

Minutes of the CTiS&D Forum held on Monday July 24th 2023 at Glemsford Methodist Church

17 people from 11 churches attended the Forum.

There were apologies from Graham Pattrick, Gerry Higginson, Malcolm Snow and Rev Andrew Doarks.

The Forum was welcomed by Tom Burrows and to Glemsford Methodist Church by Rev Ruth Ridge.

Rev Ruth Ridge led the Forum in opening worship focussing on the power of the Holy Spirit to lead us, inspire us and enable us as we thought about things that could be done better together.

When the theme had been introduced by Tom, Ruth suggested several points to be discussed in groups.

Q Look back and see what CTiS&D has done well over the years.

Answers

- “Praise on Market Hill” with band etc. Good because everyone was involved – bikers, drummers, flags. It appealed to different people. There was variety.
- It was suggested that CTiS&D should run fewer events but those that are run should be bigger.
- “Open the Book” was good because it covered the whole area and was well received in schools including those without any specific religious connection. It has reached hundreds of children.

Q Are there any aspects of CTiS&D which feel more of a duty than a joy why – and what should we change?

Answers

- Joint services
- Kettle and Fish – sometimes hard work but still worthwhile
- Meetings – probably not possible to change this as some meetings are necessary.

Tom added that a lot of things felt like duty – but they are necessary. The joy is felt because we feel that it is what the Lord wants us to do. Ruth suggested that whenever one is involved in something, one should consider how it is contributing to the mission of God.

- Special services were felt to be well worth doing, - but more enthusiasm was needed, and also younger people needed to be encouraged to come. It was suggested that more input from young people at the services – like the Eden’s services would be good.

The question was asked what was God calling CTiS&D to do. It was suggested that people should support CTiS&D as CTiS&D was supporting mission. Other comments made were:

- A comment was made that the church had become very inward looking

- We need to pray for the Holy Spirit to re-invigorate us
- The fact that churches were working together was witness in itself
- Disunity amongst churches causes mission to fail
- We needed to get leadership from young people – we needed to let young people loose in our churches. [It was pointed out that we needed the young people in the first place]
- The question was raised as to whether money needed to be spent on employing youth leaders as they had the expertise of working with young people
- Tom was asked whether he thought some of the young people from Stour Valley Vineyard church could help other local churches. He thought that they might be too heavily committed with their work at SVV.
- An invitation to Mike Maidment might be extended
- We should remember that we do have people going into schools and talking to children and staff.

There was then a time of prayer.

This was followed by news from different churches and activities.

1. Kettle and Fish – Andrew reported K&F was continuing. There was very little likelihood of ever being able to go back into St Peters. Fewer people were coming to K&F but people were being blessed
2. Prayer Breakfast - continued each week. It was appreciated by ministers as well as by those who attended
3. Stour Vally Vineyard – Healing in the streets had started and there were some breakthroughs already. 2 youth pastors were working with the church. There were now 6 people who were coming to the services who had come through Storehouse. Several youngsters were attending a conference. The church felt blessed.
4. Future Vision – in September it was hoped that Open the Book would be going into 9 schools. It was noted that more team members were needed and reps were asked to take this request back to their churches. More information could be obtained from Faith Marsden, Ruth, Andrew Dixey or Ingrid Morelli.
5. St Andrews – Peter said that “Still good to eat” was still being operated each week. On average between 50 and 60 people were benefitting from the scheme. Agape Café was still running at the Old School. It had a regular clientele and there was a good time of fellowship. An outside area had been set up with picnic tables and benches

6. Town Pastors – they had stopped over covid, and a number of volunteers had given up. Mark Ulanowski was now considering the best way forward.
7. Suffolk Road – Andrew reported that new people were coming along. They had just had a successful awayday. He said that there was a need out there and people wanted answers.
8. Holy Trinity Long Melford – Judith said that were 6 young people wanting to take the Junior Alpha course. The church had had a stand at the recent village fete and people had been interested. The church had tourists every day so they had started having a brief reflection every day to which visitors were invited to stay.
9. No 72 – it was noted that Tim would be retiring soon. No 72 was a great outreach
10. Glemsford Parish Church – Julia said that the church would be having a stall at the fete on 12th August to show a church presence.
11. Cornard Christian Fellowship – David reported that the number of children at Capital Kids had grown from about 15 to about 250. The founder was going out to see them. Prayers were requested for them

Ruth added that she had been to Party in the Park and that there had been no church presence there despite the numbers of people. She said that St John's/St Andrews Messy Church were planning, on the assumption there would be a date clash next year, to take a stall at Party in the Park. Any church who wished to join St Johns would be most welcome. The meeting agreed it would be worthwhile for CTIS&D to have a stall there.

The meeting progressed to the formal part of the meeting.

1. The minutes of the Forum held on April 27th 2023 were approved and signed by the Chairman
2. The Forum had received copies of the financial report covering the period 10th June to 30th June 2023. Peter Heard had no additional comments.
 - a. Judith said that small amounts from the money collected at Prayer Breakfasts were given to charities but she thought there was an amount of money being held . She asked for authority to spend that money on a charity of their choice. This was agreed.
 - b. It was agreed that Suffolk Road Church should receive an increase from £25 to £35 per week as a contribution to lighting/heating etc for Kettle and Fish.
3. Proposed revisions to the CTIS&D constitution had been sent to church leaders and a number of them had indicated their church's approval of the proposed revisions. It was clarified that the proposals were intended to reduce the number of reps rather than increase them.

The meeting closed in prayer at 8.55