

MINUTES OF THE CHURCH MEETING HELD ON 28TH NOVEMBER 2013 AT 8PM IN THE CLIFFORD WOOD ROOM

Present: Andy Potter (Minister) in the chair and 13 other members

1. **Opening Worship** was led by the Chairman
2. **Welcome and Apologies:** The Chairman welcomed all present. Apologies were received from Sarah Potter, Jenny Lane.
3. **The minutes** of the meetings held on 24th October 2013, including the added confidential minute regarding the minister's stipend, were signed as a correct record.

4. **Matters Arising**

- None

5. **Mission and Ministry**

Update

- Andy has been asked to lead the Christmas assembly at Highfield School – date to be confirmed.
- The Toy Service will take place on Sunday 15th December – the Highfield School Choir will be performing and there will be a contribution from the Girls' Brigade. The congregation will be invited to bring gifts of toys which will be passed on to Barnet Council who will distribute them to needy children.
- Carin Blunn has volunteered to be the representative for Churches Together in Palmers Green and Winchmore Hill.
- The Churches Together Advent Carol Service will take place on Sunday (1st December) at St Monica's Roman Catholic Church at 6.45pm.
- An advert organised by Churches Together will appear in the Enfield Independent newspaper publicizing the Christmas services in all local churches.
- The Churches Together Pulpit Exchange will take place on 19th January during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Andy will lead the service at Palmers Green URC while Fr Richard Bolton from Holy Trinity will be leading the service here.
- David Burrowes MP has offered a group from the Church the opportunity to tour the Houses of Parliament on the evening of Thursday 20th March. It was agreed that we will accept the offer. Logistical details will be discussed nearer the time.

Website

- Phil Norman has been successfully managing the Church website for more than 10 years, and the Church is grateful for his hard work. Technology has moved on significantly recently which means the current means of hosting the website may not be the best – in particular we are very dependant upon Phil as he is the only person able to edit it. Modern website hosting solutions are available which allow for easier administration, more people able to update the information and additional features such as downloadable sermons.

- There are two principal objectives of having a website. Firstly to promote the Church and provide information about to people on the outside, as the current website does. Secondly to potentially store useful information in a private area that would only be accessible to members, for example notices and Church Meeting Minutes. The current website does not have this feature.
- Several suppliers have been identified that provide hosting solutions that meet the above objectives, are easy to administer and provide a range of other features which are likely to prove useful – for example electronic calendars and email hosting. John Melbourne has been doing some detailed research and has presented suggestions to the Deacons which are being considered. The likely cost of this will be £400-500 per year.
- The meeting felt that we should ensure, if we have a more significant online presence, those in the Fellowship who do not have internet access do not feel excluded.
- Phil Norman questioned the level of expenditure given that the current website does not see significant use by members. It may be possible to develop the current website to include some additional features at minimal cost. It was agreed that this be investigated further before a decision is made to switch to a new hosting solution.
- Keith Richardson and Rachel Forster suggested that a new website could be used to build links with the Brigades and other groups that use the Church such as the Playgroup, and the rest of the community.
- It was agreed that no firm decision will be made on how to proceed with the website until the possibilities above have been investigated further.

6. Youth

Update

- The Girls Brigade Badge and Presentation Evening will take place on Tuesday 3rd December. The Girls need to be there at 6pm though the presentation normally starts at approximately 6.30pm.
- The district commissioner of the Girls Brigade has recently resigned as she is moving away from the area. A deputy commissioner has been appointed but there is currently no commissioner.
- 9 new girls have joined Girls Brigade since half term.
- The Boys Brigade trailer collection begins on Tuesday 3rd December and will take place on 10 nights over the following 3 weeks. Volunteers were invited to assist with collecting.
- Our boys Brigade Senior teams recently won both the Battalion table tennis competition and quiz nights.

7. Finance

Budget/Reserves Policy

- Ian distributed a document detailing the proposed budget for 2014.
- The table on the first page details the predicted balances in each of the funds at the end of 2013.

