

**Minutes of the Forum of Churches Together in Sudbury & District  
held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020 at the Salvation Army**

The Forum was attended by 35 people from 13 churches

1	<p><b>Welcome and Opening Worship</b> Major Georgina Pinches welcomed the Forum to the Salvation Army Citadel.</p> <p>She said that their programme of work included providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• day care on two days a week serving older people</li> <li>• Little Angels toddler group</li> <li>• Coffee mornings</li> <li>• Meet each Other</li> <li>• Bible Study</li> <li>• Service to the homeless in the community [helping to find emergency accommodation] and provision of tents, bedding, clothes, and toiletries</li> </ul> <p>In addition they work with the government on anti-human trafficking and they run a charity shop. They were involved with Red House and were grateful to CTiS&amp;D for their support for the Christmas appeal which supported over 150 young people and young parents with items needed for Christmas.</p> <p>She then led the Forum in opening worship using prayers prepared by the churches in Malta for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.</p>
2	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies were received from Judith Offord, Rev Chris Ramsey, Clare Lodge, Gerry Higginson and Nicki Dixon.</p> <p>Peter Halden took the Chair in the absence of Gerry Higginson</p>
3	<p><b>Minutes of Forum and AGM held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019</b> The minutes of the January Forum were approved as accurate and signed by the Chairman.</p>
4	<p><b>Matters Arising</b> Item 7 – a report on the current situation with regard to the Fairtrade Group would be given under item 7 Item 10 – the Christmas event suggested by Rev Tom Mumford had been put on hold until Christmas 2020 Item 10 – there would be no joint Lent course due to lack of support. A note of all Lent courses running in the area would be circulated soon. Item 10 – nothing specific had been planned for Easter this year Item 11 – An open meeting on Christian-Muslim dialogue would be led by Colin Chapman on 9<sup>th</sup> February at 3.00 pm at St John's Methodist Church.</p>
5	<p><b>Treasurer's Report</b> A copy of the Treasurer's report showing finances as at 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 had been circulated.</p> <p>The Treasurer said that one of the two missing cheques had turned up. It was hoped that the second might re-appear.</p> <p>The Chairman reminded the meeting that some affiliation donations were still outstanding.</p> <p>The Treasurer was thanked for all the work that he does.</p>

6	<p><b>Chairman's Remarks</b> The Chairman's remarks are attached at Appendix A.</p>
7	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Andrew Dixey appealed for help with <b>setting up Kettle and Fish</b> on Wednesday afternoons. He explained that a number of volunteers were unable to undertake the heavy lifting involved. Churches were asked to appeal to their congregations for volunteers.</li> <li>• <b>Women's World Day of Prayer</b> – the Chairman asked if any arrangements for celebrating the Women's World Day of Prayer in Sudbury could be notified to Ruth Ridge. A service would be held at 2.30 pm on Friday March 6<sup>th</sup> in Glemsford to which everyone was welcome.</li> <li>• Malcolm Snow reported that Nicki Dixon had agreed to chair the <b>Sudbury Fairtrade group</b>. It was hoped that every church – and individual - would commit to Fairtrade. He said that new people with a passion for Fairtrade were needed to continue working to ensure that Sudbury retained its Fairtrade status. An appeal would be made through the next edition of Church News. Volunteers need not necessarily be Christians.</li> <li>• Malcolm Offord thanked the churches who had taken part in the <b>Christmas tree Festival</b>. He said that nearly £5,000 had been raised which would be divided between the Friends of St Peter's, Success after Stroke and CAB. It was planned to have another festival in 2020.</li> </ul>
8	<p><b>News and Your Views</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rev Canon Cheryl Collins said Richard Stainer, World Development Advisor for the Anglican diocese, will be coming to St Gregory's on Sunday 23 February to talk about Fairtrade. She added that the three Anglican churches would be holding a film-based Lent course. If anyone wished to attend a local group, they should contact her to find out where their nearest group would be.</li> <li>• Major Pinches introduced Pam who was fundraising for the Sudbury Salvation Army. Donations could be made through Pam's just-giving page.</li> <li>• Andy Jowitt said that Foxearth would be an ideal place for prayer. Any church wishing to meet there or to have a prayer walk organised would be welcomed and guidance could be given.</li> <li>• Malcolm Snow drew attention to the list of CTiS&amp;D dates for 2020 which had been circulated with Church News. He offered to add anyone wishing to receive Church News to the distribution list. A copy of the list of dates is attached to these minutes at Appendix B</li> </ul>
9	<p><b>Rob McNeish – Number 72 – “Supporting Families”</b></p> <p>Mr McNeish introduced his subject by making the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family units are breaking down making it more difficult to bring up children</li> <li>• Britain is the leading country for broken families</li> <li>• One third of all children under 15 do not live with both parents</li> <li>• The implication of broken families is vast</li> <li>• It is necessary to look at the root cause of the breakdown of families</li> <li>• As Christians we can help to find a solution</li> </ul> <p>He then described who Number 72 were. He said that The Family and Community Network was founded in 2007, with a vision to help families and individuals to deal with the various challenges of modern day life although they recognised that they would never be able to mend all situations.</p> <p>They currently operate out of their café and drop-in centre in North Street, Sudbury, as well as having team members who work in a number of local schools.</p>

