action Julie, Chris**

#### 13. Other notifications/progress, Chris

- Finances have been arbitrated, we had the result, we paid the agreed proportion of the reserves

- No news yet on buying out the Baptist pension fund liability. Trustees have agreed we can continue to pay the catch-up payments, which have been determined for 2015. Sue informed Tina at AS
- Letters sent
  - Our update to SCTSB et. al. is sent periodically and will continue
  - Christmas card communications (already noted)
- Letters received
  - The Diocesan safeguarding survey was sent to lots of contacts. Julie dealt with it for us all.
  - Methodist abuse TBA, **Action Jan** will forward the letter and document to Chris. **Action Exec** will figure out how to deal with this. Jan pointed out response is needed by December, so it will have to be an email discussion.

#### 14. AOB Items

Janet pointed out the Bristol Diocese has resource centres which are closing. Gayle suggested someone might like to go ASAP to the Bristol centre and grab (first come...) whatever stuff may be useful.

#### 15. Next PC meeting

Mon 9<sup>th</sup> Feb (probably **Action Clive** to confirm once he's back vertical)

- Toothill – David Hoar will diarise
- Worship leader will be Tish

Meeting closed with prayer at 9:40pm.

## **Other diary dates and reminders**

2014

- Sun 16 Nov 2-4pm WW1 Commemorative afternoon St Marys
- Mon 24 Nov - Exec
- Sat 29-30 Nov Day of prayer
- Sun 30 Nov 10am... Joint Service at Westlea, Advent Sunday,
- Wed 3 Dec Advent prayer space Oliver Tomkins Juniors
- Sun 21 Dec Dazzling Greetings – Joint All age nativity
- Sun 28 Dec Joint carol service at St Marys

2015

- Thu 22 Jan PCC meeting (slot reserved if necessary)
- Sun 1 Feb 2pm at HTS – Discussion - Same-sex marriage in URC churches
- Mon 9 Feb PC (probably) Toothill
- Wed 18 Feb Lent begins (Arrangements TBA)
- Sun 1 Mar ASLM District AGM
- Thu 2 Apr Maundy Thursday 2015 childrens day
- Sun 12 Apr. Partnership AGM
- Thu 23 Apr. 7:30pm at Toothill, Annual Parochial Church Meeting (CofE PCC AGM)