

Minutes of the CTiS Open Forum held on Wednesday 26th June 2013 at Bures Baptist Church

The Forum was attended by some 46 people representing 17 churches.

1 The Forum was welcomed by the Chairman, Malcolm Offord

2 Worship and Prayer was led by Pastor Catherine Brown

3 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Andrew Stewart-Darling, Ken Steel, Julia Mansfield, Gary Flack, Martin and Gill Sparks, Jane Kohler, Rev C White, Julia Perkins and Living Waters.

4 **Minutes of the previous Forum**

The minutes of March Forum were approved and signed by the Chair

4A **Matters Arising**

- It had been hoped to welcome the New Life Church into CTiS & District at this meeting but the leaders were unable to attend
- Andrew Stewart-Darling wished to thank all churches who had supported Storehouse. There were some new initiatives planned for the future.
- CTiS & D had been particularly active in the past few months

5 **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer's report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Treasurer explained the apparent discrepancy in the Jagfest account figures. He also said the membership fee had been received from Lavenham.

The Treasurer was asked if Crofton House had received a donation from Jagfest and it was confirmed that they had. A member thought that Crofton House should have received a larger donation. It was explained that this was outside the remit of the CTiS treasurer. Peter Sebbage clarified that a proportion of the money raised had been held back for use by Crofton House.

The Chair reminded church reps that the Dorcas Fund now had over £1000 and if anyone knew of families or individuals who might benefit from the fund, they should contact their minister or a member of the Enabling Group so the request could receive consideration.

The Treasurer was thanked for his report and for all the work that he did.

5A **Chairman's Remarks**

- Pentecost Praise had been a great success.
PRH wanted to put on record his thanks to all those teams of people who had help make it a success. He said it had been very well received. Christians in Sudbury had worshipped together in a really vibrant way.
- Explore – the first meeting of Explore had taken place at Thomas Gainsborough School
CP explained that 4 couples had taken part. Evaluation forms were now being received from students and teachers and the occasion was seen to be of benefit. The possibility of holding a similar meeting at Ormiston Sudbury Academy was

being considered.

- Peter Adams and Graham from “Through Faith Mission” were introduced. They explained that a Two Rivers Mission is planned for 3rd May – 18th May 2014. Sudbury Ministers had held a meeting and were generally in favour of taking part in this opportunity for outreach, but had suggested that CTiS & D should be involved. Rev Peter Adams was therefore asking church reps to consider whether their church would like to take part. The idea was to go where the people are rather than to expect them to come to church. The outreach would be undertaken by local church members who would have the training and support of the mission team. The staff includes evangelists who can be invited to assist with town centre meetings. An information pack had been put round explaining the two prongs of the mission:
 - local meetings in local areas
 - town centre mission with an evangelistTeam members are taught gentle, non-aggressive yet bold evangelism. CTiS&D needed to decide whether there should be a town centre mission in Sudbury.
- Springlands – Keith Joiner introduced himself as the leader of Springlands Christian Fellowship since Ian Copeman had stepped down. They wished to evangelise in Springlands and had found the MSM course very helpful. They were only a small team and would welcome any support and prayers for what they were doing. They also asked if it was possible for someone to be a mentor and to give spiritual oversight.

6 **Future Events**

- The next prayer breakfast would be at Bulmer and members were encouraged to support this event.
- Rev. Dr. Gamal Makkar from Damascus would be speaking at St Gregory’s Church Sudbury this Sunday, June 30th - 5.30 - 7pm
- On 5th August the sponsored canoe paddle would take place. MS reminded the meeting that for every £1 sponsored, the EU would add a further £3. This year the funds raised would be put towards projects in Lebanon, and the YMCA in Jerusalem. Anyone interested in either canoeing – or sponsoring – could get in touch with either Rev John Boardman or Malcolm Snow. MS added his thanks to all those who had supported Christian Aid in any way this year. The Chair reminded the meeting that a new organiser for Christian Aid needed to be found as MS wished to retire from this post.
- Party in the Park would be taking place on Sunday 21st July. Future Vision would be running an activity and would be glad of help.
- Spectrum would be running a course on Saturday October 12th on iChurch which would help people understand the value of social media in the outreach of the church. It would be a day course costing about £20 and would be held at Sudbury Baptist Church. Publicity would be out at the beginning of September but people needed to book the date. Spectrum would be dealing with the administration.
- The Future Vision barbecue was the next Saturday.