All the staff and volunteers are DBS checked and have experience of working with children, young people and families. In addition members of the team hold qualifications in dealing with issues such as bereavement and loss, anger management and self-esteem. Mr McNeish emphasised the work was a team effort and that an increasingly long list of help was being offered.

He described the work that they do as follows:

Support and advice is provided to families and individuals living in Sudbury and the surrounding area. Working with either groups or individuals they are able to help in areas such as

- Parenting advice and courses
- Debt management and budgeting
- Dealing with bereavement and loss
- Relationship issues
- Loneliness

He emphasised that all services are strictly confidential. He added that they are continuously expanding and adapting the services they provide to meet the changing needs that people have and can now offer help and advice

- to parents and carers of children with special needs
- To those suffering from domestic abuse
- To parents on drug problems

Mr McNeish then described how the work was carried out. He said that they would start with an informal chat at the Centre. This could be followed as appropriate by

- one to one appointments
- home visits
- school appointments
- provision of ongoing support

All those seeking help or advice were assured that however long it took, support would continue.

Most people had complex issues. They were helped to break down their problems into “manageable chunks”, and an action plan was devised for each issue. They might be guided to other agencies who could help, but Number 72 would continue to be the central point of contact.

Mr McNeish thanked CTiS&D for their support – then posed the following questions for Forum to consider:

- What sort of support can local churches offer to families?
- How can churches make contact with families?
- How can we build on those contacts?
- How can we introduce the gospel into those relationships?

The Forum discussed these questions and these points were made:

- Sinners needed to feel welcome in churches – even if they did not feel comfortable
- Organisations such as MeetUpMonday or Who Let the Dads Out? could be set up
- Introducing the gospel could be approached through cafés or Messy Church
- If seed has been planted, it is possible that people will come to us and ask questions
- Jesus was a role model on how to witness – He got involved with people’s messy lives
- Churches needed to offer acceptance without condemnation.

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**Prayer Time and closing with the grace**

The Forum spent 10 minutes in prayer then closed with the Grace at 9.10 pm

## Update on Vision for the Future of CTiSD

Following the discussions at the 2019 January forum, the feedback was analysed and key areas for development were identified.

The discussion highlighted that more opportunities for prayer were needed. In addition to the prayer breakfasts, which continue to run regularly, we came together for prayer in the town on Pentecost at the 'Bow Down' event. The July forum was focused on prayer and fellowship and longer prayer times have been encouraged at each forum meeting. The united service for WPCU this year also focused on prayer for the area and it is hoped that we will hold another 'Bow down' event this Pentecost.

