



Churches Together in Sudbury & District

Minutes of the Forum held on Wednesday 9th December 2015 at Living Waters Fellowship

The Forum was attended by 27 people from 14 churches.

1 **Welcome, Opening Worship and Update from Living Waters**

Karen Avery welcomed the Forum to Living Waters and opened the meeting with prayer.

Rev Peter Avery told the Forum that this was a significant time for the Apostolic Church. On 24th January 2016 they would be celebrating 100 years of being a denomination. A whole year's celebrations were planned ending with a massive event in Chelmsford.

Missionaries have been sent out by the Apostolic Church all over the world. There are about 9,000 members in the UK. In New Zealand, and other areas of the world, the primary church is the Apostolic Church. It is planned to double the membership.

For the centenary celebrations a baton had been made in Kenya and will be travelling round the world to all churches. The baton will be coming to Sudbury on 3rd and 4th February. There will be a celebratory service on the Wednesday evening and the church hoped to be out on Market Hill on the Thursday although it had not yet been decided what would take place. Information would be circulated in the New Year and Living Waters hoped they would be supported by CTIS&D.

The baton would be passed from Sudbury to Luton. It was noted that, sadly, Luton's pastor had just died and prayers for his wife Marcia and their children were requested.

The national leader of the Apostolic Church was a Biafran refugee as a child. The incoming national leader's grandfather was one of the first of those converted in Australia.

Living Waters would be holding a Christmas dinner for about 60 people the following week.

2 **Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Peter Halden, Ann Smythe, David and Pat Ford, Rev Ruth Ridge, Elke Cattermole, Lynda Sebbage and Patrick Kohler.

3 **Minutes of the previous Forum**

The minutes of the Forum held on September 30th 2015 were accepted as accurate and were signed by the Chairman.

4 **Matters arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

5 **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer's Report recording the finances as at 27th November had been circulated. The Treasurer was thanked for all his work. Points made were that:-

- The balance is substantial
- The Dorcas Fund is growing and needs to be used.
- Affiliation donations were coming in but churches who have not yet sent their donations in were asked to do so
- It was thanks to Kettle and Fish – and to Ken and Christine Steel – that the financial situation was so healthy

6 **Appointment of Secretary and co-opted members**

The Chairman said that the Rev Ruth Ridge, a Methodist minister attached to the Bury St Edmunds Circuit had agreed to take on the role of Secretary to CTIS&D. She had already been working hard for CTIS&D and wished to be involved. The Chairman said she was most welcome.

Roger Pullan served as a co-opted member of the Enabling Group because of his involvement with

the 18-35 Task Group. Tim Ayrton was co-opted onto the Enabling Group in order to represent No 72.

These appointments were confirmed.

7 **Chairman's Business**

- The Christmas Tree Festival was taking place between 9th and 13th December. Several churches and church schools have trees decorated with a Christian theme.
- The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity would start with a united service on 17th January at All Saints. During the following week a number of churches would be hosting lunch-time services. Arthur Dalglish asked what was planned for day 8 of the week. The Chairman said that in the past churches had arranged pulpit exchanges. It was up to individual churches.
- The Secretary had prepared a list of all the Christmas services taking place in and around Sudbury. People were asked to take copies to display on notice boards or to give to local hotels.
- Lent
 - nothing had yet been organised by Churches Together
 - it was a sadness that it had not been possible for some years for churches to meet together for Lent
 - Rev Simon Gill said that All Saints would be running a course called "Generous God: Generous People". It was a Bible Study designed for 40 days. A booklet was being produced to go alongside the Bible Study which would provide material for worship. If any churches wished to join with All Saints they should get in touch with Simon.
- Easter – nothing had been planned yet but the importance of a Christian presence in Sudbury at this time was very important. A sub-group of the Enabling Group was considering what might be done.

8 **Our News and Updates**

A Recent Visit to the Lebanon

Roger and Jill Pullan gave an illustrated talk about their visit to the Lebanon. They told the Forum the following:-

- 22nd November was Lebanon Independence Day
- The opening words of the Lebanese national anthem are "we are all for the nation" –a good cry in troubled times.
- Lebanon is 120 miles long, 50 miles wide.
- The population consists of 4 million Lebanese; ½ million Palestinian and 2 million Syrian refugees
- Lebanon is a unique 'confessional' state: the President has to be Christian, the PM Sunni, the Speaker of Parlt. Shia. Jill explained the reason for the division in Islam between Sunni & Shia.
- They had visited 3 Christian projects
 1. Home of Hope in Beirut - this is a street children's home. Children are brought in by the police and latterly there have been a lot of Syrian children. The children have nothing – no papers and no future. It is a Christian home. The building is 6 floors high and in bad repair. Money has to be raised from abroad as Lebanon has no money. All children receive some education. House parents, volunteers from local churches and older children care for the younger ones.
 2. The Bread of Life School in North Lebanon for Syrian children. There are 40 children – and a waiting list of 30. They learn Arabic and English. Its run by a UK missionary couple.
 3. A Church near Beirut supporting many Syrian refugees.
- RP's main project is the provision of careers guidance for students. In 1991 he had been told of the urgent need for careers advice. Roger then prepared a full programme with help from UK careers teachers. He had hoped someone would take over the role when he left in '98. Only in 2014 did the British headteacher of an Evangelical School in Beirut (1500 students) decide to

appoint a full-time careers counsellor. Roger has been mentoring him by skype, email & visits since then, again with UK support. The programme also runs in the Lebanese Evangelical School in Tyre (950 students, mostly Muslim, but offers clear Christian teaching). They have a part-time careers counsellor under RP's training who is also a pastor.

