



Minutes of the meeting of the United Church Council Held on Monday 13th March 2017

Present: Revd Deborah Snowball, Andrew Bond, David Hibbert, June Poppleton, Sue Johnson, Rob Kay, David Edney, John Rhodes, Sue Hillier, David Carruthers, Jane Earl, Petra Hedges

The meeting was chaired by the Revd Deborah Snowball

1. Opening Prayer

Deborah opened the meeting with prayer.

2. Apologies for absence

These were received from: Heather Allum, Ash James

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2017

The Minutes were agreed and signed as a correct record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising

The LEP Constitution: a meeting of the Ecumenical Officers. We are awaiting a date to be arranged.

5. Remarks by the Vicar

- Matters of Inclusion: In 2008 the UCC approved a Statement of Intent provided by Inclusive Church. Following the sermon Deborah preached in February 2017, members of the congregation had asked if St Mary's being more visible as a church committed to LGBTI members of the community (at St Mary's and beyond). Various options are one to us if we wished to pursue this, one being to become a 'Visible Congregation' – registered on the OneBodyOneFaith website and having a Statement on our Noticeboards to inform people that this is our commitment. UCC members were referred to two websites for reference: Inclusive-church.org, onbodyonefaith.org and advised that the matter would be reviewed and discussed at the next UCC Meeting.

- Deborah is to explore offering an ongoing Series of discussions/events 'In conversation... about' Dementia, Mental Health, Marriage, Sexuality, Gender, Transgender, Being divorced, Being widowed...

- Stewardship Recorder: Brian Warmington is to retire from this role and David Gilbert is to take over with the new scheme. We recorded our thanks to Brian and he is to be written to offer our thanks for his long standing service as Stewardship Recorder.

- Thanks were offered to UCC members for their service over the past year – particularly to those who had reached the end of their Term of Office.

6. Correspondence

No correspondence received

7. Financial report

a. Approval of 2016 Accounts

The Accounts were provided for 2016 and particular items of note pointed out by Rob Kay. Their acceptance was proposed by June Poppleton and seconded by David Carruthers and was agreed unanimously. Thanks were given to Rob Kay for his work on the Accounts.

b. Present financial situation:

	09/01/17	13/03/17
Current & Deposit	£ 53,000	£ 32,000
Epworth (Myers bequest)	£ 210,000	£ 24,000
Church Centre	£ 23,000	£ 23,000

- c. The appointment of Graham Hiscocks as Independent Auditor was agreed unanimously.
- d. *Giving at St Mary's: Time, Talent, Treasure* – update
Discussion on the new Parish Giving Scheme and other financial matters.
- Some people have already completed their forms and have had responses, there are records on who has received the packs and who have responded.
- e. Giving for Life – Parish Sheet
The Questionnaire regarding Giving for Life, was explained to us as the form is to be sent back to the Diocese completed. John Rhodes led the UCC through the Questionnaire and the responses were recorded. The UCC committed itself to the following Action:
 - i. To review regular thank you letter for giver in our Parish Giving Scheme and those using envelopes.
 - ii. Legacy policy to be passed to Communication
 - iii. Churches vision and discipleship to be passed to Stewardship and Finance Committee

8. Safeguarding

- a. Representatives to St Mary's Safeguarding Team
No information had been provided to the meeting.
- b. Lead Safeguarding Officer – Agreement by UCC (Scott Talbott)
Helen Swain was appointed unanimously as our Lead for Recruitment/Safeguarding Officer who will deal with DBS forms and Training needs
- c. Safeguarding 'Champions' – update (Scott Talbott)
No information had been provided to the meeting.
- d. Update from the Diocese regarding Training for our LEP
Following discussions with the Diocesan Safeguarding Lead, all future Safeguarding for Lay members at St Mary's will be provided through the Diocese/Deanery.

9. MAP update

Details to be published on our website and to be in the Parish Magazine.

10. Minutes of the sub-committees had previously been circulated.

- a. Standing Committee
Minutes of the Standing Committee were presented.
- b. Community & Outreach Committee
- c. Fabric & Churchyard Committee
- Removing Barriers audit and Policy
The UCC Agreed the Policy Statement provided – subject to amendment of wording. Update on North Porch Access, now that the works have been carried out on the Nave and Sanctuary, we are reviewing the plans for the Disabled Access via the North Porch – Fabric and Churchyard Committee.
- d. Stewardship & Finance Committee
There were no matters arising from this Committee.

11. Thy Kingdom Come (25th May – 4th June 2017)

The UCC agreed unanimously to support this enterprise.

Action: DJS, JP and JE to meet to plan

12. Community Picnic (2nd July 2017)

Community Picnic: to have an American Independence Day theme, UCC to provide £1000 'seed fund' for this event. Sue Hillier agreed to assist with planning.

13. Deanery/Circuit news

Deanery

- Deanery Synod: It was noted that St Mary's currently has no representatives on Deanery Synod.

- There is a Deanery Service for Ascension Day at St Oswald's, Croxley Green.

- Deanery Safeguarding Training day on 8th July 2017. Those members at St Mary's who require training should attend this.

Circuit

- The latest vacancies have been filled with 2 new ministers starting in September 2017: 1 for Trinity/Bury Lane, 1 for South Down and Harpenden. The Circuit Welcome Wervice is to be on 3rd September 2017 at High Street, Harpenden. There will be 2 vacancies for 2018 and the application process is due to start on these soon.

- Richard Lawson is due to have a 3 month Sabbatical: April and June 2017.

Diocese

A number of issues were discussed: Refugee Crisis (representative for this is Rev Bonnie Hill) – we have a detention centre in our area for refugees which is Yarlswood. (We noted that St Mary's supports families in our area which are refugees through direct action and working with Watford and Three Rivers District Refugee Project.); Issues to do with Human Sexuality in Churches and there is a letter regarding the issue is on the Diocese website.

14. Items to be publicised

- Brian Warmington stepping down as Stewardship Recorder
- HSBC now not our bank
- Safeguarding: Helen Swain's appointment as Recruitment lead
- Community Picnic
- The Kingdom Come prayer event

15. Any other business

Flower Rota: Julie Smethurst has recently down side as leader of this. Hilary Pearce is leading, with Julie assisting.

16. Thanks were offered to Petra Hedges for taking the Minutes

17. The Meeting ended with a time of prayer followed by the Grace