



Churches Together in Oxfordshire Enabling Group
Minutes of the Meeting held
on Friday 18th November 2022
at Kidlington Baptist Church

Those present: Jason St. John Nicolle (Chair, Church of England), David Hare (County Ecumenical Officer), Chris Robins (Treasurer), John Anderson (Secretary, Methodist), Steve Barber (Baptist)

Apologies: Glyn Millington (URC)

1. This was a meeting to discuss the ongoing strategy for Churches Together in Oxfordshire. The chair opened the meeting with a short prayer.
2. The Chair offered his own personal view of the current ecumenical context at local level, county level (which included diocese, circuit and district, synod and area) and at national level. In the discussion that followed it was recognised that:
 - a) it is unclear as to how many of the local “churches together” groups are functioning post-COVID, and how many previous activities continue;
 - b) ecumenical work continues at local level through work such as food banks which seek to support and serve local communities (a very busy food bank at Kidlington Baptist was a timely reminder);
 - c) ecumenical encouragement does not appear to be a high priority for many, if not all the major denominations at county level;
 - d) with the decline of the major denominations via generally decline of membership, closure of churches and lack of ordained ministry, there was a greater opportunity for ecumenical working but these don’t appear to be taken up.
3. There then followed a further conversation around the possible options for the future of CtiO, which were outlined as
 - keep things exactly as they are;
 - keep CTiO going as it is but make some changes;
 - bring CTiO to an end, at least in current format.
4. It was agreed that we need to continue to support David’s work as Development Officer but that further work was required to gather more information as to the current situation at local level, to encourage engagement by church leaders and to engage with the other “non-traditional” church groups. It was recognised that there was a connection between the future of CTiO in its current form and the potential retirement of David in a few years time.

5. Actions that were discussed were as follows:

a) Bishop Gavin to be asked to host a meeting of church leaders. The Secretary was asked to draw up a list of potential invitees which would be reviewed by the Enabling Group before being sent out.

SEC then ALL

b) Chair to work with David and review his role and remuneration

CHAIR/CEDO

c) Contact with and visits to local groups are to be encouraged.

CHAIR/CEDO/SEC

It was suggested that the next review be held in three years time.

6. There was an update on the LEPs within the county. It was reported that Rev. Romily Micklem had resigned from his role as minister at Christchurch, Thame (Methodist/URC) and that plans were in place for a Methodist minister to take his place in September 2023. Rev. Richard Atkinson, superintendent of the Vale of Aylesbury Methodist Circuit, was in temporary pastoral charge. He was working with the Secretary and Glyn on the new model constitution.

7. It was recognised that many LEPs were in difficult circumstances. There was to be a celebratory service at Oxford Brookes University on 25th January at 3.00pm to recognise the changes within the chaplaincy.

8. Work was progressing on organising the 2023 Annual Meeting. The key note speaker was confirmed as Rev Canon Helen Cameron. The venue was likely to be Emmanuel Church, Bicester. Thanks were offered to Rev. Steve Barber for his efforts on this.

9. Chris Robins tabled the budget for next year. It was agreed to reduce the contributions from denominations by 20% given our surplus. Thanks offered to Chris for his work on the finances.

10. The meeting was closed with prayers.