

West Swindon and Lydiard Tregoze Church Partnership

Partnership AGM (P-AGM)

and CofE Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

By Zoom and telephone Tue 13 Oct 2020, 7:30pm

Present:

Marie Chorley, Janet Clarke, Sue Green, Steve Kershaw(chair), Angela Mak (HTS)
Mike Black, Rachel Dowling (Toothill)
Trevor Day, Jacqueline Kirwan, Ed Poole, Mary Poole, Pat Watson (St Mary's)
Pete Gilder, Chris Scarisbrick, Richard Williams (Westlea)
Clive Deverell, Gayle Bryon

Apologies from:

Pam Ray, Julie Scarisbrick, Teresa Townsend, Wendy Deverell, Pete Rogers, Norris Kiddle,
Ruth Kiddle, Claire Camm

1. Welcome (Steve Kershaw)

Steve welcomed folk to the meeting and opened with prayer

Advance papers for the meeting had been available online at
<https://wswinlyd.org.uk/council/report/>

Chris showed things on screen as discussion proceeded.

2. Presentation of Partnership Annual Report for 2019 (Steve)

Steve proposed a vote of thanks for the work that Graham, Claire and Gayle have been doing.

Heartily and unanimously agreed

- Highlights, questions

Some of the discussion covered progress since the report was drafted in early 2020, and ranged over actions arising from the minutes of last year's AGM.

- Safeguarding

Chris showed the latest update on the safeguarding paperwork backlog. Good progress, that has slowed recently.

- Conservation work at St Mary's

The conservation work is done, though the community engagement parts are still outstanding. Hence some expenditure will be delayed. Some of that includes part of the loan that the partnership made. A final symposium still yet to be held

- The day group is a significant discipleship success

- Unfinished items in 2019 goals

These aspects will be held over and dealt with along with 2020 focus areas.

- Methodist plans to withdraw from partnership

Clive updated us on the Methodist plans. We believe the circuit still intend to withdraw from the LEP, but the decision making will be delayed while they go through the national LEP appraisal and consultation process. We are being supported locally by Chris Dobson and Gerald England. Local church leaderships have considered futures a bit.

St Marys want to continue with receptive ecumenism as far as possible.

Toothill have had some committee discussions. There are advantages to leaving and becoming part of the circuit. but nothing is decided.

Westlea (leadership and congregation) have started considering possible futures outside an ecumenical structure, but nothing is decided.

Motion: That the Partnership Annual Report be accepted

Agreed with no objections

3. Matters arising from minutes of our P-AGM (for 2018) held 4 Apr 2019

(Minutes were agreed at PC 13 May 2019) so just anything still arising...

We didn't publish a strategy as we said we would. We have been overtaken by managing events – Covid-19 shutdowns, our financial position and the possible Methodist withdrawal

We did suggest to the URC that they sell Toothill manse, which they have now done.

4. Presentation of Partnership Central Account for 2019 (Sue)

Sue presented the partnership's central account for 2019 (now overtaken by many events)

There were no questions

Motion: That the Partnership Central Accounts be accepted

Agreed with no objections

5. Presentation of Consolidated Partnership Accounts for 2019 (Sue)

Sue presented the partnership's consolidated accounts, as inspected, for 2019 (again overtaken by many events)

Questions were all about 2020, recorded under AI 6

Motion: That the Partnership Consolidated Accounts be accepted

Agreed with no objections

Motion: A vote of Thanks for our accounts' inspectors Steve Fraser (and Heather Weeks) at MHA Monahan's

Agreed unanimously

Motion to appoint Steve Fraser at MHA Monahan's as inspectors for 2020 accounts.

Agreed with no objections

6. Budget Discussion (Sue)

The budget used at the beginning of the year and agreed with Partnership Council then, was previous to a lot of changes driven by external circumstances.

Given Covid-19 lockdown, St Marys are unlikely to make their predicted contribution. Toothill and HTS hope to but its partly subject to rental income returning after lockdown. Westlea expect to make their contribution.

Toothill's contribution to the partnership is likely to cover the Methodist contribution (now increased back to where it should be)

The CofE are asking for less next year, 48,000. Who can tell if we can make it? 2020 will be a deficit, but not fatal, given the 3 redundancies we have made.

Sue gave notice that she is intending to stand down from all church roles in March 2021.

A unanimous vote of thanks was given to Sue for the work she puts in.

7. Areas of focus for 2020

- Stabilise our long-term finances

With the 3 planned redundancies we stand a chance of stabilising our finances in the short term.

- Resolve outstanding Safeguarding concerns from partner overseeing denominations

Our safeguarding backlog of admin paperwork and record keeping has improved. We started very well and progress has slowed. (Chris showed a graph). A level 2 course has just become available online. Chris urged those who needed it to book on. (They've already had the dates)

- Conclude the Holy Habits initiative and ask each fellowship to focus on growth discipleship in our congregations.

We have concluded HH (well, Westlea are about to). We're not yet sure how we will measure the growth of discipleship, there are hopeful signs, and we will continue to look for this.

- For each church to take greater responsibility for the schools within its vicinity. We're asking each church to find a primary school contact for their local school to help where Gayle will leave off. Mixed results. Gayle has contact names for each church, can you help?

Technical support for Open The Book (videos etc) will be needed after Christmas.

- Other matters

We discussed the question of the future of our partnership, confidence, and communication. It was pointed out that a long hiatus may cause stress. It was pointed out that much of the formal partnership between the denominations is under review, that this will take significant time, and much discussion will not involve us greatly

It is clear that the LEP formal partnership may not have much of a future.

