



CHURCHES TOGETHER IN KENT

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Minutes of a Meeting of the Full Council of Churches Together in Kent

held at 9:30 am, on Wednesday 16th March 2005 at The Hermitage, West Malling, Kent

Present:-

Revd Robin Blount (Canterbury Diocese, CofE); Bishop Brian Castle (Rochester Diocese, CofE); Revd Alec Cheyney (Kent Baptist Association); Revd Michael Cooke (Hon Secretary); Revd Malcolm Cooper (London South East District, Methodist); Major Anthony Cotterill (Salvation Army); Revd Tony Cross (KBA, and Chairman after item 4.1); Bishop John Hine (Southwark Diocese, RC); Revd Dr Jeremy Ive (Rochester Diocese, CofE); Revd Ruth Matthews (KBA); Fr Wilfrid McGreal O Carm (Southwark Diocese, RC); Revd Jim Perryman (Canterbury Diocese, CofE); Revd Harvey Richardson (London South East District, Methodist, and Chairman until item 4.1); Revd Trevor Rolls (London South East District, Methodist); Revd Bryan Shirley (Southern Province, URC).

Apologies were received from:-

Mr Michele Cascioli (Hon Treasurer); Revd Geoffrey Collins (Southern Province, URC); Bishop Graham Cray (Canterbury Diocese, CofE); Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali (Rochester Diocese, CofE); Fr Geoffrey Pointer (Southwark Diocese, RC); Michael Staynes (East Kent Meeting, Society of Friends); Revd Nigel Uden (Southern Province, URC); Bishop Stephen Venner (Canterbury Diocese, CofE).

1. Welcome and Opening Prayers

The chairman (Revd Harvey Richardson) began the meeting by welcoming Revd Alex Cheyney, a retired Baptist minister to his first meeting of Council. Harvey then lead a reflection on the Common Lectionary Gospel for the previous Sunday (John 11), and committed the meeting with prayer.

2. Membership

An updated list is appended (*see pink sheet*).

3. Finance

3.1. Accounts for 2003 and 2004

As a result of the unavoidable absence of the Treasurer, the Secretary introduced the accounts:-

The Accounts for both calendar 2003 and 2004 were pre-circulated (*2 blue sheets*), (the former having not been ratified in 2004), and should be attached to these Minutes. The Treasurer was seeking to have them independently examined (by Mr D Howe), but by the time of the meeting he had not heard back. The following points were noted:-

(A) 2003 had shown a slight deficit

(B) 2004 had shown a surplus, due to three main variances:

Increased income: A one-off catching up of contributions from local Churches Together (some monies from previous year!), and

Reduced expenditure: Council had agreed not to produce a printed Ecumenical Directory (a continually updated version is available on the website), and the Secretary's travelling expenses were unexplainably less.

- (C) The income for 2004 is (on the Treasurer's advice) shown as having been received, but in fact four denominations had not paid their subscriptions by the year end (whence the £5,160 due). Mr Cascioli had recently written to the Creditors and was fully confident of receiving the amounts outstanding. He believed it was clearer to the denominations to present the Accounts this way: to show at the top the amounts as expected, rather than 'shame' with zeros, rather than have to explain next year why some denominations had appeared to pay a double contribution.
- (D) The uneven timing of monies received was one additional reason why CTKent needed to keep to its recommended half-year reserve.

Subject to proper independent examination, the Meeting adopted the Accounts for both years. The information would be published on the web.

Actions: (a) Michele Cascioli to supply Examined Accounts
(b) Michael Cooke to provide web version

3.2. Annual subscriptions to Churches Together in Kent in 2006

The Secretary introduced the Treasurer's proposal (*one double-sided blue sheet*) for the 2006 budget. These were based on

- (a) Estimated increase in stipend for County Ecumenical Officer of 4.8% (i.e. the same increase as from 2004 to 2005)
- (b) Pension contributions to increase by the above 4.8% AND the general increase required from the Church Commissioners.
- (c) A one-year zero percentage increase in contributions from the denominations.

Questions were asked about why the web expenses were so low (only a renewal of domain name expected – but some members thought that by 2006 we should be budgeting to update the Website to a more modern showcase format for what the churches do together). Jeremy Ive agreed to liaise with Neil Thomson and Michael Cooke to see what scope for modernising there was, and the proposals would be brought to the following meeting of the Church Leaders.

