



Report of the County Ecumenical Development Officer

Annual General Meeting 2024

This has been an interesting year, there has been a very marked rise in the number of actual meetings since Christmas and many CT groups seem to be awakening. I still find I seem to have dropped off some mailing lists, again I would say please let me know what you are doing, I want to support you and the least I can do is pray specifically.

With LEP's I try not to make yet another level of governance while again staying interested and available. There have been two LEP's looking for a new leader. Peachcroft have just appointed a Baptist minister, David Masters, and he will be inducted at the end of April. I know the church, and CTO, are most grateful to the URC, who felt they couldn't provide a minister but have purchased a manse for the church's use. Ladygrove is a little behind, they have decided that a House for Duty post is all they can afford, which means the new incumbent will probably be an Anglican.

I have been able to attend some Churches Together meetings, to help direct CT work and to have discussions with leaders, mainly by email or zoom. It has been encouraging how some groups of churches, who had seemed to wither with Covid, are now wanting to meet again. This is often focussed on a specific project, it has been good to encourage, nudge and support these new initiatives. Doing things together is a positive way of meeting other denominations, actively working in the community on a specific project, share expertise, manpower and initiative, while always glorifying God.

I have not excelled in getting Church leaders together this year. So, it was great to have a meeting recently of Church leaders from a wide spectrum of denominations at Bishop Gavin's home. This was a time of chatting, doing some work looking at how we could support each other, led by Steve Barber, and praying together. One of the central themes was building relationships, as well as making this meeting a safe, confidential place for all the leaders. Bishop Gavin has proposed we meet again in the autumn, an encouraging outcome from a valued time together.

Oxford Brookes University Chaplaincy is no longer an LEP (it had not functioned as one since before my time as it's a multi-faith body) and has officially withdrawn from that status. I was asked to remain of the Board of the Chaplaincy as a co-opted member. It is good to still have a voice at this body, to be able to encourage chaplains and to see the development of the Chaplaincy with Spiritual Health starting to be acknowledged by the University leaders.

Much of the other work is supporting, directing, and encouraging individuals and CT groups in their work. It is a privilege to do this, to be able to foster the work of all churches in Oxfordshire, working together for the advancement of the kingdom. I believe that we all serve a loving Father who wants us to work together and glorify his name as we witness, despite our differences, to the world in our actions and speech.

David Hare
County Ecumenical Development Officer
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