

Minutes of CTiS and District Open Forum held at St Gregory's Church Hall at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 3rd December 2008

Apologies were received from: Rob Greenow, Jon Halden, Father Peter Brett, Rev Jamie Allen, Rev Nigel Ford and Val Ford, Diane Badrick and Chris Rowe.

The meeting was attended by 41 people from 16 churches.

1. **Welcome, reading and prayer.** A welcome was given by Rev Gregory Webb who also led the opening worship on the theme "The Light of Jesus Christ coming into the World".
2. **Minutes of the Forum of 25th September 2008.**

The minutes of the previous Forum were approved as a true record. There were no matters arising which were not covered by the agenda. It was however noted that the Chairman, Roger Pullan, and Malcolm Snow had attended Marion Bright's farewell tea on behalf of CTiS.

 - the Christmas Tree festival had started, and K&F were busy providing refreshments.
3. **Treasurer's Report**
 - As attached to the agenda. The Forum authorised all payments shown and Peter was thanked for his work.
4. **Updates**
 - a) Chelsea, a "my second year out" student reported that the **first Revive meeting** had been very successful. It had been attended by about 15 people – from 6 different churches – who have outgrown n:vision and Edens. It had included praise, Bible study, and fellowship. Meetings were currently fortnightly, but it was hoped to hold them weekly from January. The Forum approved a message of congratulations and support, to be passed back to the organisers.

Jon Halden's report on the **all-age worship evening** was shared. He said they had felt a strong presence of God and it was hoped to meet again in February. Points raised following the service were:- there needed to be more of a welcome; a café-style service might be appropriate; the advertising was not getting through to all churches despite Malcolm Snow's efforts. Forum definitely wanted the evening repeated.
 - b) Much appreciation had been expressed about the **Christmas lights** and Lynda Sebbage was thanked for all the work she had done. The star was particularly appreciated (though it was hoped it might be a little higher next year) as were the choirs from St Andrews and Sudbury Choral Society, and the Salvation Army band. Comments included reference to too much noise at the back of the church so the choir could not be heard and possible inappropriateness and fire hazard of parts of an illusionist's performance. Some of the problems were caused by the need to have entertainers indoors because of the weather. The Forum agreed it was an excellent evening.
 - c) Having read Jamie Allen's report on the **Marriage Focus Group**, and heard Jane Kohler's report, concern was expressed at the lack of church support for this initiative which was felt to be badly needed – particularly over the Christmas period. Two trained counsellors were moving away from the area. Those at No 72 often received marriage related questions. It was recognised that there was a huge potential for connecting with the community through this initiative and it was important for churches to actively support it. The Forum unanimously approved a motion, proposed by the Rev. Brian Stenner: **"We heartily support this initiative. We regret the level of support on the ground is low but we will endeavour to improve it"**. In considering how best to support it, Patrick Kohler suggested sponsorship so that more effective publicity can be achieved. Churches were exhorted to take a more active part by sending representatives to the Marriage Focus Group – who were planning a special drop-in day after Christmas to support couples who felt their marriage was under stress. The next meeting of the Group is on January 12th at 7.30 pm at St Andrews. It was noted that more copies of the Marriage booklet are needed. It is about to be re-printed.

d) The report of **Future Vision** was noted and churches were asked to consider whether anyone would be prepared to assist with the dramatic presentation of Bible stories in schools.

e) Consideration of the **draft constitution** would be postponed. It was hoped it would be available for adoption by the next Forum.

5. Connecting with the Community

a) Steve Millard gave a presentation on **Town Pastors**. He made the following points:-

- the scheme was set up in Ipswich in 2006
- there was an awareness of the need for a friendly face for youngsters on the streets particularly on Friday and Saturday nights
- there are about 80 town pastors in Ipswich who go out in pairs [one male, one female] over the hours 10 pm – 4.00 am while a prayer base prays for them.
- Ipswich Police and the Council feel a good job is being done. An evaluation report done by the police showed a considerable drop in a whole range of offences
- they carry basic equipment – water for dehydration; space blankets; chocolate bars; bags for sharps; cards giving details of how to contact town pastors and a radio linking them with the police.
- the main aims of town pastors were listed:-
 - * to bring God's love to the streets (by getting alongside people)
 - * maintain vigilance – especially for the vulnerable
 - * prioritising people's basic human needs
 - * liaising with the police – and following their advice
 - * looking after each other
 - * having evangelistic conversations only when initiated by those they meet (which in practice they quite often are)

- if the scheme were to be started in Sudbury, a voluntary co-ordinator would be needed and volunteer town pastors; there would need to be a launch meeting; training would be needed; and above all – prayer.