- Weekly offerings have so far declined during 2013 and are below budget. It has been assumed that in 2014 loose offerings will be the same as what they have actually been in 2013 and regular offerings will increase by 2.2% (£1000) compared to 2013.
- The usual allowance has been made for reclaimed tax. From 1 April 2013 we should benefit from the new Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme and an allowance has also been made for this.
- The predicted income from premises has been significantly reduced due to the fact that the playgroup is currently struggling financially and may be forced to close during the year. (Members are asked not to discuss this situation publicly.)
- During 2013 significant miscellaneous income has been received in the form of the balance of the Philip Denning Trust and a refund of council tax. No such income is predicted in 2014. Any distribution of the Denning Trust money will have to respect the terms of the legacy.
- The actual income for 2013 should be very close to what has been budgeted as the additional miscellaneous items have made up for the decline in offerings. In 2014 a reduction in income of £6000 is predicted.
- The expenditure on Ministry will increase in accordance with the increase in the minister's stipend that was agreed at the previous meeting.
- A transfer to the Youth Fund of £700 is proposed. £1100 was transferred last year but the Youth Fund currently has a healthy balance and it is believed that the reduced transfer, together with the other sources of income, will still be sufficient to fund the Youth activities during the year.
- The Missionary Committee have not discussed a budget for 2014. As such the Mission budget for 2014 will be left the same as for 2013 for the time being.
- A modest increase is suggested in the donation to Pathway as it has not been increased for several years.
- The Donations and Subscriptions budget has been increased as the amount requested by many of the organizations we subscribe to has increased.
- The budgeted figure for Spotlight has increased to reflect that the magazine is being professionally printed which, while it is well presented, comes at a higher cost.
- The budget for administration is increased to take account of the possible change to the website.
- No figure has been budgeted for 'outreach' as this has never been spent in previous years.
- Ian suggested that the expenditure normally entitled 'maintenance' in future comes out of the Repairs Fund – nothing has therefore been budgeted for 'maintenance'.
- Overall, excluding the Buildings and Repairs Funds (which are discussed later), a deficit of approx £2300 is predicted. This is not a particular problem as it is small compared to the balance of the General Fund and is based on some pessimistic assumptions.

- The situation regarding the Buildings Fund and Repairs Fund is quite difficult:
 - The funds had previously built up a healthy balance but have been depleted by all of the urgent work that has been carried out in the last two years. Once all the work that is happening in 2013 (including the dry rot) is paid for, it is likely that there will be approx £2500 left combined in the Buildings and Repairs Funds, though there is some uncertainty in this. It will depend on the final bills for some significant works currently in progress.
 - The funds can either be funded by direct donations or (if necessary) by transfers from the General Fund. In the past, significant donations were received directly into these funds, but these have declined over the years so that in 2013 only £430 has been received. Ian is reluctant to simply transfer money from the General Fund at the moment for three reasons:
 - The General Fund budget is currently finely balanced.
 - There may well be a presumption by donors that the General Fund should be used to support mission and ministry and not to maintain the buildings.
 - More importantly, there is no assurance that we shall not encounter the need for significant and urgent expenditure as we have done over the last few years.
 - The deacons are concerned that there is no comprehensive plan for how money will be spent on the buildings over the next few years. Recently there have been several urgent problems requiring large expenditure which have arisen out of the blue. The concern is that there could be other similar problems lurking undiscovered. The deacons have discussed this and have decided that a plan needs to be produced, most probably involving a survey being carried out, so that necessary work can be identified and correctly prioritised.
 - If any further urgent problems do arise, or if the existing problems deteriorate and become unacceptable, a specific appeal could be made and if necessary some money could be transferred from the General Fund to allow repairs to be made.
 - In light of the above, no money will be transferred from the General Fund to the Buildings or Repairs Funds at present. However it was agreed that an appeal will be made for members of the congregation to make donations directly to these funds. In the past this has proven effective in building them up. Once the balance of the funds has increased, more money can be spent on the buildings in accordance with the plan discussed earlier.
- The proposed budget was approved by the meeting with no amendments.
- The Reserves Policy will remain unchanged from the previous year.

