Minutes of the Forum held on Monday 6th December 2010

31 members were present representing 9 churches

Apologies were received from John Boardman, Chris and Audrey Proffitt, Chris Rowe, Margaret Vogan, Betty Scrivener, and Peter Sebbage

ACTION

1 **Welcome**

A welcome was extended by the Chair to all those present. He thanked Living Waters for their hospitality.

2 **Living Waters**

Peter Avery opened the meeting with prayer. He then outlined the work that was being done by Living Waters with an emphasis on the fact that the church's mission field was just outside its doors.

He then updated the meeting on the work of the Town Pastors. He said that there were 12 pastors on the street and 20-25 people in prayer teams. He said that the work was developing into areas that had not been covered in their training and they were needing to reconsider where their base should be located as it seemed to be needed nearer the centre of Sudbury.

More town pastors needed

3 **Minutes of the Forum of October 7th 2010**

The minutes were accepted as correct and signed by the Chair. Matters arising included:

- Chris Rowe had been appointed as the Executive Secretary, but Judith Offord would continue with some of the work until Chris was able to take the role fully.
- Thanks were expressed to Judith and Malcolm Offord for all the work they had done, and continued to do, for CTiS
- Following a comment at the October Forum, it was hoped to hold the June 2011 Forum at Glemsford.

4 **Marriage Focus Update**

Roger Pullan reminded the meeting of the original aims of the Marriage Focus Group when chaired by Jamie Allen. Simon Gill, who had taken over leadership when Jamie left, had considered how the work of the MFG should be carried forward, but felt he would be unable to continue to lead it. John Clark had agreed to take over the leadership and would chair a meeting to be held on Thursday 9th December at St Johns Church at which ideas on the future work would be welcome.

Ideas for direction for MFG needed

5 **The Work of "Explore"**

Gavin Struthers was welcomed to the meeting. He spoke about the work that Explore were undertaking in Norfolk as a charity that enables young people in schools, colleges and prisons to explore the experience of couples in a Christian marriage in order to appreciate what produces healthy and enduring relationships, family life and marriage.

Mr Struthers offered help if Sudbury were to consider setting up an Explore group.

Questions were asked about how to obtain access to schools.

6 **Updates**

a) Christmas Hamper Appeal - it was reported that the first day had gone well. Requests had been received for 70 parcels from local homes. If churches were aware of names of individuals

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[1] **Leading artists represented in the Collection include:**
Graham Sutherland: *The deposition*
Georges Rouault: *"Aimez-vous les uns les autres" ("Love one another")* and *"Obéissant jusqu'à la mort et à la mort de la croix" ("Obedient unto death, even the death of the cross")*
Elisabeth Frink: *Pieta*
Eric Gill: *Annunciation*
David Jones: *The Three Kings*
F. N. Souza: *The crucifixion*
Norman Adams: Christ□s entry into Jerusalem
Edward Burra: *The pool of Bethesda*
Ceri Richards: *The supper at Emmaus*
William Roberts: *The crucifixion*

who needed a parcel they should let Peter Sebbage know. There were 22 sacks of potatoes to be distributed. Help would be welcome between 10 – 12 over the next couple of days.

b) I Spy Easter – Lynda Sebbage explained the suggestion that actors should dress up in costume representing characters from the Easter story and be around Sudbury ready to answer questions prompted by an I Spy Booklet. Costumes are already available. Eleanor Ridge was prepared to assist. The project had EnGp support. Forum approved the proposal and it was suggested that anyone interested in joining a Task Force should give their names to either Lynda Sebbage or Eleanor Ridge.

Those interested in helping with I Spy Easter to give names to LS or ER

c) Dorcas Fund - Judith Offord explained the background and purpose of the Dorcas fund. Crofton House residents were offered second-hand furniture and it was suggested it would be nice if they could be given some new items. To provide sufficient funds it was suggested that Kettle & Fish income could be tithed. Forum agreed to this proposal. Clarification was given about how else the fund could be used, A letter was going out to ministers and others confirming this.

d) Methodist Art Exhibition 2011 – Graeme Garden told the Forum about the background to the Exhibition which had been described as "the best denominational collection of modern art outside the Vatican."[1] No admission charge would be made but the cost of the exhibition would be about £8,000. He said he was very excited about the possibilities this exhibition – which would run from 16th July to 21st August - presented. He had referred to the exhibition as a "Christian Experience". A lot of help would be needed to ensure the success of the exhibition and all churches in the area would be asked to provide stewards, bookstall staff, catering assistants and hosts/hostesses. It was hoped that each church would appoint someone to collect volunteers' names from their church and pass these on to the co-ordinator, Malcolm Offord.

Churches to appoint rep to gather names of volunteers

It had been decided to call the exhibition "Art and Soul".

e) Pentecost Praise and Party in the Park – Peter Halden put forward the suggestion of the Events Group and EnGp that this year Alive on Market Hill should be replaced by an inspirational joint service in St Peters on June 11th and participation in Sudbury Town Council's Party in the Park. The Forum agreed with this proposal.

Ideas for inspirational speakers to be given to PRH

7 **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer's report had been circulated. It was noted that some affiliation fees had not yet been paid. The accounts were so clear there were no questions. Forum gave approval to items of expenditure listed in the report.

Thanks were expressed to Peter Heard for all the work he did.

8 **Future Dates**

The dates for 2011 were noted – particularly the change of date for the March Forum from Thursday 3rd March to Wednesday 2nd March. It was also noted that session 3 of the Lent course would be held on Thursday 31st March at St Andrews, Cornard.

9 **AOB**

- Lynda Sebbage said she had just negotiated a monthly column with the Mercury to be called "Church Chat". If churches had issues they wished reported, they were asked to contact Lynda.
  Thanks were expressed to Lynda for all the work she does on behalf of CTiS with the Town Council
- There would be an extra session of Kettle and Fish on the 16th December
- The Christmas Tree Festival would start on Wednesday 8th December. There were sufficient volunteers to cover Kettle & Fish

10 Peter Halden wished everyone a happy and meaningful Christmas and the meeting closed in prayer

Explore – Notes from the presentation at the Forum – 6th December 2010

Gavin Struthers explained, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the work done by Explore.

- It was started in the mid-1990's by Rex Chester, who had been married four times himself.

- He came up with the methodology of going into schools

- In Norfolk, they have been going into 5 schools for some time and are hoping to go into a further four

- They also run a workshop in Norwich prison although with constant movement it was difficult to get a full attendance at a 6 week course

- They have about 30 volunteer couples. It is a requirement that they have a Christian marriage as this is accepted and understood as the baseline in England

- Students are given the opportunity to discuss any issues relating to marriage/relationships with the volunteer couple

- Only 5% of 15-19 year olds had had serious discussions about long-term committed relationships

- The aim of "Explore" was to enable young people to explore marriage

- The Educational Principles and Focus
  - learning by experience
  - young people are taking responsibility for their own learning
  - marriage is a key institution in society rather than just an interpersonal relationship.

- Explore now uses three modes
  - run a **half-day conference** [3-3 ½] hours. They can explore their hopes and fears about having a family of their own; share their own experiences of marriage and relationships; they can see the reality of two couples' marriages and can see how problems are worked out and resolved
  - a **short workshop** when they work within the school timetable and stay in the class rather than pupils coming out of class
  - a **long workshop** – when they have 12 sessions and include in their consideration the relevance and place of marriage in today's society

- It was noted that it was important for youngsters to formulate their values at an early age