

Minutes of the CTiS& District Forum held on Wednesday 30th September 2015 at St John's Methodist Church Hall

50 people were present representing 21 churches

1 **Opening worship**

Rev John Boardman welcomed the Forum to St John's and led the Forum in opening worship.

He also gave a brief introduction to St John's Methodist Church. He said that

- the church had received the Eco Congregation Award for its evidenced care of the property and its concerns for the environment
- That it was running a lively Messy Church and reaching out to those who would not normally come to a church service
- The church was a Fairtrade Church and active in promoting Fairtrade throughout Sudbury which was now a Fairtrade town
- That it was a serving church and was looking towards appointing a community worker to help in this

The Forum noted that the sponsored canoe run, in which Rev John Boardman had taken part, had raised close to £1000.

2 **Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Rev Simon Gill, Margaret Tracey, Liz Webber, Patrick Kohler, Eileen and Bob Bird, David Rout, Gerry Higginson, Rev Matt Lawson and Irene Lally.

3 **Welcomes**

The Chairman welcomed Rev Bryn Rickards [Hadleigh and Sudbury URC], Pastor Mark Ulanowski [Sudbury Baptist] and David Lee [Forum Rep from Bures churches] to their first CTiS & D Forum.

4 **Minutes of 2014 AGM**

The minutes of the AGM held on October 2nd 2014 were accepted as correct and signed by the Chairman.

5 **Minutes of the previous Forum**

The minutes of the Forum held on June 25th 2015 at Shimpling were accepted as correct and signed by the Chairman.

6 **Treasurer's Report & Accounts**

The Treasurer's Report had been circulated. There were no questions. The Treasurer explained to the Forum the proposed allocations from Kettle and Fish and other sub accounts at 1st September 2015. It was proposed that:-

- Future Vision should receive £1000 as last year, to be paid £250 quarterly
- 18s-35s should be extended to include Fellowship Football and Fellowship Snooker and the allocation to be increased by £200 to £500 to be drawn on as and when required
- The events allocation to be increased by £947.73 to return it to £1,500 as last year
- Marriage Focus allocation to be decreased to £500 from £1000 as it had not been used in the past year

The resulting net amount of £1647.73 to be taken from Kettle and Fish leaving a new balance as at 1st September 2015 of £5618.30.

The Forum agreed with these proposals and approved the treasurer's report.

The Treasurer was thanked for all his work and his very concise report.

The Treasurer said that affiliation donations would be gratefully received.

He was asked about the situation with the Credit Union. He said there was nothing further to report at this stage. There have been a number of difficulties dealing with them, but £4,000 had been deposited with them.

7 **Annual Reports**

The Chairman commented that the reports showed a tremendous range of activities taking place and the reports made fascinating reading. However there were a number of areas where help was needed. Both Kettle and Fish and Agapé Café needed volunteers – particularly those who could help with setting up and clearing away. The Chairman asked reps to go back to their churches and ensure the need was emphasised.

The Fellowship Snooker Annual Report had been circulated with CTiS News on 16th September and the Fellowship Football Report would be circulated with the next CTiS News.

8 **Chairman's Remarks**

- It was hoped that the Box Valley group of churches would be joining CTiS&D soon
- A new CTiS&D leaflet had been produced which showed all the churches involved with CTiS&D and also all the projects with which CTiS&D are involved
- David Ford introduced the new Language Register which would be held by Malcolm Offord, Sheelagh Ruse, Gerry Higginson and himself. This listed all those in the area who spoke a second language and who would be prepared to be approached if ministers or others needed help with translations. All churches will receive a letter giving details. David said that if speakers of any additional languages were known, they could be added to the Register. It was hoped that this would be a very useful tool. David was thanked for all the work he had put into preparing the Register.
- The Chairman said that Sudbury Town Council was setting up a trust to manage the funds raised for victims of the recent Sudbury Fire. They hoped that a representative from CTiS&D would serve on the trust. Anyone interested in doing this should let the Chairman know.
- The Friends of St Andrews Church had organised an evening with Stuart Townend on Monday 12th October at 7.30 pm at St Peter's. Tickets were still available from Peter Halden. Peter Sebbage commented that the evening would appeal to non-Christians too.
- The Chairman reminded the Forum that there would be a united service on 18th October at 6.30 pm at the Baptist Church. It would be led by Eden's
- Andrew Stewart-Darling said that Eddie Lyall, the President of Open Doors UK & Ireland, would be coming to speak at a united service on Sunday November 1st and would be speaking on "Unshakeable Faith – stories of hope from the persecuted church". Unfortunately the planned venue had been double booked so a new venue was being sought. Rev John Boardman offered St John's if no larger venue could be found.

