

Wharfedale and Aireborough Circuit

Minutes of the Circuit Meeting of 17th September 7.30pm at Guiseley

1/ Welcome and Devotions

Lesley welcomed Rev Dr Roger Walton and the Norwood Management team to the Circuit Meeting.

- Roger led the opening devotions
- The meeting sang Stf 661 Give me a faith
- Roger read from Matthew 14 and talked about a number of projects in the district he had recently visited. All of the projects had faced times where it seemed impossible to bring about change but had managed to do so.

2/ Correspondence, letters of greeting etc...

- A letter of thanks to Elizabeth Halsall who has been manse steward at Christchurch
- Gerald Longs son & daughter on Gerald's sudden death
- Lesley expressed her thanks for all his work in the circuit and on behalf of the CLT

3/ Membership of the meeting and apologies for absence

Apologies from:

4/ Minutes of the meeting of 20th June

- The minutes from the Special Circuit Meeting at Norwood which took place in August will be presented at the next Circuit Meeting.
- Carol Tooke – The text of her written answer to a question proposed at the last Circuit Meeting to be included in the minutes
- The minutes were accepted and signed

5 / Matters arising:

- GDPR Mike has received six responses from the mapping exercise so far. Please make sure churches respond as soon as possible if they have not already done so.
- Angela Pearson – Circular emails should be put in BCC box as part of circuit policy
- Michael Hardstaffe – If we adopt this policy, the email should include the category of who has received it. e.g. Ministers, Local Preachers etc.

- Lesley - Pool caretaker - At the last meeting we looked at the job specification.
- Leonora Wassell – We received several enquiries for the information pack, but one applicant – David Barker who was interviewed today.
- The interview panel were impressed by him and have offered him the post.
- Circuit Calendar – Lesley – This has been tweaked and is now the definitive version

6 / Notification of any other business

- Lesley has not received notification of any AOB

7 / Re-invitation of Rev Lesley Taylor *(this part of the meeting was chaired by the District Chair Rev Dr Roger Walton)*

- Roger explained the process of re-invitation
- the proposal is that Lesley is offered two further years
- No objections have been received and so the recommendation can be accepted
- Roger officially announced that the recommendation has been accepted and the meeting applauded

8 / Otley

- Roger asked the meeting to refer to the paper that had been circulated and read out the proposals that Otley are to take to get onto a sound financial footing
- Tim – The figure of £12k listed in the document should actually be £10k

Debbie Mashiter - The news that Otley Methodist Church is likely to have a large deficit this year and is likely to run out of money by the end of next connexional year came as a real shock to me.

The indication is that this year's deficit will be in the order of £10,000 but I know from my own experience as a treasurer that making accurate predictions is very problematic and so the figure of £10,000 should be treated with a degree of caution. That said, if projections have been worked out for 2019/20 it would be good to know what assumption has been made for payment of circuit assessment next year.

Whilst it is good to hear about efforts to secure the future of the church and its property we all know that re-shaping the future in this way takes time – I would suggest longer than 2 years and can involve significant upfront financial outlay to redesign and upgrade the property to suit its future role. If Otley is short of funds, can someone explain where the money comes from for upfront costs and fees in these circumstances and also what happens if the church runs out of money meanwhile.

I am not encouraged by the comment that the District and Connexion are reluctant to let go of Methodist property. Too much emphasis is placed on maintaining a property portfolio rather than the priority of keeping a faith community alive in a particular place. Meanwhile a desire to keep a vast property like Otley's could cost us all very dearly and leaves Otley itself with such a weight of overhead and responsibility that it might prevent the members from finding a way forward as a worshipping community.

There is an element of secrecy about the finances of each of the Churches in the Circuit and we are so caught up in our concerns for our own church that we are not generally aware of the state of the general health of the other churches and so the situation at Otley, were it to happen at any of the churches, would also appear 'out of the blue'. The decline in membership numbers at any of our churches impacts on the circuit assessment of the other churches. On top of this, the position at Otley highlights the vulnerable position we could all face by financial difficulties at any one of our churches in terms of making up a shortfall of circuit assessment. This may not be the proposal in relation to Otley on the table today but would be inevitable should the position continue long-term or the church cease to exist leaving a £48,000 hole in the Circuit's annual income and so the position at Otley, whilst being a pastoral concern, should not be only a pastoral concern for us all.

Should we be looking to establish a range of triggers for churches to report their position to Circuit meeting if they breach the triggers so that a situation like this comes to our attention at an earlier stage? Should this be an agenda item for the next Treasurer's meeting?

