



Minutes of the meeting of the United Church Council Held on Tuesday 13 March 2018

Present: David Carruthers, Jane Earl, David Edney, David Hibbert, Sue Hillier, Robert Kay, Barbara Paterson, John Payne, June Poppleton, John Rhodes, Adam Shiels

In attendance: Helen Swain

The meeting was chaired by the Lay Vice Chair, John Rhodes.

1) John Rhodes opened the meeting with prayer.

2) **Apologies for absence** were received from: Buzz Coster, Dorothy Denzer, Darryl Sharp, Hilary Stevenson, Revd Deborah Snowball, Revd Scott Talbott.

3) Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2018

The Minutes were agreed and signed as a correct record of the meeting subject to one small amendment to minute 10 – Adam Shiels had agreed to contact Chorleywood Quakers (and possibly the Bookshop).

4) Matters arising

a) John Rhodes had told Andrew Sykes the rates for engaging a temporary organist.

b) The logo for the 'Inclusive Church' was now on the website.

c) Rob Kay advised that the Banking Ombudsman had made a provisional award to St Mary's Church of £6.5k in respect of the issues which had arisen from the closing of the HSBC accounts. Thanks were expressed to Rob and to David Gilbert for their tenacious work in pursuing compensation.

5) Safeguarding

Helen Swain reported:

a) All DBS checks are up to date.

b) 12 people have been identified to go on a training course on 30th April organised by the Deanery. Two more individuals will be attending a course on 17th May. Helen confirmed that most of those who had been DBS checked had been trained to the appropriate level.

c) The revised safeguarding policy had been circulated and was presented. Helen confirmed that there had been no major changes made – changes were mainly tidying up. It was agreed unanimously to adopt the new policy which will be reprinted and circulated to all those who should receive a copy. It was recognised that the Tower Policy sat outside the main policy and David Hibbert would be drafting a new policy and bring it back to the UCC in due course. **Action: DH**

6) Diocesan/Deanery/Circuit news

a) Diocese: John Rhodes gave an update on the diocesan synod. In particular, the Bishop's address had focussed on the centenary of the end of WWI and a theme of blessed are the peacemakers. It was proposed that all Church Bells throughout the diocese be rung at 11am on 11th November. The budget for the diocese was being trimmed and there had been a presentation on youth work in Luton; and protecting the planet.

b) Deanery: an Easter service for those who were living with dementia was being held on Tuesday 23 March at Christ Church; and the Deanery Ascension Day service would be held at Christ Church on 10th May.

c) Circuit: David Edney reported on the statistics for Mission in the Methodist Church. Derek McLean was moving on in August and to date no replacement had been identified.

7) Reports of sub-committees

a) Stewardship & Finance committee

An ad hoc meeting had been convened to consider the financial accounts prior to the UCC meeting.

b) Fabric & Churchyard committee

- i) Health and Safety policy had been reviewed and no changes were proposed. The UCC approved the new policy as recommended by the F&C committee.
- ii) The Fire Risk Assessment was presented and approved..
- iii) An issue had arisen with regard to the electricity supply in the porch. A quotation of £2,034 + VAT had been received from Jim Branney. The UCC asked that two additional quotations be obtained – if the Branney quotation was the lowest David was authorised to proceed otherwise he should bring the issue back to the UCC for review.
- iv) Boiler – waiting for two more quotes for replacing the boiler. One quote of £25,000 +VAT had been received. Adam agreed to investigate whether we could recover the VAT. **Action: AS and DH.**
- v) A risk assessment of the Church and Church Centre had been received from Ecclesiastical Insurance and four items required immediate attention – three within 3 months and one within 6 months. It was reported that there had been an attempt to break-in to the Church Centre – the door needed repairing and quotes would be obtained.
- vi) Church cleaning: June Poppleton had spoken to the cleaners who clean the Church Centre who had quoted £25 a week to clean the Church and £50 a month to polish the pews and clean the tiles amounting to c. £1,600 a year. Notwithstanding the notice in the pew leaflet it was becoming increasingly difficult to get people to help with the cleaning. John Rhodes agreed to write a report for the Link and it was agreed to have a further discussion at the next UCC meeting. Adam Shiels reminded the UCC that they had agreed a deficit budget for 2018 and as such it would be necessary to identify some fundraising activities to help pay for additional items as they arose.

c) Community & Outreach committee

- i) Lent Course: there had been 6 groups with 36 people having signed up.
- ii) St Mary's School: an OFSTED inspection had been carried out and whilst a number of items had been identified for improvement, St Mary's had still been graded a good school. It was about to be inspected by the diocese and there was some concern amongst the staff as previously the Vicar would have been involved and during Deborah's period of sickness it was unlikely she would be able to be involved. It was also agreed that ties between the Church and School could be stronger.
- iii) X-team: additional helpers were needed as the numbers had increased (about 9 or 10 regularly attend).
- iv) Governors: Christine Payne would be standing down as a School governor. There were currently two foundation governor vacancies and David Carruthers would be returning to the UCC with recommendations in due course.

8) Financial report

- a) Rob Kay presented the cash position. He noted that the Epworth Investment Management fund had had a good year.

	22/01/18	13/03/18
Current & Deposit	£57,000	£68,000
Epworth (Myers & other bequests)	£165,000	£165,000
Church Centre	£38,000	£38,000

- b) Legacy: £5k had been received from Ruth Lake for which everyone was very thankful.

- c) Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2017: Adam Shiels presented. The key messages were that expenditure had exceeded income by £35k recognising that £60k had been spent on the fabric of the Church and the cost had been met by the Epworth Fund. Amendments were suggested to the cover page which Adam agreed to make.
- Planned giving fell by £8k and the previous year there had been two significant financial legacies which had impacted the figures in the previous year. There had also been a significant gain on investments of £61k. Ancillary income had increased by 14% driven by the Church Centre lettings. The Parish Share had amounted to £87,835 and a note of thanks from the diocese had been circulated.
- Rob Kay and Adam Shiels were both thanked for the significant work they had done together on managing the Church's finances during the year and producing the accounts. The UCC expressed particular thanks to Rob Kay for his many years of service as the Treasurer to St Mary's. It was noted that Adam would be succeeding Rob as Treasurer following the APCM in April 2018. The Churchwardens would discuss with the Revd Scott Talbott when to hold the next stewardship campaign. **Action: Churchwardens**
- d) Appointment of independent examiner: it was agreed to appoint Graham Hiscox as the independent examiner for the financial accounts.

9) Mission Action Plan

- a) Lonely People: Hilary Pearce had asked if she could run a tea/coffee session at the back of church as a drop-in particularly focussing on those who may be feeling lonely. It was agreed that it would be a fantastic to do this and David Carruthers would let Hilary know. **Action: DC**
- b) Young people: Work is ongoing to develop our work with young people and Kasia and Claire were working with the school.

10) William Penn 300th anniversary

Adam Shiels reported on some of the ideas that are being developed locally to mark the 300th anniversary of the death of William Penn on 30 July 2018. A further meeting was due to be held on 19th March and Adam would report back. **Action: AS**

11) General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Buzz had agreed to help Jane with this initiative and work was ongoing. **Action: JE, BC**

12) APCM 2018

- a) The APCM will be held on 16 April in the Church.
- b) John Rhodes urged all members of the UCC to stand for election and encourage others also.
- c) Thanks were expressed to everyone who had served during the previous year.

13) Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the UCC will be fixed after the APCM.

The meeting ended with the Grace.