



CHURCHES TOGETHER IN KENT

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From: Revd Michael Cooke, Secretary to Council, and County Ecumenical Officer for Kent

Minutes of Full Council Meeting

held at 10:00 am, Wednesday 15th March 2006 at The Hermitage, West Malling, Kent ME19 6HB

Present

Mr Michele Cascioli (Hon Treasurer);
Revd Alec Cheyney (Kent Baptist Association);
Revd Geoffrey Collins (URC, Canterbury District);
Revd Melvyn Cooke (Ecumenical Officer for Methodist, London SE District);
Revd Michael Cooke (County Ecumenical Officer, and Minutes);
Major Anthony Cotterill (Salvation Army, South East Division);
Revd Roger Cresswell (Methodist, London SE District);
Revd Tony Cross (Kent Baptist Association, and Chairman);
Revd John Currie (Anglican, Rochester Diocese);
Bishop John Hine (Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark);
Revd Jeremy Ive (Anglican, Rochester Diocese);
Canon Jean Kerr (Anglican, Rochester Diocese, Bishop's Officer for Mission and Unity);
Revd Guy Laurence (Kent Baptist Association);
Revd Ruth Matthews (Kent Baptist Association);
Michael Staynes (Quaker, East Kent Meeting)

Apologies

Revd Robin Blount (Anglican, Canterbury Diocese);
Bishop Brian Castle (Anglican, Rochester Diocese);
Revd Malcolm Cooper (Methodist); Bishop Graham Cray (Anglican, Canterbury Diocese);
Sarah Kind (Salvation Army); Revd Oliver Harrison (Anglican, Canterbury Diocese);
Fr Wilfrid McGreal (Catholic); Revd Jim Perryman (Canterbury Diocese);
Fr Geoffrey Pointer (Catholic); Revd Bryan Shirley (URC, Ecumenical Officer);
Revd Nigel Uden (URC, Moderator of Southern Synod);
Bishop Stephen Venner (Anglican, Canterbury Diocese)

1. Opening Prayers were led by Revd Tony Cross

2. Membership

2.1. Pauline Condon

The meeting stood to remember Pauline Condon, member of West Kent Meeting of the Quakers, and member of our Council, who had died at home on 27th February.

2.2. Current Membership List

This was distributed at the meeting (pink sheet)

3. Issues from the Church Leaders' Meetings (most recent was on 22 February 2006)

3.1. Kent Industrial Mission

- (1) Revd David Helms (Director of Workplace Ministry, and Lead Partner within the team of Industrial chaplains) had presented KIM's strategy report to the Church Leaders at their meeting on 20 December 2005. The report was welcomed and fully endorsed by the church leaders.
- (2) Attention had been drawn to the need for further Trustees from some of the denominations.
- (3) Would the Salvation Army would be interested in joining the Partnership?

3.2. Ashford: Mission Co-ordinator

The issues of future funding, job description, and lien management are now nearly all fully resolved. (One denomination has still to approve its funding of the package.)

3.3. Prayer across Kent in 2006

Bishop Graham Cray was convening a meeting on 28th March which, we hoped, would result in a coordination team to plan and promote Prayer across Kent in late 2006 (or early 2007)

3.4. Emerging Churches' Event in 2007

Tony Cross reported that, following the Wellspring deficit (*see 4.1 below*) the plans for an Emerging Churches Event on 24th June 2006 would still go ahead, but on a smaller scale (e.g. one speaker, rather than 2); publicity would soon be available. Although the Baptists are the lead party, the day will of course be open to all. The meeting was reminded that Canterbury Diocese had its own Diocesan Conference a week earlier, and that in May there was the event sponsored by St Luke's, Maidstone.

3.5. Asylum Destitution

Following the letter to The Times newspaper in December, and which had been signed by dozens of church leaders from across all main church traditions, Tony Cross had explained that there were specific issues which affect Kent – and Church Leaders from each of Kent's traditions had signed a further letter which would be sent to the Minister for Immigration; this letter would also be sent by e-mail to Council members, and also be distributed through denominational mailings to congregations to adapt and/or sign and return.

Tony encouraged members who had not already done so to visit the Detainee Centre in Dover.

Action: All

4. Finance

4.1. Annual Accounts for Year ending 31 December 2005

Michele Cascioli presented these (attached as a blue sheet to hard-copies of these Minutes).

The one extra/noteworthy item had been the payment of £1,845 as part of the funding of the £10,600 deficit from the Wellspring event held in June 2005. (The remainder of the deficit had been paid directly from denominational funds). The Church leaders had given a commitment that although this 'raid' substantially reduced CTiK's reserves below what was now considered right (6+ months of operating costs), the subscriptions would be raised in future years to restore the needed reserve.

Michele has real difficulty in extracting annual subscriptions from local Churches Together Groups – part of this reluctance to pay quickly or at all may be due to a feeling that local Churches are remote from their County Body.

The accounts were unanimously adopted, and signed by the Chairman. [*A copy is on our website.*]

4.2. Budget for 2006 and 2007

The Treasurer affirmed that because denominations had already started to make their payments for 2006 based on the previously agreed budget, there should be no change in budget for the current year; this represents a nil increase on 2005.