- Julie Mansfield from Churches Together Suffolk was welcomed to the meeting. She expressed appreciation of the enthusiasm of CTiS&D. She also drew attention to their AGM which was to be held on Wednesday 14th October. Dave Gardner would be one of the speakers.
- **Christmas Tree Festival** - this would be held 9th – 13th December. The Chairman expressed the hope that each church would purchase a Christmas tree [£16] to emphasise the Christian presence in the town. Reps were asked to take this matter back to their churches. It was hoped that CTiS&D would have a tree. If anyone wished to volunteer to dress this tree they should let Malcolm Offord know.
- **Christian Aid – the BIG Shift** – an appeal to Amber Rudd was being organised to draw attention to the fact that climate change is hitting the poorest hardest and asking her to make a commitment to phase out the burning of coal in the UK by 2023 – along with a concrete plan that gives sufficient certainty to industry and investors. A board was circulated so that anyone who wished to sign the petition could.
- **World Wide Crisis** - Rev Malcolm Hill spoke to the Forum about the crisis of refugees and wars. He said it was the worst crisis in the history of the human race. He said two questions needed to be answered.
 1. Where was God in this? He said that God is with us but that He had entrusted the earth to us and that it was up to us to make the right choices
 2. What will we do, under God, to solve this crisis? He said we needed to apply ourselves and care for people. He said he would, if the Forum agreed, draw up a paper in more detail to go out to churches. He would then like all churches to appoint 2 people to join a group to consider these issues.

David Ford said that Prayer Breakfast and Little Cornard Parish Church were donating money to the Barnabas Fund.

9 Elections

The Chairman explained the situation had changed and that it was likely that he would remain in the chair for a further year but that a lot of work would be devolved to the vice chairmen.

The following nominations had been received:-

Chairman	Malcolm Offord
Vice Chairmen	Peter Halden Lynda Sebbage Gerry Higginson
Treasurer	Peter Heard
Minutes Secretary	Gill Phillips

It was proposed that these officers should be elected en bloc. The Forum voted in favour of this proposal.

The Secretary post was still vacant but it was hoped that it might be filled before too long.

10 Ratification of Appointments

The following appointments were ratified by the Forum:-

Chairman and Manager of Kettle and Fish	Ken and Christine Steel [until the end of 2015]
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The Chairman said that a new team would be needed to run Kettle and Fish from January. He added that it is a flagship operation and it was most important to find people to do this. He asked the Forum to pray about this. Thanks were expressed to Ken and Christine for all the work they had put in over the year.

WATCH
Sudbury Town Partnership
Friends of St Peters
18s-35s

Richard Titford
Chris Proffitt
Chris Proffitt
Roger Pullan [Co-opted member]

The Forum ratified these appointments

11 **Future Vision**

Faith Marsden spoke about the opportunities that Future Vision gave to children to think and reflect about life and God. This is achieved through Open the Book and n:vision which reach many children in the area. She said that religion in the current education system is very confusing (pea soup). The chaplaincy at Thomas Gainsborough School is also very exciting. Faith said she had visited the Student Support Centre and had heard how important the chaplains' life, actions, love and compassion were to the school – they are being Jesus in the school. She said it was most important that Future Vision could continue to work in this way so asked for both financial and prayer support.

