

The Methodist Church

Bailiwick of Guernsey Circuit

Minutes of Circuit Meeting held on Thursday 24 June 2010 at Forest United Methodist Church

10/12 Welcome, apologies for absence and notification of any other business.

The Reverend David Hart welcomed members to the meeting and in particular, Kim Abbotts from Wesley Pre-School who would be giving a report later in the meeting.

Pastoral Greetings

Reverend Hart advised the meeting that Reverend Liz Hunter from Jersey had recently gone back to the UK as her ex-husband had died suddenly, leaving parents that needed her support. The Reverend David Coote, although able to attend the Methodist Conference next week albeit only for a couple of days, was very unwell again and had to undergo more chemotherapy. He would be staying in the UK now.

It was agreed to send the thoughts and prayers of the Guernsey Circuit to these two people.

There were a number of items to be considered under “any other business,” and these are listed below.

- Trusteeship of L’Islet
- Marriage forms
- Wesley garden
- Les Adams

Apologies for absence were received from Irene Day, Jurat Peter Lane, Janet de Jersey, Rev’d Tom Vidamour, Craig Dowding, Andrew Roussel, Caroline Lane, Brian Guille, Ray Mabire, Roy Le Poidevin, Sandra Gallienne, and Michael Ward

There were 44 people present at the meeting.

10/13 Opening Devotions were led by The Reverend Carole Holmes

10/14 Minutes of the meeting held on 08 February 2010 which had previously been circulated, were approved.

10/15 Matters Arising

10/08.1 Progress on Planning Application – Brock Road

Andrew Male said that progress had been made in talks with Planning Officers over converting the property into flats and office space and it was hoped to move forward now with formal planning approval.

10/08.3 Sale of Baugy Manse

It was reported that the lease for this property had now expired and arrangements were in hand to put the property up for sale.

10/08.4 Application for wayleave at L'Islet

Andrew said they were waiting for the consents process to be completed so that the wayleave could be granted.

10/06.2 Appointment of Secretary of the Property Committee

Clive Falla reported that nobody had come forward yet to fulfil this position and as he was soon to resign there may be a short period without a Secretary. However the responsibilities of the Committee were presently undergoing some changes and he would report back on the situation at the September Circuit meeting.

10/16 The work of God in the Circuit

10/16.1: Presentation by Kim Abbott, Leader – Circuit Pre-School

Kim referred back to the time she was first involved with the Pre-School when it was established in 1993 and she had been greatly influenced by Margaret and Eric Waldron during her time at Salem to be involved with working with children. The Pre-School had been running for 17 years and had gone from strength to strength starting with only 6 children to the present total of 30. There was now a highly qualified workforce and the Wesley group was regarded as one of the best in the island. Kim worked closely with Social Workers and Health Visitors, and there were home visits before any child started. There was an open door policy for families and some parents had been able to get involved and help out and it was felt to be more than just a pre-school as the children's development was continually assessed and observed. She said that children from the age of 3 were received into the pre-school mainly through the recommendation of Health Visitors.

Reverend David Hart thanked Kim for her presentation which was a helpful reminder to the Circuit meeting and asked that she convey to her team the grateful thanks of the members. He further acknowledged the hard work of Wendy Hayward, one of the Leaders, who would be retiring on 14 July. He intended to make a presentation to Wendy on that day, which was the last day of term and Kim extended an invitation to any of the Circuit members to pop in on that day or any other, at their convenience.

10/16.2 Safeguarding – Guernsey Vetting and Barring Scheme

David Hart informed the meeting that the present safeguarding system was in the process of being updated through the Home Department to establish a Guernsey Vetting Bureau. This scheme would 'vet' individuals and produce a 'passport' for those people to be able to work in any area requiring safeguarding. The new scheme was likely to come into force later this year and churches would be advised what practical steps they needed to take. In the meantime there was a lot of administrative work required to update the current Circuit records and because of the new issue of accountability, a statement would now be required from the Managing Trustees of each church council that a resolution had been passed to approve people. Mrs Helen Lowe, from Les Camps Methodist Church, had begun the process of updating the Circuit's current records and she had circulated a list to Ministers for amending. She would also need a copy of each Church's Safeguarding Policy. Reverend Hart proposed that Helen be officially appointed by the Circuit meeting to be the Circuit Safeguarding Officer. Her role would therefore be one of liaison between the churches and the Guernsey Vetting Bureau. This was agreed.

10/16.3 'Re-Grouping for Mission'

A proposal document by the Circuit Leadership Team, which had been circulated at the beginning of the meeting and is attached to these minutes, was read out by the Senior Circuit Steward. Andrew Male said a lot of thought and prayer had been given to the proposal after consideration of the Church Councils' strong desire to retain 4 Presbyters. David Hart suggested that the meeting take a minute or two in small groups to consider the document before making comment.

During ensuing debate the following points were raised:

- History suggested that churches amalgamating did not necessarily mean greater membership, long term.
- If there were only 6 churches, they would need some future direction in order to establish fresh expressions
- Consideration should be given as to whether the situation was one of finance or lack of Ministers
- Any money resulting from closures should be invested in initiatives to support people if possible and not just buildings
- The present reserve funds had a limited lifespan to sustain the present number of Ministers
- Voluntary closure was not being asked for at this point.
- Some Local Preachers were struggling to fulfil their calling with the present numbers of attendees at some Services.
- The Spiritual aspect should be the most important when considering the proposal
- Future profiles should have a sentence which referred to the rolling programme and Ministers would be invited to come on the basis that they would contribute to the transition.

