



Churches Together in Oxfordshire Enabling Group
Minutes of the Meeting held via ZOOM
on Tuesday, 16th February 2021

Those present: Jason St. John Nicolle (Chair, Church of England), David Hare (County Ecumenical Officer), Chris Robins (Treasurer), John Anderson (Secretary, Methodist), Dave Llewellyn (Vice-Chair, Baptist), Glyn Millington (URC)

Apologies: None

1. The Chair opened the meeting in prayer.
2. *Minutes of the last meeting.* Received without amendment.
3. *Matters arising not covered on the agenda.*
 - (a) *Christchurch, Thame.* Glyn understood that the URC review of the ministry of Rev. Dr. Romilly Micklem was now underway. Both the Secretary and CEO were supporting Christchurch in the development of their new Constitution.

ACTION: SEC/CEO
 - (b) *Reviews of LEPs and gathering of constitutions or ecumenical welcome.* No further progress.

ACTION: SEC
 - (c) *Updated contact lists and GDPR.* No further progress.

ACTION: SEC
 - (d) *Discussion paper for future meetings.* No further progress.

ACTION: SEC
4. *Financial matters.* The Treasurer had circulated three documents prior to the meeting which would need to be approved by the AGM in March, after review by this meeting. He noted that it has been an unusual year, due to the effects of COVID. All contributions from participating denominations had been received. Finances therefore were in a healthy state, especially given the low level of expenditure despite the purchase of a new computer for the CEO. This would need to be taken into account when creating a budget for 2022. There were no comments from the meeting; Chris was thanked for his hard work.
5. *Update on Church of the Holy Family, Blackbird Leys LEP/LECOS.* The CEO had attended a recent meeting where he felt that denominations were more able to share than they had been in the past, in his experience. The problem remained finding funds to invest in the renewal project, although some denominations were looking to offer personnel. He felt it was still important for denominations to be clear as to their future participation in the LEP.

The Chair was able to report that the Diocese were looking to give an undertaking to the City Council with reference to the site. The exact wording of the undertaking was still under review.

Dave Llewellyn felt there was a lot of energy coming from the Archdeacon but was there a sense of reality? He was delighted to find that there were Baptists within the LEP.

The Chair suggested that there were 'contested narratives' within the wider conversation. He highlighted the need for proper 'buy in' from denominations and consultation at ground level.
6. *Oxford Brookes Chaplaincy Review.*

(a) The CEO had attended a multi-faith board meeting last week which had been positive. There were still issues to be worked out e.g. the need for potential chaplains to have accredited theological training. The review had highlighted that the Ecumenical Chaplaincy Council had not met recently. Questions were asked as to the function of this Council and the formation of the Chaplaincy as an LEP. The Chair and CEO were to discuss this with the lead chaplain and prayers were requested for the situation at the University. The Secretary suggested that referencing the chaplaincy at Leicester University might be helpful as this was also an LEP.

ACTION: Chair/CEO

(b) The CEO was now able to publish the review.

ACTION: CEO

7. *Arrangements for Annual General Meeting.* AGM to be held on 22nd March via ZOOM. Rev. Dr. Paul Goodliff of CTE had agreed to be our speaker but the Secretary would confirm that Paul was still available and happy to operate over ZOOM. The existing officers were willing to be re-elected. Paul would be asked to update us on the way that the churches in Bicester where he lived were reaching out to the new housing, and to reflect on that from a national perspective.

ACTION: SEC

8. *Sharing of news:*

(a) David Llewellyn said that the Baptists had just released a video on the work in new housing, in two versions.

(b) CEO had become a Mental Health First-Aider, looking to offer a ministry in this area, responding to the growing need for mental health support.

9. *Any other business* – none.

10. *Date of next meeting:* Tuesday 12th October 2021 at 12.30pm, hopefully at Kidlington Baptist Church.

11. David Hare closed the meeting with prayers.

Secretary's Notes:

- I think that this is the link to the videos that Dave Llewellyn mentioned:
https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/602922/Graven_Hill.aspx
- From the Society for Ecumenical Studies, Canon Dr Jeremy Worthen, previously Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and Theology at the Church of England Council for Christian Unity, speaks and takes questions on the subject: 'Visible Unity – still our hope?' I haven't had a chance to watch this yet so can't comment but thought it would be worth publicising.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3tnraOUm18>
- Thanks to Glyn for sending the new/updated documentation for LEP constitutions, the Partnership Agreement and the associated help documents. A key paragraph, at least for me, in the accompanying URC letter:

In LEPs which include either the Baptists or Church of England, you may be asked about using the constitution for a Charitable Incorporation Organisation (CIO). Both the Methodist Church and the URC are very reluctant to choose the CIO route and will therefore only agree to these under exceptional circumstances. They also require additional legal advice.