Andrew Dixey, Chair of the Future Vision Trustees, said that all the finance currently given is appreciated but that more is needed. Future Vision cannot cut their costs without losing a worker. A further £4,000 is needed this year. He said that if churches wanted to know more about the work, either he or Faith would be prepared to come and speak to the church. More stability was needed with giving on a regular basis. He suggested that if 30 people would commit to giving £8 a month it would be helpful.

Before moving on to the next item on the agenda, Peter Halden thanked Malcolm Offord on behalf of the Forum for all he had done as Chairman of CTiS&D over the years.

12 **Tim Harcourt-Powell**

Tim explained the background to his visit to Occupied Palestinian Territories. Through International Citizen Service (ICS) he was given a once-in-a-lifetime volunteering opportunity open to all 18-25 year olds, backed by the UK government. He said it gave volunteers the chance to work side-by-side with local volunteers in developing countries, to make a meaningful contribution to fighting poverty, and to gain valuable skills that will stay with them long after the 12-week placement is complete.

He said the experience was in three stages.

1. Pre-placement – volunteers needed to seek funding. He was grateful to CTiS&D for the top up contribution they had made
2. The placement – for Tim this was in Occupied Palestinian Territories
3. Action at home – this was to share what he had done and help raise awareness of the issues

He had a crash course in Arab culture guided by two young people who introduced him to the art of making coffee and to the variety of food. He found the Arab people very hospitable nevertheless he said there were some harsh realities

- All people had to carry ID cards and any movement was very restricted – by walls and checkpoints
- Palestinians are stateless

There was a budget for cultural trips and he was able to visit Lifta a Palestinian Arab village on the outskirts of Jerusalem. The population was driven out during the Arab-Jewish hostilities of 1947/48 and the efforts to relieve the Siege of Jerusalem. The village, which is mainly intact, is located on a hillside between the western entrance to Jerusalem and the Romema neighbourhood but is deserted and uninhabited. The hospitable young people capture the goodness there is in the country despite the challenges

He had worked on an advocacy film which was aimed at empowering school drop-outs. The star of the film had been a drop-out herself for economic reasons. 36% of children in East Jerusalem do not finish their schooling. Schools cannot afford to pay highly qualified teachers so the standard of education is not high. Tim said that the level of school drop-outs did not boost the economy of the society and so there was a rise in child labour and juvenile delinquency. He said that 60% of children need to use public transport to get to school - 40% because of the length of journeys created by checkpoints. There was a Youth Development Programme which offered vocational training and on-the-job training.

Tim talked about the non-violent protests. A resident of a village on the West Bank which is under military occupation protests each Friday. Their economy is basically agriculture but 60% of their land has been appropriated and a big wall has been built on it. The non-violent protests take place at the wall but they have been met with orders barked in a language they do not understand – and tear gas. They are resilient but have been arrested and beaten by the military. Tim said they represent the challenge that faces the next generation. He said that the international media is drawn to violence but there are people protesting in a non-violent way who deserve support. With international support society could be changed.

He thanked CTiS&D again for their support and said he hopes to go back and recommended those who could to go and see the situation for themselves.

13 **Any Other Business**

- Roger Pullan drew attention to the SPECTRUM 1829 Project strategic Forum for church leaders, 18-29s and leadership teams, to discuss how churches can reconnect with this age group. It will be held on Saturday October 31st, 2015. 8.00am - 12noon (continental breakfast included) at West Road Church, 68 Queen's Road, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3EW. The cost would be £10 (f/t and gap-year students £5, group discounts apply). Some free tickets available for ministers/church workers. Roger asked whether some people would consider going in view of the lack of this age group in our churches.
- Peter Halden said that the Porch Project which had originated in Hadleigh was being brought to St Andrew's, Great Cornard in October. The funding was in place but the Forum was asked to pray for this initiative.
- Malcolm Snow said that if people wished to receive the CTiS&D news, they should let him know

14 The meeting closed with the Celtic blessing.