Action: Jeremy Ive

This budget was accepted (proposed by Bishop John Hine, seconded Trevor Rolls, and agreed unanimously). It should be attached to these Minutes (*one double-sided blue sheet: one side with the budgets, and the other with notes to the budget*). Members were asked to inform their denominational Treasurer of the amounts due in 2006.

Action: All Church Leaders

4. Issues from the Church Leaders' Meetings (most recent was 15 Feb 2005)

4.1. Chairmanship of Churches Together in Kent

Harvey Richardson would be leaving Kent in August 2005 to take up an appointment as Superintendent minister in Croydon; the Church leaders had discussed a successor as Chairman of Churches Together in Kent, and proposed Revd Tony Cross (Baptist Regional Minister for Kent). This proposal was unanimously welcomed.

Tony Cross took the chair, and began by giving a warm tribute to Harvey for his leadership over a significant era in the churches partnership together. His patient and gentle leadership had been an inspiration to all.

4.2. Proposed Chaplaincy to the Fire & Rescue Service

Michael reported on his meeting back in 2004 with Paul Grout, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, when various models of chaplaincy (including that used in the police) had been discussed. One particular feature of the Fire & Rescue service is the dual system (payroll officers, and the Retained Fire Officers).

Members felt that the churches should perhaps be more proactive; i.e. not waiting for volunteer would-be chaplains to self-nominate. (There is a bigger question here: how do the churches, or CTKent interact with the workplace.) The possibility of CTKent sponsoring later in the year a special training event was also mooted. A small subgroup agreed to look at the possibilities, and to report back to the church leaders meeting.

Action: Fr Wilfrid McGreal, Malcolm Cooper and Robin Blount

4.3. Kent Industrial Mission

The church leaders reported on some of the background: KIM becoming a charity had raised issues of how oversight was exercised. Progress was being made, and there was an important meeting due on 18th April 2005.

4.4. Police Chaplaincy, and Ambulance Chaplaincy

Police Chaplaincy

At the next meeting of the ecumenical police chaplaincy, Fr Wilfrid would be handing over the churches' co-chairmanship to Bishop Graham Cray. Fr Wilfrid surveyed some of the important features both of Kent Constabulary (e.g. that stress is a very big issue; the amazing background of the current Chief Constable; the willingness of officers to work with culture; the changing gender mix), and of the ecumenical chaplaincy group (the wide denominational support; the mix of gender; the diversity of experience (e.g. that some chaplains had previously been police officers); and the recent appointment of Major Robin McIntosh as half-time chaplain to the Headquarters). Issues of inclusivity (e.g. non-Christian chaplains) were being addressed. Fr Wilfrid gave great tribute to the co-chairmen with whom he had worked (including Assistant Chief Constable Tim O'Connor, and Chief Supt Jan Stephens), and to the recent memorial service for ACC David McCann. Fr Wilfrid expected there to be an annual celebration of what the police achieve.

Ambulance Chaplaincy

Bishop Brian drew attention to the new Co-ordinating chaplain (Revd David Jones) who had been licensed last November at a service which also celebrated the achievements of the staff in the Ambulance service. David Jones was based at Coxheath, the HQ for Kent's ambulance service, but provided support and encouragement across the service.

4.5. Prayer across Kent in 2006

Members were reminded of the prayer initiative which had begun in 2004 in Sussex, and which had been widely welcomed across all the different Christian traditions. The organisers had then hoped it would spread to the neighbouring counties. Surrey was starting at Easter in 2005. The meeting heard that Bishops Stephen Venner and Graham Cray were commending 'Picking up the baton' in Kent in 2006 - BUT it would only work in a big way if someone could be identified who would be the co-ordinator and encourager. Do any members know who might wish to take on this role within Kent?

Note. Though not formally discussed or available at the meeting, Linda Ashford's paper 'Picking up the baton' is circulated with these Minutes. (See yellow-coloured paper.)