- Roger concluded by saying that Lebanon is an incredibly beautiful place. He added
 - Don't ever think that God has given up on your dream
 - Don't ever think about retirement!
- He added that he had just spoken to the award winning careers advisor from Thomas Gainsborough School who had agreed (with the HM's full support) to be part of the UK support for the Lebanese schools' careers programme.

Peter Sebbage asked whether Muslims had been invited to the Crib Service at St Gregory's. It was confirmed that they had.

Penny Thewlis asked what careers were available to Lebanese students. Roger said there were 40 universities and a lot of opportunities – they included engineering, building, medicine, pharmacy, music/art, media studies, teaching and nursing.

The Chairman asked about the doctrinal differences between Sunni and Shia. Jill explained there were very few.

The Chairman thanked the Pullans for their presentation.

Trust for Sudbury Fire Victims

The Chairman said that the Trust had been set up and the first meeting would be held shortly.

Fellowship Snooker

Nigel Smith reported it had run successfully for a number of years. It was a major outreach opportunity. There were about 72 players – equally balanced church and non-church members. There were teams and leagues and matches were played on Sunday evenings. The website explained that it was “snooker that seeks to reflect the Christian love and friendship that Jesus taught his disciples”. There was a break for food and grace was said. It was also an opportunity for people to ask for prayer. It was for all ages – and for men and women.

Fellowship Football

A report from Mark Gillett – the CTiS&D Team Overseer - which was shared with the Forum is attached to these minutes.

Roger said there had been a lot of discussion recently about the progression from activities such as Fellowship Football and Fellowship Snooker to discipleship. He said that Rev Simon Gill would be speaking about this later.

Arthur Dalglish commented that the both Fellowship Football and Fellowship Snooker honour and respect the Christian ethos. This was an excellent outreach to non Christians.

The Chairman suggested it would be good if CTiS&D could support these initiatives.

Kettle and Fish

Ken Steel thanked all those who had been involved, and would be involved, in serving refreshments at the Christmas Tree festival. It has provided an opportunity to talk to customers about Kettle and Fish. He said:-

- He was concerned about how few churches knew about Kettle and Fish despite the efforts of Malcolm Snow through the Church News.

- More people are being recruited to help from different areas, not necessarily churches.
- He said that help would always be welcome in all areas on a Thursday. Welcomers and door openers were particularly needed at the moment.
- There would be a team meeting on the third Thursday in January
- Kettle and Fish would be open for four Thursdays in January and for four Thursdays in February
- There was a lot to look forward to – but it may be the last year for Kettle and Fish until planned renovations to St Peter’s had been completed
- St Peter’s was the second most used redundant church in the UK
- Each Thursday, more than 300 people come through the door
- One thing needed for Kettle and Fish to continue to be successful was commitment. Support was needed from CTiS&D
- Anyone who wanted to know more could come to Kettle and Fish on a Thursday

The Chairman emphasised that CTiS&D appreciated all that Ken and Christine do for Kettle and Fish.

Storehouse

It was noted that Storehouse particularly needed at this time of year main meals, UHT milk and Christmas treats.

9 Your Views

- The Chairman said that if anyone had any ideas about Lent or Easter next year they should email himself or Gill Phillips.
- Peter Sebbage said they would be conducting the walk of witness at Easter. He hoped it would be well supported.

10 Any Other Business

- Graham Gilbert said that there would be a quiz night on 12th March at St Gregory’s
- Rev Simon Gill said that, in connection with the reports on Fellowship Football and Fellowship Snooker, consideration was being given to how to help people move from meeting socially for football or snooker to a level of commitment. In the New Year it was hoped to explore new ideas such as “Grill the Vicar” sessions.
- Rev Peter Avery recommended a “Testimonial Book” priced £9.99. All proceeds from the sale would go to charities. Karen would order copies as required. He added that despite rumours, he had not retired as pastor or from Sudbury
- The Chairman thanked Living Waters for their hospitality.

11 Closing Prayer

Rev Peter Avery closed the Forum with a prayer.

Fellowship Football – CTIS&D team update December 2015

The football season is well underway and all the teams are back in action with a few new faces appearing together with many familiar ones.

A total of 8 different teams have entered the League this year and the abilities and ages of the teams remain quite a mixed lot! I think it is fair to say that the CTIS&D team continues to represent this well, with the addition of a couple of younger faces but also probably the team with some of the oldest players (who said you had stop playing in your 60's!) As an Overseer, I definitely want our team to have this mix of ages but also that teams in the league must also make room for players of lower abilities, and for our part it is definitely not "win at all costs" within the CTIS&D team. We may lose one or two players that are not accustomed to losing most weeks and feel the team is not for them. However, the motto: *Fellowship First, Football Second* is one which I believe the CTIS&D team should hold strongly to.

As a League I feel we must be welcoming to all abilities and have more teams involved moving forward where players can find their place and more importantly more young (and old!) men are brought under the influence of the Gospel, that is key to what we do. We also had our first Soul Café on Dec 7th where all the teams get together socially for an interactive quiz and where there is the opportunity for a short talk which relates to Faith.

Please continue to hold the CTISD team and the League in your prayers.

Mark Gillett – New Life Church - CTIS&D Team Overseer