7 **Future Vision**

Lesley gave the meeting an outline of how Future Vision was working

- It is a Christian Charity set up in 1991 on the Springlands estate
- It started as a holiday club
- Then a Sunday School was started but this was not popular so it became a Monday evening club – which it still is
- Its aim is to share the gospel with school age children

- It goes into 5 primary schools and runs after school clubs
- It has run 3 middle school clubs but now these schools are closing it is hoped to get into both Thomas Gainsborough School and Ormiston Sudbury Academy
- They run “Open Book” assemblies in 10 primary schools which means they make contact with 1300 children over 2 weeks.
- They try to work with the local church to get a team together. The teams can be of different denominations so are a witness to unity
- A major activity is Life Path organised by Ian Copeman
- Everyone was thanked for the response to the request for funding which enables the work to continue
- Pupils and teachers respond to Open Book assemblies because they are simple and visual

The team then gave a presentation of Jesus calling his disciples – which was thoroughly appreciated by the meeting.

8 **Mission Shaped Ministry**

Chris Rowe reported on the MSM course she had attended.

- The course had started last October and had taken place on Tuesdays and some Saturdays and had just finished
- It had been really challenging
- 13 people from Sudbury had attended
- They had learnt:
 - one can be small but one can still go out
 - integrity is important – our lives need to speak as evangelism
 - evangelism is not always having to proclaim – it can be listening

To emphasize the last point, CR read an extract from a book.

- CR said the course was well worth doing. The next course starts in October and she has the details if needed.

9 **Reports from Churches that make up the District**

Great Waldingfield and Acton

- Great Waldingfield have a Poppy meeting place for anyone who would like coffee and a chat
- Acton has a similar activity – a drop-in centre once a month
- N:vision and Open the Book run in both primary schools
- Rock Solid is a Youth Club in Great Waldingfield School for 4-7 year olds
- Solid Rock is a club for 12+
- An Easter workshop had been held this year with more than 50 children attending
- A Sunday Club meets at Acton Village Hall once a month and then they go into church for a family service
- They have held Lent lunches – and this has developed into a regular lunch club
- Every year they hold a safari supper – a good opportunity to get to know each other
- There are 4 lay elders who assist in providing pastoral care
- A group of about 70 went to Sizewell Hall for 4 days – tiring but fun
- In warmer weather they host prayer breakfasts
- They have house groups
- They have 2 lay readers and two in training

PS asked if there had been any feedback on Jagfest. It was thought it had been thoroughly enjoyed

Glensford

- Part of Glem Valley United Benefice
- St Mary's is an active church with a number of services
- The Methodist church has a weekly evening meeting
- There is a Tuesday evening Fellowship Study Group held at the Rectory
- A coffee shop is held on Tuesday mornings at the Old School Hall – an opportunity for coffee and a chat
- The 'Contact' magazine serves the whole benefice
- Christians Together in Glensford meet in the Parish Church to discuss what the two churches can do together
- A monthly service is held at the Briars
- There is a weekly assembly at the Primary School
- The local multi-agency forum has church representation on it.

Bures Baptist

- Praying for the village is the main focus
- There is a monthly prayer meeting and also a monthly prayer meeting with the Parish Church
- The vision statement has just been finalised and includes the components Grow, Share and Serve
- There is a toddler group
- Youth work continues to grow – prayers are requested for the work with Thomas Gainsborough School
- Coffee mornings are held
- There are 4 house groups – each catering for different needs
- They hope to develop more opportunities to share faith and reach out in appropriate ways

Lavenham

A report from Lavenham is attached to the minutes

Long Melford

It was noted that Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford was in an interregnum and was waiting on the Lord

10 **Any Other Business**

- PS said that he had recently run a workshop on evangelism and was prepared to run it again for anyone who would like it.
- It was noted that the Croziers [Salvation Army] would be retiring. Best wishes were extended to them.

