



CHURCHES TOGETHER IN KENT

St Lawrence Vicarage, Stone Street, Seal, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 0LQ
Telephone: 01732-761766 www.ctkent.org.uk ctk-7@ctkent.org.uk

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

Minutes of Full Council Meeting

held at 10:00 am, Monday 30th March 2009
at The Hermitage, West Malling, Kent ME19 6HB

Members of Council present:-

Revd Robin Blount (Canterbury Diocese); Mr Michele Cascioli (Hon Treasurer); Bishop Brian Castle (Rochester Diocese); Revd Peter Clark (URC); Revd Geoffrey Collins (URC); Revd Michael Cooke (County Ecumenical Officer, and Secretary); Revd Malcolm Cooper (Methodist, South-East District); Major Anthony Cotterill (Salvation Army, and chair for the meeting); Revd John Hellyer (Methodist South-East District); Revd Canon Charles Hill; Bishop John Hine (Southwark Archdiocese); Revd Jeremy Ive (Rochester Diocese); Revd Canon Jean Kerr (Rochester Diocese); Capt Sarah Kind (Salvation Army); Revd Guy Laurence (South Eastern Baptist Association); Revd Bryan Shirley (URC); Revd Pauline Sparks (URC).

Apologies were received from:-

Bishop Graham Cray (Canterbury Diocese); Revd John Currie (Rochester Diocese); Revd Stuart Davison (South Eastern Baptist Association); Revd David Hinchliffe (Methodist); Michael Staynes (Religious Society of Friends); Revd Nigel Uden (URC); Bishop Stephen Venner (Canterbury Diocese).

Chairman

In the unavoidable and long-notified absence of Revd Nigel Uden, chair of CTKent, the meeting was chaired by the vice-chair, Major Anthony Cotterill.

Actions for members

Please note that there are a lot of specific actions under Minute 7.

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The chairman welcomed Revd Canon Charles Hill to his first meeting – Charles is Canterbury Diocese's Ecumenical Officer for its Maidstone Archdeaconry.

2. Prayer

Anthony Cotterill read from Psalm 27, and a prayer was led by Sarah Kind.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 19 November 2008

3.1 These Minutes were approved unanimously.

3.2 Matters arising, and not covered below:

3.2.1 Christmas Adverts from Churches Advertising Network Adverts

Michael Cooke reported that with a total of £1,250 – raised from CTKent, the Archdeacon of Tonbridge and 4 local Churches Together groups - a series of fifty-six 30-second adverts had been 'purchased' to be broadcast on Invicta Radio (commercial radio) over the period 17-24 December 2008.

No member of Council had had any feedback from local churches over this series (though we recognised that the typical Christian worshipper listens, if at all, more typically to BBC Radio 4 than to Invicta radio). It was noted that the adverts should

be seen in combination with whatever churches were doing locally to advertise the gospel. It was suggested that the adverts be made available through FaceBook and/or YouTube.

4. Finance

4.1 Year-end statement for 2008

When the exact figures are available (end-April 2009) Michele Cascioli will forward to Michael Cooke for onward forwarding to all members of Council

Action: Michele Cascioli, and Michael Cooke

4.2 Budget and denominational subscriptions for 2010

The budget for 2009 had been based on 'standard ongoing costs' for the first 4 months, then for the remaining 8 months the cost of the Researcher (pro-rata £8,500 per annum, similar to the current Ecumenical Officer's stipend, but while there will be no pension payments, there will be advertising and recruitment costs).

For 2010, the budget will be made up of a further 4 months of the Researcher's costs PLUS 8 months of whatever is then decided by Council. Recognising that denominations need a figure by this summer for their own budgeting, each should plan on a placeholder budget akin to 2009 (i.e. £3,765 from each of Canterbury, Rochester and Southwark dioceses, and £753 from each of SEBA, Methodist, Salvation Army, and URC).

Action: Denominations to inform their Treasurers/Finance Departments

5. Downturn in the Economy; European Workers; rise of the BNP

5.1 Down-turn in the Economy

The following is an update on what denominations and other groups are experiencing /undertaking.

NB Items marked with # will be circulated, when available, to Council members.

5.1.1 Initiatives taken by Kent Workplace Mission, and comments included:

- An event is being planned for 4th June at Aylesford for those in chaplaincy, local ministry, business people where questions can be asked and thoughts given on business in a Christian perspective. KWM will be producing advertising for this initial event in the near future.
- Articles written by David Helms (Lead Partner) for various publications. Malcolm Cooper undertook to provide details (#).
- No response had been received from Robert Hardy (c.f. previous Minutes)
- "The current economic climate is a challenge not just to economic need and moral issue, but also to pastoral mission."
- "Synergy is needed between church life and the work place: it is not sufficient for churches to pronounce on business practices; it is also essential that Christians involved in their workplaces take the message to the churches."
- The Vice-president of the Methodist Church had visited, and there had been a good discussion about ethics in business.
- Anthony Cotterill reminded the meeting that KWM is us!