Questions followed to which these replies were given:-

- funding would be principally from the police and from the local council. Radios would be provided. St Johns ambulance training would be the most expensive item.
- the lower age limit for town pastors was preferably 22. There was no upper age limit – although physical fitness was required. Both men & women are needed.
- there was a vetting process. The police paid for CRB checks.

Tim Aytron (No 72) said they were happy to provide accommodation for meetings and possibly also a base for such a scheme.

The Forum was asked whether Steve should be requested to put together a detailed plan and come forward with a specific proposal. With the comments that it was important to be pro-active, and that prevention was better than cure, the Forum agreed, almost unanimously, that this should be done.

b) Tim Ayrton described the work being done at **72 North Street**. It was a base for Family and Community Network and provided a coffee shop, a book shop, and an information centre. He explained the aims of No 72, and described how informal support was given to families through:-

- drop-in for coffee
- provision of information
- recognition of the role of fathers
- running debt counselling and budgeting courses [the next course, for which referrals would be welcome, was due to start on Wednesday 21st January and run for 3 weeks]
- supporting single parents, those in marriage difficulties and those who have been bereaved.

He explained that they seek to be Jesus to those in need, and to offer hope –everything that is done is about reaching out. He invited CTiS&D members to become part of the team and/or to pray.

Tim was thanked for all the work undertaken at No 72.

c) Andrew Stewart-Darling talked about how he saw the role of the **Stour Valley Vineyard Church**. He made the following points in describing how the Vineyard Church strove to be relevant to people today.

- they try to be intentional in all they do – and rational
- they try to be prepared and not haphazard
- they try to be outward looking and are intentionally inclusive in practical ways and in language
- they operate a Storehouse – they reach out by giving time and non-perishable items which can be given out when they know of a need
- they intentionally tilt towards gathering rather than nurture and care
- they have home groups which have an outward focus
- they recognise the importance of developing 1:1 relationships; they invite people to their services; there are no buildings; the church really is the people
- “a healthy church is a reproducing church”
- people get involved in church life – and are accepted – whether they believe or not (“belonging often comes before belief”)
- they are trying to open a lot of doors into the church.

d) Matt George spoke to the Forum about the possibilities of communicating faith through the **CTiS&D website**. He believed that the internet could be used to spread the message of God’s love. Websites need to have interaction – to talk – and to be thought-provoking. He felt the CTiS&D website could be made more interactive with personal testimonies; with reports of events that have taken place; with stories; with book reviews; with links to Eden’s; and with items celebrating what CTiS&D were doing. He said we needed to be speaking the language of the people and using the opportunity to get the message to the people. He suggested CTiS&D might form a communications committee to consider how the website might be used. It was agreed EnGp should consider this issue with Matt’s help.

The Chairman thanked all the contributors for raising such important and thought provoking issues.

6. AOB

- Donations towards a gift for Marion Bright were invited.
- Prayers had been answered and £20,000 had been raised for Edens which would allow them to continue work until the beginning of the next fiscal year.
- Christmas hampers were on course – but help was still needed on Friday.
- Malcolm Snow reminded members that he needed email addresses if information was to be sent to churches.
- Michael Ross Watson would be giving his testimony of personal healing on Saturday 10th January at SBC, and leading a session of prayer and fasting, open to all, on Sunday 11th at Living Waters from 1– 5pm.
- Peter Avery was trying to collect goods together for a young lady due to give birth in February. She had been mugged and lost her maternity allowance. If anyone could help, could they contact him.
- Richard Titford reminded the meeting about Time for Reflection on Christmas Day afternoon. It was not just for the bereaved. Information and posters would be distributed shortly.

7. Date of next Forum: Thursday 12th March 2009

8. Closing Prayer

The closing prayer was led by Rev Keith Horton.