David Hart reminded the meeting that the Churches together made up the Circuit and the situation would be considered by a consultative process. Legally only the Managing Trustees could say if that church was going to close. The process would inevitably be painful and difficult.

The Very Reverend Canon Paul Mellor in making an observation asked that the ecumenical dimension be kept in mind, and echoed the view that if there were closures any available money should be invested in people and not buildings.

In summing up, David Hart said that historically, amalgamation had not resolved the issue of numbers of members and reminded the meeting that if the Circuit should continue in the same way the outcome was going to be the same. Consolidation and not membership alone was the reasoning behind the proposal and the Church needed to be viable in order to meet its Mission. The core has to be about spirituality. He made the point that the members present had a commitment to return to their churches and advise the Managing Trustees to help them understand the present situation.

The meeting agreed that progress should be made towards consolidation by the year 2016. 4 people voted against the proposal. The meeting further agreed paragraph 4 (a) and (b) of the

document so that these aspects could be included in the profiles which were being compiled next few weeks.

Following a proposal by Paul Le Boutillier, the Circuit Leadership Team would develop proposals after the arrival of the new Chair of District and Superintendent, Reverend David Hinchliffe in September. Some church representatives wished to consult further with their church members and it was proposed to consider arranging a special meeting in November after the Autumn Church Councils, to progress these proposals. This would be solely for further discussion on the proposal, following the special meetings of the Church Councils.

10/17 Finance

10/17/1 Presentation of budgets for year beginning September 2010

The Treasurer had circulated a paper at the beginning of the meeting. Reporting on the figures Bob Harbottle said the Circuit was grateful to the States Social Security Department for its grant towards Wesley Pre-School. Having considered the cost of £95 for the weekly advertisement for church services, the Circuit Leadership Team had recommended that the adverts be discontinued at the end of this connexional year. It may be a possibility to come back in the future and reconsider a new way of advertising.

The meeting agreed the budget together with the points raised by the Treasurer.

10/17.2 Future financial planning for the Circuit (2011 – 2015)

Reverend Hart said he would be attending the Methodist Conference next week and needed to inform them of the Circuit establishments. Reverend Paul Chesworth would be leaving Guernsey in 2011 and the Circuit would be looking for 1 or possibly 2 Ministers in 2010, which would be 5 – year appointments. The present budget would be unable to meet this cost without some input from the Venmore bequest. Paul Le Boutillier said that each church should be taking its share in the responsibility to support the Ministry. Mr Harbottle said he was aware of a number of small, largely untapped funds which he would review to see if these could be put to better use.

The Guernsey Income Tax Authority had recently introduced a scheme to charities whereby it would make a percentage payment to that charity based on its individual donations. Mr Harbottle was meeting the Authority next week to clarify the situation and see what the benefits were to the Methodist Church.

10/18 Ministerial Appointments and Stationing

The meeting was asked to note the constitution of the Invitation Committee as set out in the Agenda attached to these minutes and asked that authority be given to this Committee to act on behalf of the Circuit meeting in dealing with the invitation process. This was agreed. Church Councils effected by a change in Minister should therefore ensure it appointed 2 representatives to the Committee.

10/19 Any Other Business

10/19/01 L'Islet – As there appeared to be no record of the formal transfer of the Managing Trustees to the Circuit meeting, the meeting resolved that it was and should be regarded as Managing Trustees for all matters related to L'Islet.

10/19/02 Woodlands – Reverend Stephen Robinson had said the new owners had agreed to transfer the piece of ground to the ownership of Wesley Methodist Church. The Circuit may, however, need to meet the cost of legal fees for the transaction but this was not certain at the moment. The meeting was unanimous in its approval of this.

10/19/03 'Something Else' at Les Adams – Reverend Carole Holmes explained this was a new initiative to encourage unchurched young people, aged 20/30 to gather together once a month for fellowship of some sort – unknown as yet – but not to include a traditional type of Service ie singing of hymns or listening to a sermon. If current church members wanted to accompany a young person by way of introduction that would be welcomed, but it was not intended as an alternative fellowship for those already in the church family. She asked for the prayerful support of this initiative and the meeting approved the one-off grant of £250 to cover initial costs of advertising, etc. In the future it might be appropriate to apply to the District Advance Fund for financial assistance.

10/19/04 Marriage Forms – All the Guernsey forms had now been completed and were ready to be sent to the Greffe. Alderney was being dealt with directly in Alderney.

10/19/05 Prayer Support – Mrs Sue Grimsley asked if prayer support could be given to Miss Karen Bell who had now finished her ministerial studies at The Queen's Foundation, Birmingham and would be going into full-time Ministry at Purley. Michael Grimsley had one more year of training left. Reverend Hart also mentioned that David Hollingsworth had been accepted to train at The Queen's Foundation this coming autumn and his wife, Rose, was being Ordained this weekend in Portsmouth Cathedral. They, too, would greatly value our prayers. Work was now progressing to find a replacement for David Hollingsworth in Sark, by October.

10/20 Date and place of next meeting: Tuesday 14 September at Delisles Methodist Church

Andrew Male expressed thanks and appreciation on behalf of the Circuit to the Reverends David and Anita Hart for their dedicated work over the past five years. He also thanked Rev'd Stephen Robinson for his ministry to the Circuit and wished him well in his retirement.

Paul Le Boutillier also wished to record a vote of thanks on behalf of the Methodist Homes for David Hart's help and valuable contribution made to the recent establishment of Maison de Quetteville, this too had been very much appreciated.

In reply, David thanked all for their dedication and Christian support and said he would remember Guernsey as being a very special place. He went on to thank Forest United for its hospitality, and closed the meeting with the words of the Grace.