5.1.2 London Institute for Contemporary Christianity

Jean Kerr drew attention to the work of this institute, which aims to equip Christians for living in today's world – see their website www.licc.org.uk

5.1.3 Credit Action (Keith Tondeur)

Jeremy Ive mentioned the work of this initiative – see www.creditaction.org.uk

5.1.4 Debate at the Church of England's General Synod in February 2009

Bishop Brian mentioned the recent discussions at the February 2009 General Synod – with some good critique emerging from the debate between the “movers and shakers” in the finance world. A paper (#) from Andreas Whittam Smith (Chairman of the Church of England's Church Commissioners' Assets Committee) is attached to these Minutes.

5.1.5 Baptist/Methodist/URC Joint Public Issues Team

Pauline Sparks drew attention to this group and their work to prepare for the G20 Summit a paper (#) for sign on by UK Churches, and which had been presented to Stephen Timms, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Hazel Blears, and the Prime Minister's Political Office. 10 Downing Street. It is hoped that JPIT will be able to engage in further discussions with the Government on these issues after the G20 Summit

5.1.6 A general observation to all the above:-

While much was being done in a theoretical way, how does this impact local congregations and issues faced by their members and the communities they serve and work in?

5.2 European Workers

Two areas of concern are (1) those workers with not enough employment time to qualify for government help; and (2) those with illegal status.

Robin Blount mentioned the work of Migrant Helpline (which he chairs). Robin undertook to provide Council members with pictures, numbers, and examples of the legal situation of such workers.

Action: Robin Blount

Bishop John said some of his knowledge on this subject came from Catholic schools (which of course implies the experience relate only to workers with families).

The meeting noted that its information was at present very nebulous, and it needed more concrete information. The issue would be on the agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the Church Leaders.

Action: Church Leaders

5.3 Rise of the British National Party (BNP)

Bishop Brian drew attention to the historic pattern of the rise of the BNP in times of economic downturn, and exemplified most recently by the election of a BNP councillor in Swanley. This rise is fuelled by our poorly representative parliamentary system, and loose talk of protectionism (e.g. “British jobs for British workers”) There are moves by the BNP to infiltrate Christian churches (NB General Synod had declared being a member of the BNP was incompatible with being one of its ordained ministers). Some new “Christian” movements are fronts for the BNP.

Action: All, to note and pray

6. Researcher / Development Officer Appointment (progress towards)

The final version of the advert had been issued, and copies were on both CTE's and CTKent's websites - but many Council members did not seem to have had it cascaded down to them. A copy is attached to these Minutes.

Closing date for applications is set as 15th April, with interviews planned for 20th April. Members were asked to spread the word about this opportunity.

Action: All

Post-meeting note: The advert has been re-sent to the Church Leaders, and additionally immediately e-mailed to all members of Council.

7. Covering what is essential in the current County Ecumenical Officer's work

Michael Cooke stands down from being County Ecumenical Officer at the end of April 2009. Nigel Uden and he have arranged a "hand-over" meeting for 23rd April, and the expectation is that files of Minutes, Finance, essential information about LEPs and other Partnerships, Churches Together groups, CTE's file of Ecumenical Notes, an electronic copy of the web up-to-date to mid-April 2009, etc will be handed to Nigel (or his PA!) so that essential correspondence can continue.

A sheet prepared by Michael and detailing his current roles was discussed, and with the above understanding that some of the following may soon prove to be better handled by the Researcher, or through the Chairman, the roles were apportioned as follows:-

<u>Current specific roles of County Ecumenical Officer</u>	<u>Assignment or Action</u>
7.1 Ecumenical Officer for the County (of "Greater Kent")	
1. Covering issues for denominations where there is no Denominational Ecumenical Officer (DEO). <i>Currently this involves Canterbury Diocese, and Southwark Archdiocese. See also Minute 8.1.7b, below.</i>	Denominations to appoint; within Canterbury Robin Blount and Charles Hill felt they could cover pro-tem.
2. Maintaining links with, convening and encouraging meetings of, Denominational Ecumenical Officers, Council, etc	(a) 12 th May 2009: John Currie (b) 20 th Oct 2009: Pauline Sparks
3. Source of good practice/guidelines/ resources for LEPs, Churches Together groups, etc <i>(Michael has maintained only a collection of files/pamphlets/books/statements on Canon Law, Standing Orders, Inter-church agreements, background on other ecumenical activities, specimen constitutions, etc, but more importantly he knows where such information is to be found! And if he doesn't know an answer, he probably does know who will be able to help!)</i>	Jean Kerr has offered to hold all pamphlets/ files/ folders unrequired by Chair or Researcher
4. Being individually involved at any one time with 2 or 3 "challenging areas" of local ecumenism - e.g. Churches Together groups, or LEPs; much of this done by e-mail, telephone, by visiting, or attending local councils of churches.	Denominational Ecumenical Officers
5. Arranging one-off events/activities, such as "training" or information type gatherings (c.f. the recent 3-counties Training Day for members of LEPs)	(Drop this activity)
6. Attending local denominational Synods and Unity groups (c.f. URC's Southern Synod in March 2009; Catholic Unity Commission 2-3 times/year, etc.)	(Drop this activity)