CHURCHES TOGETHER in Sudbury & District – Finances as at 29th November 2008

The balance in hand of	£4819.14	(£3984.57 on Dep't) is accounted for as follows
General Funds	735.31	(£2489.00 on general Deposit)
n:vision@sprg rent	197.20	
Kettle & Fish	2256.96	
Easter	99.35	
Way Inn	1495.57	£1495.57 on 30day notice Deposit
Prayer Breakfasts	34.75	in Current A/c

Affiliation donations for the year Sept 08 to Aug 09 have been received from: Bures Baptist, Sudbury Baptist, Christ Church URC, Cornard Christian F, St Gregorys, St Johns Methodist & St Andrews Gt Cornard.

If your Church/Fellowship is not in the list please remind the Treasurer of your Church/Fellowship that the 2008/09 affiliation donation is now due.

Current suggested donations are: small organisations £60 (£23 for general funds & £37 for n:vision rent) and £85 for larger (£33 g.f. & £52 n:vision) and these are considered adequate for this new year.

General Fund. £50 was paid to Friends of St Peters for the use for the AGM. £300 has been donated by the Prayer Breakfasts to Edens Project and paid on their behalf. £315.00 was received in relation to the Healing Ministry training and the expenses amounted to £368.58 – it was agreed that the balance of 53.58 could come out of the Kettle & Fish account. The Renewal Premium of £105 has been paid for the Ecclesiastical Public Liability Insurance. £12 was paid to Friends of St Peters for a Christmas Tree and £39.99 for decorations.

Kettle & Fish at St Peters. The net refreshment etc sales income for September to November totalled £1494.83 (aver. £166.09). £39.96 has been paid for a new Toaster, £38.07 for aprons with logo, £13.20 for replacement picture frame glass, £100 for 200 'Why Christmas?' booklets, £11 for 4 literature holders, £21.19 to St Andrews Bookshop for books sold, £221.08 for catering supplies, £20.80 to St Johns Traidcraft for tea & sugar, £51.15 to Primo Coffee & Tea Co, £390 to Friends of St Peters (7 @ £50 & 1 @ £40) & £326.97 for 4 30"x36" tables, also £100 to David Rout for his amplification help with Praise on Market Hill.

We should give 50% of any offering taken up at a service in St Peters to Churches Conservation Trust but we do not wish to deprive such as Edens therefore we have given £150 to CCT from Kettle & Fish – that being appropriate as Kettle & Fish are based in the church.

n:vision. £196.00 has been paid to All Saints Middle School as 14 weeks rent for the current term. I have been informed that n:vision@springlands will be using Woodhall Primary School as from January 2009 and the rent will be 50pence per evening lower.

Easter. The balance in hand of £99.35 will be held for a future event.

Way Inn. All funds are on deposit.

The offering of £231.96 from the October United Service has been paid to Eden's Project, for which they have thanked us.

United Services offerings have historically been for the financial support of: October – Edens Project, January – n:vision@springlands, May – Christian Aid & July – Praise in the Park costs.

Please approve the above payments.

Peter Heard
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01787 373935

REPORT ON THE SUDBURY CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON

On 28th November the brand new display of eco-friendly Christmas lights were switched on by the mayor. This was an exciting event as Churches Together in Sudbury and District were instrumental in the design of the lights and specifically the star that stands proudly atop of St Peter's Church glowing as a beacon of Christ's love for all. The idea was that the star should be seen from all roads leading into the town and this is certainly the case!

There were three choirs singing that night and grateful thanks go to Major Neville Andrews and his musicians, Sudbury Choral Society and The Rev'd Jamie Allen plus choristers from St Andrews who not only sang so well but handed out free glo-sticks to the children to illustrate the coming of the light of the world.

The evening commenced with the ringing of the bells of St Peter's to herald the opening of the event and we are grateful to the Friends of St Peter's who provided this permission and to the bell ringers from Holy Trinity Church Long Melford.

It was important to ensure a Christian presence and therefore Kettle and Fish opened supplying refreshments and details of the churches in the area.

Our endeavour is to see Christ back into Christmas through our involvement with the planning of this event. On the morning of the opening BBC Radio Suffolk interviewed me and I ensured that the Christian message and Churches Together were given coverage.

Lynda Sebbage

MARRIAGE FOCUS GROUP

We're just about to do the next "run" of the marriage Guide - so any changes, please notify me asap.