Allocation of Interest

- It was agreed that the interest received on the amounts in all of the different funds will be allocated to the General Fund.

Christmas Day Collection

- It was agreed that the proceeds of the offering collected on Christmas Day will be given to Tear Fund.

8. Membership

- Nothing to Report

9. World Mission

- While reading the Dallmans' prayer letter, Andy was struck by the large amount that is happening at the JLC, which is increasing the demands on the Dallmans' workload.
- After much prayerful consideration, Hazel March has decided to move permanently to Peterborough in Spring 2014 to be near her family. Members were asked to pray for her as she plans for her future.

10. Secretarial

Calendar 2014

- The proposed draft calendar for 2014 had been previously distributed by email and additional copies were given out in the meeting.
- The proposed dates of the regular events follow the usual pattern as follows:
 - Prayer Breakfast on the 1st Saturday of every month
 - Deacons Meetings on the 2nd Wednesday - none in August
 - Church Meetings on the 4th Thursday - none in August or December
 - Thursday Afternoon Club on the last Thursday - none in August
 - Midweek@WHBC meetings on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays.
- School holidays have been marked on in accordance with those published on the Enfield Council website.
- Parade service dates have been agreed with the Brigades while the date of the Anniversary was agreed at a previous meeting.
- Easter occurs on the 3rd Sunday of April so it was agreed to move the communion service to the 2nd Sunday.
- The AGM, following the normal pattern, will be on the final Saturday in March which is the 29th. An error was noted on the draft calendar which showed a Church Meeting on the 27th March - in March the regular Church Meeting is replaced by the AGM.
- Barbara Richardson suggested the possibility of hosting a 'light party', a Christian event for young people as an alternative to Halloween. We will discuss this ideanearer the time.

Christmas Publicity

- Andrew thanked those members who had expressed a preference for the design of the Christmas publicity cards at the previous meeting. The design chosen, 'It's still wise to follow Jesus', was the one that the greatest number of people had expressed a preference for, though a wide range of different views had been expressed.
- The publicity cards have now arrived. There are a total of 1600 - approx 1450 have been allocated for delivery to local streets and the remaining 150 are available for members to invite their friends and family or for distribution at events in the Church. It was encouraging to see that roughly half of the bundles for street delivery were taken on the

first Sunday they were available. The publicity banner, using the same theme, has also been put up on the main noticeboard.

Communion Preparation

- Four new people have been recruited to join the rota for Communion preparation, which means the total is now five. One extra person is sought as this will keep the commitment down to two occasions per year. The work involves arriving early (approx 09.30) on the Sunday morning to prepare the bread and juice and staying after the service to wash the cups. Jean Daniels has provided training and written instructions to two people - this will be cascaded to the others over the coming weeks. The rota is still to be finalised.

Dates

- Deacons: 11th December
- Church Meeting: 23rd January

11. Buildings

Dry Rot

- The main work to treat the dry rot is complete. Some cosmetic work still needs to be done such as the skirting boards etc.
- Binnie Weston queried as to whether the old cleaning cupboard is to be re-instated as she has a quantity of Church cleaning materials in her garage and would prefer to be rid of them. The cleaning cupboard is not being re-plastered, partly to save money, partly because it will allow the brickwork to dry out more effectively. However there appeared to be no reason why the room could not be used for storage.

Work Day - Saturday 1st February

- It has been proposed that this day is set aside for some practical jobs to be carried out in the Church, such as cleaning and painting. This has been added to the calendar.

12. Pastoral

News was shared about a number of members and friends. A time of prayer was held for those in need.

13. Any Other Business

- None

The meeting closed with the Grace at 9.37 pm

Signed.....

Date.....