4.6. Selecting and 'installing' a minister where there is an interchurch dimension

Michael distributed an up-to-date paper prepared by Robin Blount, Ruth Matthews and himself. He stressed the intention NOT to have a closed document which covered every feature in great detail, but one which highlighted the main issues. The paper was therefore deliberately a working draft. It dealt, however, with the widely differing practices between denominations (e.g. is it Collation, Induction, Installing, Licensing, and/or Welcoming?), and in particular it addressed the important areas of how the minister was selected and resourced (not covered in the 1997 paper produced by CTE's Group for Local Unity). It also addressed appointments where there were less formal inter-church dimensions, as well as to the Council of CTKent.

On a question from Bishop Brian, Michael agreed to check whether CTE/CTBI provided additional or more current relevant material. **Action: Michael Cooke**

The meeting warmly commended the paper, and asked for it to receive the widest possible circulation. Members were asked to forward any detailed comments within the week, so any amendments could be made before final circulation at the end of April.

Action: All

Harvey Richardson commented that the next steps should be to address the nature of the liturgy used at such appointments; he hinted at some recent poor experiences where partner denominations had effectively been ignored.

5. Issues from Churches Together in England

5.1. "The Gathering" (5-7 November 2004)

Reporting on their mixed experiences from this meeting, Robin Blount and Bryan Shirley expressed some concerns that 'it didn't cut much ice'. But the meeting had probably met its own objectives, which were to enable a wider less ecumenically experienced group to gather and share experiences. The contribution from Cardinal Murphy O'Connor was much appreciated.

5.2. General Election

Together, the Christian churches together had a major responsibility in the forthcoming electioneering to further an informed debate about the deeper issues at stake, such as Make Poverty History, Asylum, other faiths. CTE provide excellent materials on their website to help churches and local Churches Together groups host meaningful hustings with would-be candidates.

5.3. Meeting of County Ecumenical Officers (due 18-20 May 2005)

Members were asked to tell Michael of issues they would like him to discuss with other County Ecumenical Officers.

Action: All

6. Other National and Regional News/Issues, including

6.1. Regional Faith Forum / Regional Development Agency / South East England Regional Assembly

Individuals are involved in various aspects of regional policy and planning (e.g. Bishop Stephen Venner is highly involved in the Kent Partnership; Peter Southcombe is the representative on the South East England Faith Forum), and Michael Cooke had been the sole 'faith representative' at the recent SEERA/KCC presentation/workshop in Canterbury). Concern was expressed, however, as to how 'joined up' are the contributions of the faith communities (especially the churches who are taking the lead role). The issue will be on the Church Leaders' agenda in April.

Action: Church Leaders

6.2. Three-Faiths Forum in Bromley/Lewisham area

Michael Cooke reported on the progress being made between representatives of the three Abrahamic faiths in the Bromley/Lewisham area. There had been good exchange of information and understanding; matters relating to differing practice and belief had been courteously examined. For the future there was commitment to build on this, and also to open up discussion to highly emotive matters like the West Bank of Palestine.

7. LEPs and Informal Local Partnerships

An updated set of summary information had been circulated with the Agenda. (*See green papers.*)

Trevor Rolls reported that the Review of Burham and Wouldham had taken place, and that the review papers would shortly be available.

8. Other Ecumenical Work, including

8.1. Wellspring 2005 (18 June 2005, at Aylesford Priory)

Fr Wilfrid summarised the mass of committed work that has gone in to producing what he believed would be an excellent programme. He outlined the contributions from several of the keynote speakers, and the wide range of workshops. The entry price had been carefully set, and he was optimistic that the attendances would be comparable to that in 1995, when over 4,000 people had still braved very unappealing weather to come. Although the final stages in the preparations were underway, suggestions were still welcome. The main need was to ensure bookings. **Action: All**

8.2. County Show and the Churches Tent

The history of the Churches Tent was outlined, together with the role of the Executive committee who ran the tent. Historically the tent had three purposes: (a) as a place of welcome and hospitality; (b) as a showpiece of the churches work; and (c) as a place of training (as part of their involvement in rural life) for new ministers. Various views were expressed as to how far each of these objectives were being fulfilled. If the Tent is in the name of the Churches, where was the ownership in practice?

