

Minutes of the CTiS&D Forum held on Thursday 27th April 2023 at St Mary's Bures

30 people from 14 churches attended the Forum.

1. The Forum was welcomed to St Mary's by the Revd Daniel Whiffen.
2. The opening prayers were led by Revd Daniel Whiffen
3. Apologies were received from Revd Simon Pitcher and from Peter Heard. Revd Daniel Whiffen was welcomed to his first CTiS&D Forum

4. **Speaker: Parvin Stewart on SAT7**

Mrs Stewart introduced herself explaining that she had grown up in Iran where Christian outreach was not possible. Circumstances had brought her to England where she had gone to university but she and her husband were not able, because of the political situation, to return to Iran. A friend had suggested that possibly her mission field was to be in England and she had started working with SAT7 - a Christian satellite television network broadcasting in Arabic, Persian and Turkish across 25 countries in the Middle East and North Africa, along with about 50 countries in Europe. She made the following points:

- If we think of Iran, we think of conflict, poverty, revolution and despair
- 15 million people had been forced to leave their homes
- It was very difficult to be a Christian in Iran – so where was God in all this?
- Only 3% of the population are Christian and they are likely to be persecuted

There was however another story of faith, love and hope.

She said that SAT7 broadcasts throughout the year bringing a positive message about Jesus right into people's homes which gives a fresh perspective of hope. The SAT7 vision is to see a growing church in the Middle East and North Africa, confident in the Christian faith and witness, serving the community. The educational channel provides education which contributes to the good of the whole society. Additionally there are health programmes and culture programmes. SAT7 depends on donations.

SAT-7 PLUS was the region's first on-demand streaming service of Christian content and was leaving an amazing impact in the Middle East and North Africa. Television programmes were available to everyone and were accessible to everyone even if they could not read or write. At each studio there were teams of support volunteers. Women, children and discipleship were the 3 key areas for SAT7 Plus. Audience engagement had increased since the Taliban had taken over. She added:

- Programmes were made by indigenous people.
- Prayer support would be valued.
- Any support given could be selective ie focussed on a particular area of outreach.

Mrs Stewart was thanked for her most interesting presentation.

5. Prayer Breakfast

Andy Jowitt said that all was going well with the breakfasts being organised by Malcolm and Judith Offord and himself. A new rota starting in June was being prepared. He emphasised the importance of the work.

6. Church News

a) Daniel Whiffen outlined what was happening at **Bures**. He said that the 3 churches were very keen on hospitality. The church was also developing a relationship with the school. They were wanting to be more “loving the Lord Jesus”.

b) Andrew Dixey spoke about **Open the Book**. He said that Ingrid Morelli had been appointed and that work in schools was starting again. He added that there was need for more volunteers to go into the schools to help with acting out the stories which would only take 45 minutes to one hour a week. He said that they would like churches to be more involved. It would be great to have a representative from each church on the planning group. Open the Book needed more money but even more it needed prayer. He emphasised how enthusiastic both children and staff were about Open the Book assemblies. He asked that those attending Forum could take these requests back to their churches.

c) Lesley Mitchell gave an update on **No 72**. She said that Tim was on a sabbatical and two people had left – leaving only 4 people. She had taken over as Manager in January. She outlined some of the work with which No 72 was involved which included:

- Supportive listening in TGS every week
- Taking Social Services referrals and
- Debt work

She suggested the points for prayer were:

- The need for more staff
- The need for wisdom and guidance for those dealing with despair, heartbreak and debt
- The need for more funding

d) Andy Jowitt reported in connection with **eco events**. He advised that the date for the Ascension Day Prayer Walk was 18th May and not 11th as advertised. He said that the Eco Church Support Group had made a good start and now had several activities planned for this year. A list of dates was available. He reminded the Forum of the open air service to be held on 21st May at Foxearth at which the speaker would be the Bishop of Colchester.

e) It was noted that there was a **Meditation Group** held every Thursday at 6.00 pm at St Gregory. Everyone would be welcome.

f) Tom Burrows thanked people for their support of Food Store but added that they were struggling to meet the need. He said that “Bow Down” would be taking place at 9.00 pm in front of St Peter’s on Pentecost Sunday (May 28th). It would only be a 30 minute activity but was a good witness and everyone was encouraged to join in.

7 Your Views Tom Burrows asked the Forum to continue to support CTiS&D

8 Minutes of the Previous Forum

The minutes of the Forum held on 26th January were approved as correct and signed by the Chairman.

9 Financial Report

A copy of the Financial Report for the period 13th March to 18th April had been circulated. There were no questions.

10 Any Other Business

- Peter Halden said that “Still Good to Eat” was still running on a weekly basis at St Andrew’s. It was very well used.
- He added that on the day of the coronation, it was proposed to show the coronation on a screen at the church. There would also be a barbecue.

11 Closing Worship

The closing worship was led by Tom Burrows.

The Forum closed at 8.30 pm.