Points made were:-

- Will Prayer across Kent in 2006/7 have a financial consequence?
- Does our budgetary process reflect our Mission?
- The Wellspring deficit highlighted the need not only to think ecumenically, but also to have good communications; most ecumenism was worked out at the local level.

In discussion, the need for CTiK's website (shop-window) to be more lively was noted, members were asked to think how this could be achieved, and to liaise with Michael Cooke. Significant work on the website would occasion a likely unbudgeted cost of some £100s.

4.3. Annual subscriptions to Churches Together in Kent in 2007

For 2007 the Treasurer had been proposing a 5% increase – but in view of the Wellspring ‘raid’, he agreed to provide amended figures (e.g. based on 7%) for consideration at the next Church Leaders’ meeting (May 2006)

Action: Michele Cascioli

5. Other National and Regional News/Issues, including Churches Together in England

5.1. Churches Together in England’s Forum (12-14 May 2006)

Melvyn Cooke, and Michael Cooke would be representing CTiK.

6. LEPs and Informal Local Partnerships

6.1. Latest situation(s) on LEPs

(NB Since most day-to-day issues are discussed at the Denominational Ecumenical Officers’ meeting, the agenda item here was for mention of particularly ‘interesting’ cases!)

In particular brief mention was made of:- the current situations at Burham and Wouldham (Anglican/Methodist, but where the ministerial contribution for the Circuit is being reduced); Thanet (Methodist/URC); and Folkestone (appointment of a Youth Worker).

Jeremy Ive reported that the boundaries of the LEP at Tudley and Five Oak Green were being changed to match the civil boundaries.

7. Other Ecumenical Work, including

7.1. County Show (“Ownership” of Churches’ stand)

Progress on any needed re-defining of the churches role will need to await the appointment of the new Rural Officer.

7.2. Chaplaincy work (Police, Fire and Rescue, Ambulance)

Within the Police Chaplaincy, several Areas were still lacking in a second chaplain (need for cover/holidays, etc). The Police need extra support as they reorganise into fewer Areas.

There has been no progress on identifying a chaplain to trial what chaplaincy would mean in the Fire & Rescue services.

7.3. Training for church involvement in Critical Incident Response

As soon as she has the dates, Jane Winter will be notifying denominations for nominees to the third training session. The meeting was reminded that those already trained needed to undertake regular ‘refresher’ training.

8. Communications

8.1. CT Kent’s Ecumenical Directory (Updates to, and format)

Michael Cooke reminded the meeting that although CTiK no longer mass-distributes hard copies, he is prepared to run off individual copies when requested. The current (Marc 2006) issue is also available on the website as a PDF (as are standard WebPages)

A request was made that he e-mail Council members with changes to the Directory. *[Post meeting note – this would entail a lot of extra typing; each webpage already has a date on it indicating when it was last updated. He asks that those who want regular updates let him know how they want the information.]*

Action: All

8.2. Notifying Ecumenical Events across Kent

Members were reminded to notify Michael of any relevant activity. The website’s list of events is only as good as the information provided.

9. Denominational News

9.1. Happenings or plans affecting denominations in Kent

- Methodist The new London District starts on 1st September 2006; the new South East District has a Chairman-designate (Revd John Hellyar), and recently the three Assistant Chairs had been announced – for Kent we will welcome Revd Peter Neatham (lives in Herne Bay)
- Baptist are ‘limping’ towards a similar structure. The three Associations (i.e. including the Kent Baptist Association will be amalgamated into the South East Partnership; local association within Kent will be through four networks, each of ca 16 churches.
- Tony Cross also drew attention to the recent publication of consultations with Anglicans (inevitably the two big issues remain: the Apostolic nature of the church, and Baptism)
- URC To reduce levels of church government, the level of District will be abolished, BUT there remains the issue of how effective pastoral support and oversight of local churches (Currently through the District Pastoral Committee) can be continued.
- Rochester The recent Diocesan Conference (“Proclaiming the Faith Afresh”) had been a success in terms of encouragement; how this affects the wider church is now being worked on through the Deaneries.
- Within Kent Thameside there had been good ecumenical progress; likewise there was good ecumenical openness as to the best development in Rochester Riverside.
- Southwark The Archbishop had called on Catholics to consider how parishes might better be served; there had been a good overnight residential consultation. As above, deaneries now needed to look at what it might mean for them – “Are there better ways we could do it?”

10. Minutes of the previous Meeting of the Council held on 23rd Nov’r 2005

These had already been distributed; they were agreed, and signed by the chairman.

11. Matters Arising from Minutes of 23rd November 2005

(not separately covered as today’s numbered Agenda Items)

Re Item 4 (Inter/Multifaith): There had been no follow-up

12. Any Other Business

12.1. Flu pandemic

Melvyn Cooke asked how prepared the churches were for the pandemic expected in ~2 years time – a pandemic would affect freedom to associate together, travel, as well as causing great increases both in mortality and in the need to support the sick. There were no answers!

12.2. Date(s) of Meetings in 2007

The meeting noted the suggested dates: Wednesdays 14 March 2007 and 21 November 2007

12.3. Date of Next Meeting - already agreed as 22 November 2006.

13. Closing Prayers, and Closure

These were led by the chairman.

The meeting thanked Bishop John for allowing us to meet at his home.

The meeting closed at 12 noon.