We're at the planning stage of offering (experimentally in the first instance) a special drop-in day to support couples who feel that their marriage is on the brink of break-down. We are planning to hold this in the new year (a lot of couples find Christmas a very difficult time, as you know), and would appreciate the input of as many people as possible as we pray and plan how to make this happen. Is your church represented on the Marriage Focus Group? If not, does that mean your church has nothing to say on supporting marriage as a wonderful gift of God to His children? Please do make every effort to come to our next meeting - Monday 8th December, 7.30pm at The Bannister Room, St Andrew's Church, Great Cornard. THANK YOU !

Jamie Allen

FUTURE VISION

Open the Book is a very simple way for a team of about 4 people to go into schools and tell Bible stories. The story is read from the Lion Bible Story teller book and acted in different ways by the team. It is acceptable to the schools because they know exactly what will be presented.

At the moment Future Vision is bringing it to 2 schools with another one waiting until after Christmas. We would like to get it into all schools in the area. **That requires a lot of people.**

Are you able to help or do you know anybody in your church who might like to get involved. If you do then please contact either Jo Longhurst on 01787 379468

or jolonghurst@f2s.com or Chris Rowe on 01787 370844 c.m.rowe@talktalk.net. Just to reassure you - you do not have to have great acting skills!!!

If you think a presentation of what is involved would help your church to understand then please let either of us know that as well.

Chris Rowe



What is a Town Pastor?

A Town Pastor, working as part of a team and in collaboration with the police and local council, seeks to be a positive influence principally on the streets of the town centre and other nightlife areas. Town Pastors would typically be out at the weekends in these places from around 10pm until the early hours.

The role of a Town Pastor is not primarily evangelistic but rather about listening, caring and helping young people. It is about showing concern and offering assistance where appropriate, in a non-judgmental and unconditional way.

Town Pastors seek to be a positive presence on the streets, available to offer support to vulnerable people, de-escalate potential trouble and generally assist the police and other agencies.

Expectations and Commitment

A team of four Town Pastors will be out on the streets at any one time. The team will then divide and patrol in pairs. The desire and ability to work as part of a team is therefore essential.

To be a Town Pastor you must be over 18 and a Christian who is part of a local church.

It is expected that Town Pastor teams will be out in the town centre on most Friday and Saturday nights. The teams will patrol from 10pm to around 4am on these nights. On average each Town Pastor is expected to be out one night a month.

Training

Training is an essential part of becoming a Town Pastor. Effective training also ensures we can deliver a quality service in a consistent way. Each Town Pastor *must* have completed the basic training programme before joining a team and going out.

Additional training will also be delivered and it is important that Town Pastors commit to participating in their ongoing training and development.

The basic training package will cover:

- The values, role and responsibilities of a Town Pastor.
- Alcohol and drug awareness training.
- Conflict management and personal safety.

This will be delivered in four or more training sessions. It is essential that would-be Town Pastors attend all these sessions.

Town Pastors Prayer Team

We believe effective prayer cover is vital for the Town Pastor initiative. We are therefore very keen to recruit a committed prayer team to support the Town Pastors on every occasion they are out on the streets of Sudbury.

Clearly to be most effective, the prayer cover needs to coincide with the times the Town Pastors are out on the streets. Therefore, individuals on the prayer team will need to be willing to pray at times between 10pm and 4am on the weekend nights the Pastors are on duty.

There are two distinct 'streams' that members of the prayer team can opt for.

Prayer at Home

We are seeking to recruit people who are willing to pray for an hour slot, at home, between 10pm and 4am.

Prayer at a town centre venue

We are seeking those who could join with others at a town centre venue to pray between 10pm and 4am (in communication with the Town Pastors on the streets). They also bless the Town Pastors with tea, coffee and toast when they take an occasional break.

On average, each Prayer Team Member is expected to be 'on duty' one night a month. You will be given the opportunity to indicate your availability each month.

What next?

The first thing that needs to be done is for a coordinator to be appointed to help to organise and run the scheme. Applicants are invited to contact either:

Peter Avery – 01787 372797 or email: peterkaren_avery@btopenworld.com
or

Steve Millard – 01787 370234 or email: pastor@suffolkroadchurch.org.uk

Once a coordinator is in place applicants for either Town Pastors or Prayer Team members will be sought.