

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN FARINGTON

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.30pm, Tuesday 3 September 2024 in the Friends' Meeting House

Present: Katie Foot (Chair – AS), Jonathan Mapley (Treasurer – AS), Jenny Braithwaite (Quakers), Fr Claro Conde (BH), Elaine Gathercole (FBC), Tim Gerry (FBC), Rev Mark Greenwood (FBC), Val Jones (Quakers), Rev Maria Jukes (AS)
Second half of meeting: Peter Starr (BH)

The meeting opened in prayer.

1) Apologies for absence:

Margaret Broadberry (FUC), Rev Jason Cooke (FUC), Jeni Summerfield (AS)

Katie welcomed new members of the committee – Rev Jason Cooke (FUC) (who was unable to be present this time) and Elaine Gathercole (FBC). Sarah Mais (AS - moved to Abingdon) and Mark Jackson (AS) have resigned.

- 2) The **Minutes of the last meeting** were approved as a true record and signed, subject to the correction of a couple of small typos (FBS instead of FBC).

3) Matters arising:

a) *FollyFest Service*: Thanks were expressed to all who organised and took part, particularly to Maria Jukes for leading and Mark Greenwood for giving the talk. Maria felt it was better to have a narrated drama (of a parable or similar) as it is difficult to hear the actors unless their voices are amplified. As the member of the Friends who was due to read felt uncomfortable doing so on the stage, we need to find an appropriate way in future of including them.

b) *Summer activities for children and families*: All Saints' held two half-day events (one in the churchyard looking at bugs and one based around Lego, followed by a barbeque and games in the Vicarage garden). FBC had a special Messy Dads session.

c) Jenny said that the *Prayers for Peace* on the 4th Saturday of the month at the Friends' Meeting House would likely resume in the New Year, up till Easter. Further details will follow.

d) *Care for Asylum Seekers and those with temporary leave to remain*

The Brackendale residents were finally allowed back in the building after around four weeks, having been evacuated at very short notice (owing, as it turned out, to asbestos being found during building works). During this period, some already received their right to remain and had been rehoused in other parts of the country. It is very difficult to know who is there as we are given no information by the authorities. Father Claro visits regularly and many come to Blessed Hugh for meals or other events, but he said there is now some friction between certain nationalities. Mark and others have also welcomed some to FBC, but Katie (with Sanctuary Faringdon hat on) felt that, as a town, we were not doing as well as we might.

Mention was made of the offer of a sofa to anyone moving into a new home, and Elaine said she had a lot of kitchenware in her garage. Another Brackendale

resident had asked for a TV/monitor that did not require a licence so her child could watch on a larger screen than a mobile phone. Tim and Mark thought they might be able to set one up for her.

Maria referred to the recent race riots across the country. She had been in touch with the police who had specifically asked us NOT to draw attention to Brackendale or even to hold a prayer meeting in the Market Place for fear of attracting racists. She did feel, however, that we ought to have a public prayer meeting for peace and asylum seekers/refugees everywhere. After discussion, it was felt that a Saturday morning, just before the Farcycles head off on their bike rides, would be appropriate and 8.15 am on Saturday 28 September was suggested – time to be confirmed.

e) *The Mustard Seed* sales continue well. It is still difficult to get the stock we want when we want it, but Karen Vogt (BH) continues to provide a colourful and interesting display of goods. It's easy to order books through the Cornerstone but we can't keep a large stock of new ones in the shop, although Katie got several more children's books recently. There is a good supply of second-hand ones though (so long as we don't accept any that are not appropriate).

Blessed Hugh and St Denys, Stanford in the Vale both have monthly sales after church on a Sunday. If any other churches would like to do so (probably ideally on 2nd or 3rd Sunday of the month, to spread out stock), do please get in touch with Katie or with Karen Vogt who will explain how it works. Equally, if anyone would like to get together a group of friends for a pre-Christmas sale, we could help with that too.

4) Finance Report:

Jonathan reported that the CTiF account balance remained the same - £1,895 at present.

5) Faringdon Food Bank

Jeni was unable to be present but reported that more volunteers are needed, and more donations, both in cash and kind.

Jonathan clarified that funds are relatively healthy at the moment (£11,600 in current account and £36,000 in deposit account), though £4,000 down from a year ago. He would be applying for a grant from Faringdon United Charity for Adele's second year salary. Five or six people give by regular standing order, which is very helpful for budgeting, so he asked that this be encouraged in all the churches. A stall at FollyFest had raised £650. In answer to a question from Tim, Jonathan replied that Reserves (95 day deposit account) represent considerably more than the Charity Commission recommendation of just 50%.

6) Creationtide

A CTiF service for Creationtide (the period of the church's year between the beginning of September and the first Sunday in October) will be held at Faringdon Baptist Church at 6.30 pm on Sunday 29 September 2024. Mark asked if it would be a good idea to offer refreshments before or after the service. Elaine was happy to organise this, and it was agreed that before the service (from 6.00 pm) would be best and this would be advertised.

Other Creationtide events are taking place at All Saints', with a lending library of eco-books, a Table of Plenty (excess fruit and vegetables from people's gardens, to

share among the congregation or others where it would be useful, e.g. the Day Centre) and a display around the font that will be added to each week following the sermon series.

7) Any Other Business.

a) *Christmas Lights switch-on, Saturday 30 November pm:* Maria suggested a CTiF stall with games for children e.g. Spot the Star, buzzer run, some kind of Advent calendar (Josey Speller (AS) will work with Karen Spence (FBC) on this) and perhaps chocolates for prizes. A free stall is available to us for this. She also suggested that the CTiF musicians might have a slot between choirs to play some more modern Christmas music (Karen Bruschi (AS) would get a group together). All agreed these would be great to do.

Would the appropriate person from each church please send details of Christmas services, carol services etc to Maria

(vicar@allsaintsfaringdon.co.uk) by **Saturday 16 November so posters and fliers can be made up in time to hand out at the Lights Switch-on.**

b) Margaret Broadberry (FUC) had asked the meeting to consider arranging a performance of 'The Journey of the Magi' by a drama/dance group called Springs. This was discussed, as well as 'Bread and Starlight', an excellent dramatised monologue by John the Baptist's mother, Elizabeth, while she awaits Mary's arrival, by LAMPS in Abingdon. It was decided to consider this for next year as it will take some time to arrange hire of a suitable space. Father Claro recalled a CTiF zoom showing of "Bread and Starlight" in Advent 2020 (zoom because of Covid) and Katie thought LAMPS had done a production at All Saints' in 2021 (though on checking back, 'Babs of Bethlehem' had had to be cancelled because of Covid).

c) Posters were handed out for display in churches and The Mustard Seed for the next of the Blessed Hugh evening talks, this one on 'The Thin Places – Sacred Spaces in South-East Asia', given by Sean Bolger on Friday 27 September at 7.45 pm.

Father Claro suggested setting up a forum to help us understand more about the Muslim and Hindu (and other) faiths, as more and more people from these religions are moving to Faringdon. Peter Starr (BH) has a great knowledge of Islam after 20 years in Turkey, and Father Sebastian Matapally in Longworth has a great knowledge of Hinduism.

10) Date of next meeting:

AGM, Sunday 13 October, 6.00 for 6.30 pm, Faringdon Baptist Church

Closing Prayer

The meeting finished at 20:45.

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT is 8-22 September – please support The Mustard Seed and tell your friends!