The imminent appointment of a new denominational Rural Officer had brought into focus how far it was his/her responsibility to have some responsibility/involvement in the Churches Tent. The meeting was of the firm opinion that a church rural officer should be involved in the role of the churches tent at the County Show. Michael would convey this discussion to David Grimwood.

Action: Michael Cooke

8.3. Training for church involvement in Critical Incident Response

Next training dates had been circulated before Christmas as 4th and 19th May 2005. Some members were of the opinion they had not been informed of these dates.

9. Communications

9.1. CT Kent's Ecumenical Directory

Michael reminded the meeting of the 2004 decision not to produce a printed ecumenical Directory and to rely instead on a more easily updateable web version (which can still be downloaded in perfect A5 format). He needs to know, however, of changes. **Action: All**

9.2. Media work

Nothing to report

9.3. BBC Radio Kent Lent Course

Fr Wilfrid reported on the role of the Advisory Committee, one of whose roles was to support BBC Radio Kent's Sunday Programme, and the Lent Series. Live Christian material is highly dependent on station policy, time and the availability of engineers. Fr Wilfrid expressed the hope that the current opportunities can be maintained. The station needs both letters saying "That was great", and responses to crass comments made by other members of the public. Churches need to be proactive: if there is anything newsworthy and local, send it in. **Action: All**

Fr Wilfrid gave credit and thanks to the producer Lynn Wallis-Eade, and to Robin Gill's "Theme of Grace" which had been the source of the well-received 2005 Lent Series.

9.4. Notifying Ecumenical Events across Kent

Suggestions for improving communications included regular e-mails being sent out; the provision on the Website of a subscribe/unsubscribe facility. This would form part of the review of the web facility already discussed. (See Minute 3.2, above)

10. Denominational News

10.1. Happenings or plans affecting the denominations in Kent

- Baptist The South East Partnership (Kent, North Downs (=most of Surrey) and Sussex are revisiting the new structures proposed.
- Methodist Likewise, much time being given to restructuring – specifically how the non-London areas of the present London South-East and South-West Districts will combine. (One large District, or with two centres?)
- Rochester Diocese Michael drew attention to the appointment of Canon Jean Kerr as Bishop's Officer for Mission (includes ecumenism)
- URC Bryan Shirley reported on progress of the Provincial Synod to streamline its business procedures (e.g. with a new Mission and strategy group at the centre, with strategy people from each District). He also noted the national "Catching the Vision", and the commitment to provide more sector ministers.

11. To approve the Minutes of the previous Meeting of the Council held on 21st July 2004

These were approved unchanged. There were no matters arising not already covered.

12. Any Other Business

12.1. Making Poverty History

If the Prime Minister and/or the Chancellor are going to achieve anything at the forthcoming G8 summit, they need great support from those who care – the majority of whom are within the faith communities. Mention was made of asking church members (and Churches Together Groups) "What was your action this week to help Fairtrade?"

Malcolm Cooper volunteered to issue his list of Websites related to poverty and Fairtrade issues.
[Note added after meeting: Appended to these Minutes!]

Action: Malcolm Cooper

The Church Leaders were asked to consider whether regional bodies (e.g. Christian Aid or CAFOD) should be invited to send their representative to Council meetings.

Action: Church Leaders

13. Date(s) of Meetings in 2005 and 2006

The date of the next meeting in 2005 is scheduled as **10:00 am, 23 November** and a major theme is suggested as Inter/Multi-Faith. Note the later start of 10am! No dates were set for 2006.

*[Note after the meeting – the Church Leaders had meant to suggest corresponding dates in 2006, viz. 15 March 2006, and 22 November 2006. **Please note these dates!**]*

14. Closing Prayers were led by the chairman

The meeting closed at 1:05 pm.

- Attached (a) Membership (*1 pink sheet*)
 (b) Accounts 2003, Accounts 2004, Budget 2006 (*please append the copies distributed with the Agenda (fresh copies may be downloaded from www.ctkent.org.uk): 3 blue sheets, one double-sided*)
 (c) "Picking up the baton" (*1 double-sided yellow sheet*)
 (d) Malcolm Cooper's promised sheets re Make Poverty History (*3 white pages: 2 pages of web-addresses, and one a copy of details of CTBI's Meeting "Prosperity with a Purpose" on 14th April 2005*)