Current specific roles of County Ecumenical Officer

7. Membership of other county-wide bodies (c.f. membership of one of the county's LSPs; links with Thames Gateway groups; Co-ordinator to the Police Chaplaincy)

8. Representing CTKent at CTE events including national services, triennial Forum

9. Link with interfaith groups, including North Kent Interfaith, the Three Faiths group meeting on the Bromley/Lewisham border.

7.2 Secretary for Churches Together in Kent

1. Link person with the Church Leaders (and disseminating both ways between these Leaders and DEOs); on occasion, drafting letters for them.
2. Convening and arranging meetings (Full Council and Leaders' meetings, and occasionally Study/Training days), and Minute taking/ from these

7.3 Point of Contact with and for the County

1. Single point of contact for LEPs, Churches Together Groups, CTE and members of the public

2. Link with neighbouring County Bodies (e.g. CEOs of Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire meet ~ 3 times each year to share sub-regional issues); occasional attendance at London Borough Deans' meeting

3. Churches Together in England: e-news (some to be onward disseminated); national events (e.g. Covenant services, appointment/retirement services; Forum; etc)

4. BBC Radio Kent (c.f. recent interview for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity)

Assignment or Action

(a) West Kent LSP: Michael to arrange representation from a Churches Together group in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling, or Tunbridge Wells;
(b) Th. Gateway: Chairman;
(c) Police Chaplaincy: See Section 7.5b of these Minutes.

Through Church Leaders (for triennial Forum, see Minute 8.3a)

Peter Clark and Jean Kerr

(Drop this activity)

Chair of CTKent to make arrangements

List all DEOs on all future correspondence, and on CTKent website

Geoffrey Collins

TBA – via a forwarding address

Geoffrey Collins

Current specific roles of County Ecumenical Officer

Assignment or Action

7.4 Administration

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Maintaining contact lists of contacts with LEPs, CT groups (this can only be done by regular contact with the groups, and/or them knowing who is the single point of contact: such contacting usually elicits “non-admin” issues!) | Await outcome of Researcher Review |
| 2. Occasional mailing of good practice of and to these groups | Await outcome of Researcher Review |
| 3. Maintaining CTKent’s website of 30+ pages (~weekly updates) | Robin Blount will “look at what is involved” – NB Robin is not committing that he will therefore then take this role on! |
| 4. Ad-hoc responses to individual members of the public for details of e.g. list of churches in an area, where to get a baptism, name of a specific denominational church in a particular town, etc. (NB some of these requests are far more than mere “admin”!) | Denominational Ecumenical Officers (DEOs), via their contact details on website. |

7.5 Two Post meeting notes:

- (a) Arranging LEP Reviews
This is, and always has been, the collective responsibility of the Denominational Ecumenical Officers.
- (b) Coordinator to Chaplaincy to Kent’s Police:
The role of Coordinator to the Chaplaincy is not an appointment or formal role of Churches Together in Kent. Revd Peter Hills is both a chaplain and a member of CTKent’s Council, and so can provide any needed feedback/communication between the two bodies. At the Chaplains meeting of 31st March, Michael was asked by the chaplains to continue his role as co-ordinator, “but like a grandfather free to hand the baby back at any time.”

8. News from denominations, LEPs, CTE, Bexley & Bromley

8.1 News from denominations relevant to other churches

8.1.1 Rochester Diocese

- (a) Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali announced on 28th March his decision to stand down from 1st September 2009 as Bishop of Rochester; his last engagements in the diocese will be in June, giving time for hand-over, etc. His future role is not fully determined, but is expected to be in the area of support and education for churches in need.
- (b) See also Minute 8.1.8 re Church in Society (shared with Canterbury Diocese)

8.1.2 Canterbury Diocese

- (a) Bishop Stephen Venner was retiring in November 2009; his replacement will take priority of that of Bishop Graham, and a name should be known towards the end of the year, with the new Bishop in Canterbury in post around Easter 2010.