- Lesley – We do need to set up triggers but we had to outsource our treasurer role which did not provide us with the information we needed, also lost two generous givers
- Just gathering information at moment
- Have had offers of help from Cliff College and others
- Prayer day organised
- Roger Walton – asked the meeting to vote in favour of and the proposal was clearly carried
- Keith Reed– We got this news at short notice, the flow of news should be better in the future.
- Carol to respond to Debbie's questions

8 / Finance

- Carol talked through the finance report
- The Circuit's cash position as 31st August was £153k in credit plus £48k in TMCP fund
- We will have an overspend of £12k by the end of year
- £16k in the coming financial year
- The Addingham manse has been sold and we have purchased the new manse

- The expected surplus after fees will be approximately £23k.
- Carol requested to change the Central heating at Yeadon and Bramhope manses at a cost of £5.5k and to draw this money down from TMCP alongside monies for Addingham decoration and building work £15k
- The meeting agreed the draw down from TMCP
- Liz Smith. Some in the Addingham and Ben Rhydding area are very aware that the minister has borne the brunt of the situation and it should be noted that, in looking at the pennies and pounds we can miss out on pastoral care.
- Carol mentioned that we did give the minister the choice of putting items in storage, we weren't penny pinching.

9 / Property

- Lesley explained that Bev is currently on holiday. She expressed thanks to Carol and Bev for their hard work and valuable consultation during the process of buying and selling the manses.

10 / Norwood - Business Plan Review

- Lesley - This time last year, Norwood was going to close but, the Circuit Meeting had turned the decision around.
- Lesley invited Steve Weatherley and Carol Tooke from The Norwood Management team to share the update
- Carol – The original plan had:
 - Norwood continuing regular worship
 - The cottage to be let
 - The conference facility to be made available to a wider market
 - Costs would be mitigated by The Friends of Norwood
 - Norwood to be run in a financially sustainable way
- There were some delays in letting the cottage.
- The work in the worship area itself was able to go a bit further than planned.
- The project costs run at £20,700, money that was raised through donations and fundraising.
- We need £5k to finish.
- We now have regular income from the cottage.
- Annual revenue about £4.5k.
- It is becoming sustainable and all everyone is very positive about the future.
- Steve Weatherley invited everyone to consider becoming a friend of Norwood.
- Steve explained that a key component of the business plans was establishing a functional Friends of Norwood membership.
- Membership is a £15 annual donation. Includes a regular Newsletter and an invitation to the friend's day.
- The Friends of Norwood membership will give the project practical help and helps spread the news about our facility.
- We want more bookings but want to support the congregation as well.
- We will be publishing a programme of events to be advertised widely.
- The Open Day was very encouraging, we had 120 people attending.
- Lesley - The progress made has been astounding. People have been generous with time, money and skills. It is now a sacred space of mission please hold them in your prayers
- Leonora – Positive news – As of this month, we have achieved the target number of bookings over the course of a month.

11 / Timble

- Lesley referred to the Timble document and explained how the new arrangements would work.
- We have had interest from the village to take on a firm commitment to work with the Circuit.
- Debbie Mashiter – Is there a cost to Circuit?
- Carol – The running costs are minimal, around £400-500 pounds per annum

- Future repairs would be a risk to Circuit, but the building is in fairly good repair.
- Tim – A small, rural church in his old circuit have built an offerings box into the walls where visitors can donate. Offerings from services goes to the Circuit.
- Leonora – We hope to develop the ministry across the Washburn Valley.
- People are coming in – it is a service offering a sacred space
- The villagers are keen and do come to the festival services
- The Small Pilgrim Space Network will publicise Timble's details
- Be creative and give it a go!
- Harvest at Timble is on October 21st
- Lesley – If the Circuit Meeting agrees to take on the trusteeship of Timble, we will need to set up a management team.
- There will be some interesting faith conversations to be had with the villagers.
- Lesley asked for a show of hands to vote on whether the Circuit should take on the trusteeship of Timble, it was approved unanimously.