11 **Date of Next Forum**

The next Forum, which would include the AGM would be held on Wednesday 2nd October 2013 and would be hosted by Springlands Christian Fellowship in Suffolk Road Church

The report from Lavenham follows:

Church of St Peter and St Paul, Lavenham

Report to Churches Together in Sudbury & District Forum 26 June 2013

Firstly an apology that no one was available to give this report in person this evening. After just over two years with a priest—in-charge (following almost 2 years of interregnum), Rev Stephen Earl was instituted as rector of Lavenham with Preston St Mary, by Bishop Nigel, in December last year. At about the same time he was appointed Rural Dean. This coming Sunday Mark Woodrow — fresh from theological college — will be ordained as Deacon at the Cathedral and will be with us as curate for the next three years, prior to taking his own parish.

With the blessing of our Archdeacon we ran a yearlong trial using a nave altar which culminated with a survey of our congregation's opinions revealing an exact 50/50 division of opinion on the matter! The decision was therefore taken to alternate between the (moveable) nave altar and high altar on a weekly basis. For our Lent course this year we arranged a series of five meetings on the subject of prayer among the great religions of the world — this was very well attended, not just by those living in Lavenham. After a break of a few years we have now reinstated a monthly Fair Trade stall in church after the Sunday morning service. We are currently going through a "working together" initiative designed to make the church members aware of the tasks that others are undertaking with a view to better using the talents and experience of all.

During April we ran a Gift Day with letters being delivered to almost all residential and business addresses in Lavenham (in addition to our own congregation). This resulted in generous donations from churchgoers and non-churchgoers alike totalling over £4000, plus Gift Aid to be claimed.

Unfortunately not all the news is good and we have not had positive outcomes for all initiatives. For many years there has been little or no children's work in the parish but Stephen Earl has attempted the difficult task of getting children's work underway at Lavenham. Unfortunately despite the best efforts of Abi, our rector's wife, the struggle to encourage children to meet at the rectory, prior to joining the main Sunday morning service in the church, failed to attract support and has had to be abandoned. Earlier this year a monthly non-Eucharistic family service was introduced at our sister church of Preston St Mary but despite a promising start this too has failed to live up to expectations and has been dropped. This year there was a complete revision of the church electoral roll, which takes place every six years, and in the case of Lavenham this now totals 112 (compared with 183 on the old roll). The fall is not wholly surprising given the age profile of our congregation — it is quite amazing how many nonagenarians we have! — nevertheless newcomers have helped boost the attendance at services.

On a positive note the Lavenham churches, including the Salvation Army and Roman Catholic community produce the local parish magazine known as Lavenham Life which has both church and general parish news and is highly appreciated in the town. The church has the benefit of a large seating capacity and excellent acoustics which make it popular for concerts of which there will be 12 or 13 this year alone. We have also been able to donate to those holding charity fund—raising events in our church as part of our secular giving. For the

first time we recently hosted a CTiS prayer breakfast in Lavenham (at the village Hall) which we felt was a very friendly and encouraging occasion. Last Saturday 24 of us attended an away-day in the Cathedral lecture room where Dr John Parr led a discussion about the future direction of our church.

Financially things are tough. The dreaded 'quota' for this year is set at £65,000 — an increase of £10,000 compared with 2012; this, coupled with a large church to maintain and a hefty heating bill presents a daunting target. The donations of our congregation alone cannot meet this expense so a lot of effort is put into fundraising. We do gain a significant amount of income from tourist purchases in our church shop and second-hand book stall (the latter has just reached a staggering £50,000 in its first five years of operation). Somehow we have always managed to pay the quota in full and aim to do the same this year.

Last year we received the latest quinquennial report on our church building which recommended work totalling in the region of £150,000 over the next five years, however we have only about £20,000 in our fabric fund so will be undertaking only the most pressing work in the foreseeable future.

We have sent a representative to the bishop's 'local giving advisor' initiative meetings which aim to appoint someone in each parish who will champion the congregation's whole approach to giving. At the most recent of these, entitled "engaging with the local community", we were told that a Facebook page is more or less essential. Now, when I find out what a Facebook page ACTUALLY IS

Graham Patrick (churchwarden)

The "quota" in the Church of England is also known as "Parish Share". It is paid by individual churches to the diocese and is used to cover the cost of clergy (pay, pension, NI, housing, training etc) as well as other costs of running the diocese.