- (b) The diocese is not to have a clergy conference this year – instead it will be a Gathering over Friday/Saturday 4th/5th September 2009.
- (c) See also Minute 8.1.8 re Church in Society (shared with Rochester Diocese)

8.1.3 URC Southern Synod

The Southern Synod has established a Mission Committee, which is drawing up a Mission Strategy – this is partly in response to a call from General Assembly, partly to inform how the Synod could be better organised (the current Area Coordination Teams (ACTs) are not perceived as a good arrangement – should the Synod meet in several areas to give more local involvement?), and partly to inform decisions on ministerial deployment. The Mission Committee is consulting widely, including with its ecumenical and global partners, and is due to conclude with recommendations/decision in July 2010.

8.1.4 Methodist South-East District

Circuits and churches are considering how they might be better configured for improved mission; this begs the wider question of how churches relate to one another in Kent – the Methodist Church is not alone in this! - and with most denominations suffering a decline in ordained ministry whether there should not be some collaborative decisions on deployment. (John cited the example of Methodist ministers covering 2-3 towns/villages crossing on Sunday mornings ministers doing the same but in opposite directions – this cannot be good stewardship.)

8.1.5 Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark

- (a) Following the Vision statement from the Archbishop, the catholic diocese is also undergoing some re-shaping – e.g. the recent merging of 3 parishes in Thanet into one, which is now much more alive and healthy.
- (b) The Archbishop is recovering well from his second knee operation – but Bishop John is therefore having to spend more time helping out at the centre of the diocese.

8.1.6 Salvation Army South East Division

- (a) Sarah Kind is moving to Berlin.
- (b) Anthony Cotterill, in his capacity as a nominated member of Canterbury Cathedral Council, has suggested to that Council that it would be good for the cathedral to have an ecumenical statement.

8.1.7 South Eastern Baptist Association

- (a) Revd Norman Tharby has stood down as Regional Minister to take up a pastoral appointment in Ipswich. Pro tem, the Regional Minister is Revd Stuart Davison, but a more permanent arrangement is expected in April 2009.
- (b) Revd Guy Laurence has stated his intention soon to stand down as SEBA's Ecumenical Officer for Kent.

Action: SEBA to nominate a replacement DEO

8.1.8 Church in Society

David Grimwood is retiring as Bishops' Offer for Social Responsibility and lead-manager of Church in Society.

8.2 News from other Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs, CT groups)

Kent Workplace Mission

This LEP still needs Trustees – although according to its Constitution each participating denomination should each provide two Trustees, what are needed are not so much denominational placeholders, but individuals with specific skills to help further the Mission.

Notes added for completeness after the Meeting

- (a) Burham and Wouldham LEP (Anglican/Methodist) ceases as an LEP later this year. The local churches are considering a Declaration of Ecumenical Welcome and Commitment.
- (b) Grove Green (Anglican/Baptist/Methodist/URC): The earlier financial issues appear to have been resolved, and the current plan is to call a Baptist Minister to serve part-stipend. (NB Revd Guy Laurence needs to step down from being the convenor of the Staffing Consultative Group – and Revd Peter Clark has agreed to be the new convenor.)

8.3 News from Churches Together in England (CTE)

- (a) CTE's triennial Forum takes place on 7-9 September 2009, and Kent will be represented by Major Anthony Cotterill and the new Researcher/Development Officer.
- (b) A colloquium on the influence of John Calvin for the religious traditions of England and Wales takes place 1-3 September 2009. Details on CTE's website.

8.4 Bexley and Bromley - part of CT Kent, or part of CT South London?

Following our previous Council's clear consensus that Bromley and Bexley would be more effectively located within CTSL, Michael had written in early March 2009 to all LEPs and Churches Together groups in Bromley and Bexley asking their stakeholder views on whether Churches Together in Kent should continue to cover/represent the two London Boroughs, or whether they would be better served by being within an enlarged Churches Together in South London. So far, only one tentative response had been received (from Emmanuel Church, Sidcup) – other responses were awaited.

Action: Michael to forward responses

Action: That responses also be fed into the Researcher's Review.

9. Date of Next Meeting

This was set as 1pm (meeting first for a sandwich lunch, then meeting) on either Monday 28 September or Monday 12th October 2009.

Post Meeting note: After conferring with Revd Nigel Uden, the meeting will be held at 1 pm on Monday 12th October 2009 at The Hermitage.

10. Closing Wishes and Prayer

This was the last Council meeting for Sarah Kind, who was moving to a post in Berlin, and for Michael Cooke, stepping down at the end of April after 12 years as County Ecumenical Officer. Anthony explained that Michael had already been 'sent-off with a presentation' by the Church Leaders, and the Meeting wished him well in his future.

Closing prayers These were led by Anthony Cotterill.

The meeting closed at 12:13pm

- Attachments
- (1) Advert for Researcher/ Development Officer (2 x A4 sides)
 - (2) Other documents on work/finance/business ethics, as available the time of issuing these Minutes, including papers by Andreas Whittam Smith (4 x A4 sides, see Minute 5.1.4) and JPIG (8 x A4-sides, see Minute 5.1.5)