Feedback indicated that less formal 'business' meetings and more opportunities for fellowship would be valued. The number of EnGroup meetings has reduced to 4 per year with the opportunity to hold more if required. There is also a move to keep formal business to a minimum at forum and to allow for discussions and fellowship over food. It is hoped that each year the four forums will consist of an AGM, a discussion, a fellowship and prayer evening and a speaker event.

Discussion about representation is ongoing and it is hoped that a small amount of restructuring will mean that reps have less commitments and responsibilities, whilst maintaining a voice for each church. A working group is looking at changes to the constitution to reflect this and will bring proposals to EnGroup and to the 2020 AGM.

A hope was expressed that we might organise a joint community event and a shared Lent course, however this has not come about yet. Enthusiasm is there in theory, but very few people are willing or able to take on organising these and churches are reluctant to let go of their 'in house' Lent courses. This will be re-examined for 2021. A Christmas Eve event in town could be the basis for a possible joint community activity?



## Diary Dates For 2020

### Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Day 1: Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> January, 8 – 9:30 am, *Prayer Breakfast at Cornard Christian Fellowship*

**Day 2: Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January, 6:30 pm,**

***United Service at Sudbury Baptist Church. Speaker: Rev Mark Ulanowski***

Day 3: Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January, 12:30, *St Andrew's Church, Great Cornard*

Day 4: Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January, 12:30, *All Saints' Church Hall, Sudbury*

Day 5: Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 12:30, *Long Melford United Reformed Church*

**Day 6: Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 7 for 7.30pm, Open Forum at Sudbury Salvation Army**

*Rob McNeish: Talk & Discussion: No.72 Supporting families*

Day 7: Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January, 12:30, *Sudbury Catholic Church*

Day 8: Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January, 8 – 9:30 am, *Prayer Breakfast at New Life Church*

*Refreshments will be provided after most services.*

### 24 February to 8 March – Fairtrade Fortnight

**Thursday 30 April - Open Forum**, 7 for 7.30pm at St Mary's Church, Bures

**Sunday 10 May – United Service for Christian Aid**, 6.30pm at Gt Waldingfield Church

**Sunday 10 to Saturday 16 May – Christian Aid Week**

**Sunday 17 May – A Rocha Open Air Service**, 3pm at Foxearth Meadows Nature Reserve

**Sunday 30 May - Pentecost**

**Thursday 9 July - Open Forum** 7.30pm at St Andrew's, Gt Cornard (BBQ from 6.30pm?)

**Monday 5 October - AGM & Open Forum**, 7 for 7.30pm at St John's Methodist Church

**Sunday 18 October - United Service**, 6.30pm, led by Eden's

**Sunday 6 December – United Service for Hospice**, 3pm, in St Peter's

**Wednesday 9 December to Sunday 13 December – Christmas Tree Festival**, in St Peter's, 10am to 6pm (4pm on Sunday)

### Prayer Breakfasts, Saturdays, 8 – 9.30 am. All are welcome

11-Jan-20	98 Melford Road	29-Feb-20	St Andrew's (at Wells Hall Old School)
18-Jan-20	Cornard Christian Fellowship		
25-Jan-20	New Life Church	07-Mar-20	Sudbury Baptist Church
01-Feb-20	Glemsford Methodist Church	14-Mar-20	St John's Methodist Church
08-Feb-20	Suffolk Road Church	21-Mar-20	At Suffolk Road Church, hosted by St Gregory's
15-Feb-20	Sudbury Baptist Church	28-Mar-20	Little Cornard Parish Church
22-Feb-20	St John's Methodist Church		



**Kettle & Fish** – Refreshments, Christian contact and resources.

Thursdays, 9.45am to 2pm in St Peter's. *Dates may change at short notice.*

January 9, 16, 23, 30; February 13, 20, 27; March 19, 26.

See also Google online calendar under "Calendar" on

**[churchestogetherinsudbury.org.uk](http://churchestogetherinsudbury.org.uk)**