It is equally clear we as individual churches (of whatever eventual denomination) may wish to work together in future, we need to consider this. It is well summarised by the questions

on the pastoral letter (from Clive Deverell, David Perkins, Chris Dobson and Gerald England of 30 July) All churches should engage with these and share the answers. We will add this as an area of focus for 2020 and 2021. The Exec will work on a phrasing for these minutes...After the meeting Chris proposed

- As individual churches we consider how we may wish to work together, given the possibility that in future there may be no formal LEP here. Initially we will engage with the questions in the pastoral letter

The questions in the pastoral letter are:

- a) What are the churches involved called to do together and for what purpose?
- b) How will they relate with one another as they work together?
- c) What is the context or locality in which they are called?
- d) What sort of agreement and authorisation are needed to do this work?
- e) What structures will be required to best serve the new situation, giving simplicity, accountability and clarity?
- f) What parts of the character and culture of the current SCLEP need to be preserved?

8. Renew our commitment to our policies

Full texts at <https://WSwinLyd.org.uk/council/policy>, summaries here:-

Accessibility (last changed Nov 2003, still needs an update)

We believe that all people should have an equal opportunity to experience the love of God, to grow spiritually, and to participate in worship and share fully in the life of the Church.

Domestic Abuse (last changed 2 July 2018)

All forms of domestic abuse are wrong and must stop. We are committed to promoting and supporting environments which:

- ensure that all people feel welcomed, respected and safe from abuse;
- protect those vulnerable to domestic abuse from actual or potential harm;

Health and Safety (last changed 23 Jul 2008)

We will:

- provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our activities;
- consult with our employees, members, volunteers and visitors, on matters affecting their health and safety;

Privacy (last changed 5 Feb 2018)

We will collect personal information only as necessary. We will store such information securely. We will use such information only for the purposes for which it was given.

Safeguarding (Safe to Grow) (last changed 19 Nov 2018)

This church is committed to the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, and to ensuring their well-being.

- We believe that all children and adults at risk should know that they are valued within the church and safely enjoy and have access to every aspect of the life of our place of worship.

- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children under 18 years of age.
- We recognise that we all have a responsibility to help prevent the physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, financial, discriminatory abuse and neglect of adults at risk.

Motion: That we re-affirm our Accessibility, Domestic Abuse, Health and Safety, Privacy, and Safeguarding policies.

Agreed with no objections.

9. Elections to Partnership Council

From HTS: Janet Clarke, Sue Green (ex off), Steve Kershaw

From St Marys: Pat Watson (ex off), Jacqueline Kirwan (ex off),

From Toothill: Mark Dowling

From Westlea: Peter Gilder, Pam Ray, Chris Scarisbrick

Ex-officio, likely to be co-opted or honoured friends: Gayle Bryon, Claire Camm, Rev Trevor Day, Rev Clive Deverell, Rev Gerald England, Andrew Fleet, Rev David Perkins, Ed Poole, Mary Poole, Rev Rachael Wilson, Angela Mak, Teresa Townsend

All agreed as noted

David Perkins retires in July

10. Partnership posts – Treasurer, Safeguarding lead

Treasurer: Sue Green (for 6 months only)

Safeguarding lead: Chris and Julie Scarisbrick

No objections

11. Denomination Points of Contact (reps)

West of England Baptist Assoc: Janet Clarke

CofE Swindon Deanery Synod: Angela Mak

Methodist Upper Thames Circuit: Mark Dowling (TBC)

URC South Western Synod: David Hoar

All agreed as noted

12. CofE specific posts

Churchwardens

At HTS: Steve Kershaw (resigned July 2020), Sue Green

At St Marys: Pat Watson, Jacqueline Kirwan

All agreed, no objections.

Those authorised to assist at CofE communion

At HTS: Steve Kershaw, Mark Taylor, Sue Green

At St Marys: Janet Cooper-Tydeman, Hazel Davis, Wendy Deverell, Ann Fisher, Hilary Gardner, Paul Gardner, Doreen Henderson, Jacqueline Kirwan, Ed Poole, Mary Poole, Pat Watson

At Toothill (TBC): Mark Dowling, Rachel Dowling, David Hoar, Nicola Hoar, Rev Jan Partridge

At Westlea: Pete Gilder, Pam Ray, Chris Scarisbrick, Andy Vernon, Richard Williams, Sarah Wilmott

Read banns

At St Marys: CofE clergy + Hazel Davis, Wendy Deverell, Doreen Henderson, Jacqueline Kirwan, Tish Vass, Pat Watson

All agreed with no objections

13. Any Other Dates (eg. Christmas arrangements)

Westlea continue to meet weekly by Zoom. Christmas cards will be delivered in Westlea and Eastleaze. This year will have a link to a Youtube video of Carols and Candles. Live candle and carol service 20th Dec over Zoom. Christmas Day 25th Dec over Zoom as a normal Sunday.

St Marys will be open. Remembrance will be open air in churchyard or walled garden. Not decided about indoor Christmas events with access restrictions or pre-booking, may be open air. At home services will continue. This is sent to notice sheet folks and is on HTS website

Toothill meet by Zoom, fortnightly. No intention of going back into the building this year.

HTS thinking about physical worship on 15th Nov for the first time. Suggested a merger with Westlea!

Exec Wed 4th Nov.

Will deal with questions brought from the WEBA meeting by Janet, who had attended on our behalf

14. Close

Steve closed the meeting with prayer