12 / CAP Debt centre

- Roger explained the way the service works.
 - Partnering with CAP helps us to be of service to people in debt.
 - Funding would consist of £20k per year to run the service.
 - Several churches have already become involved at various levels.
 - The working group feel that from the help that has been offered so far, it was a strong position from which we can make a start.
 - There are a number of people in our churches who have said that they feel this is an opportunity that should be pursued.
 - There is the possibility of being awarded grants towards the service costs.
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- Phil Kershaw – is Senior Steward at Burley and works at CAP.
 - Phill shared two stories, one from a church that set up a centre and another from a customer of CAP in Cumbria
 - One member of the meeting thought that we provided finance only and hadn't appreciated that the Circuit employ the manager
 - Phil Kershaw - The majority of CAP managers are employed by a church or circuit. CAP will support the Circuit and the manager.
 - Angela Pearson – We have money for two years – do we then have to carry on the project for a total of five years? With Otley's problems this seems like a bit of a risk.
 - Roger – It would be an ongoing project and isn't over a fixed term. if the money ran out we can close. We should be taking risks to do new things in order to reach out to people in need
 - Phil – There's a lot of expertise in CAP to raise funds/ grants etc. to support
 - Joan Wilkinson from Yeadon– Phil came to our church and she taken home a book about CAP which was really inspiring. They were relying on the Lord and the centre helped so many people. Tear Fund support CAP, it's something worthwhile and we should be prepared to take the risk.
 - Rita Armitage – Has been inspired that the circuit is taking on things that will change the perception of the church in our area. Speaking personally, she wants to support the CAP project, it's a visionary project.
 - Leslie Holmes – Wants to support this – He asked if there had been any approach from our Anglican Baptist colleagues wanting to get involved?
 - Phil – there are many examples where a CAP service has brought churches to work together
 - Debbie – Given the pressures on finances generally, she expressed concern that we might fall into a trap of a salary on a circuit budget, especially if fundraising falls away in the years to come.
 - Joan Bosomworth – This goes back to the beginning with Roger's address about projects that were considered risky or impossible. Are we a people of faith who will risk everything for the lord? Time to put faith first.

- Tim – Believes that the reasons to do this are overwhelming. To clarify, the donation from Burley has not yet been authorised. Once the Circuit Meeting have given approval to the project, it will go to Burley Church Council to be approved.
- Lesley - Asked for a vote for approval for the project to go ahead which was carried. God is working in unusual places and ways. God is blessing us with the work we're doing and the risks we are taking.

13 / Safeguarding: policy and audit

- Isabel Griffith – The safeguarding policy and the district review
- Recording incidents may be problematic under GDPR if you are recording an incident get in touch with Katie Spencer- _Maddon, the District Safeguarding Officer. We need to record, but we need to be careful how we do it.
- We have discussed the policy and have tweaked it to fit our Circuit
- It has a good role description for the Safeguarding officer
- Lesley – Asked the meeting if they were happy to accept the safeguarding policy – The meeting agreed.
- Isabel talked through the audit document.
- Lesley – if there's information missing, please contact Isabel.
- We need to send it out on Monday 8th October.
- Isabel - Thanks to Circuit Safeguarding officers and thanks to Viv for organising training.

14 / "How then shall we live?"

- Lesley Taylor - We are picking this up again
- Roberta Topham - We've made some great decisions tonight and, to get to this point, is the result of working together as a team.
- We need people to catch the vision once you go back to your churches.
- Roberta gave some examples of team getting together to achieve things.
- Talked through the story of the Circuit Leadership Team away day and how the things discussed there are coming into being.
- Roberta mentioned the possibility of a Circuit away day and has asked Dr Roger Walton to talk on the day.

15 / Guiseley new lay worker

- Jean Light – Guiseley received a legacy and have discussed the idea of a lay-worker. the result was the idea of employing an activity organiser would work a few flexible hours week.
- Lesley asked if the meeting was happy for Guiseley to go ahead? – The meeting agreed.

16 / HR volunteer for Circuit

- Pauline Tate - We have now got a volunteer to help with the Circuit-based lay staff.
- Wendy Ribbands from Christchurch has plenty of experience and is willing to do the job as a volunteer.
- Liz Smith – The person is to be a line manager of the lay employees and is to be welcomed, but we need to be clear that this is the role.
- Lesley – Asked if the meeting was happy to go ahead - the meeting agreed

17 / Jo Dixon: grant for MSM course

- Jo is a layworker at Menston and is asking for just under £100 for a third of her course.
- The meeting agreed

18 / Synod reps

- Lesley – We have three places on synod to fill. Please ask around your churches for people who might be interested in going to Synod.

19 / Rev Leonora Wassell

- Lesley asked permission to defer the review of Lee's work in the Circuit until February - The meeting agreed

20 / AOB

Date of next meeting

12th February, venue TBC

The meeting closed with prayer