

Minutes of the Church Meeting at Goring URC
for October 2023 meeting held on Saturday 4th November 2023
at 10.30 in the Church.

Welcome: Val G

Devotions: Caroline: what does the bible say about a New Era for our Church.

Those present: 17 Apologies 8

Minutes of meeting amended, agreed and signed by Val G

Matters arising:

Safeguarding Training Update: Mary reminded the meeting that the first Zoom meeting for training is Tuesday 7th November at 6 - 8pm to be held in the church.

Mission Statement:

Please see appendix 1 for the full report.

- To obtain the approval of the Church meeting there are two questions to ask.
- 1 ... does the meeting understand and acknowledge that the Mission Statement should be reviewed, refreshed and updated? Vote ... 17 present ... 16 agreed.
- 2 ... Will the meeting entrust the Elders to use consideration that the new Mission Statement, it would be good to have it in place by Christmas, prayerfully considering the input from the responses received? Vote ... 17 present ... 15 agreed.

Church Family News:

- The email from Hilary Redman was read to the meeting. See Appendix 2

Church Flowers:

- Hilary is stepping down from the flower duties on a Sunday morning at the end of November.
- This means that a different system should be put in place. The suggestion is that a note book/diary should be left in the flower room for Hilary as pastoral secretary and anyone else who knows of someone who would appreciate flowers from the church.
- This means that those people on the flower delivery rota will just consult the book and sort out the flowers for delivery.
- Bett Swierk mentioned the flower supply/arranging list sometimes has no-one on it. This was answered by Val G ... anyone could buy and arrange them, not necessarily a big arrangement but perhaps just put in a vase.
- Matthew Smith, Treasurer said that it is perfectly proper for anyone who purchases flowers be reimbursed.
- This will mean working as a team and not all on one person's shoulders.

Elders Time:

- in the light of the Southern Synod Deployment Process it asks us to Pray Pray Pray therefore it was mentioned we should arrange a Prayer time.
- The ideal time for this is at the Thursday Praise Evening, therefore the next one on the 16th November will a time of Worship and Prayer, concentrating on praying for our church and its mission going forward, it is hoped it will be a very welcome time of prayer. It was

suggested that it should appear in Welcome this week and November's editor Wilfred Rhodes will do this.

Outreach:

- Val C reported that Outreach has not met since the September meeting Therefore a few reminders.
- Coffee Morning for Safe in Sussex at 10.30 to 12 noon Friday 10th November.
- The January coffee morning is in aid of Papyrus a charity working to prevent suicide in young people. It also helps those grieving after losing someone to suicide.
- The joint meal is Monday 6th November at the North Star.
- 3rd December at 3pm there is to be a short Carol Service, for those who can't get out easily and those who are unable to go out in the dark for the candlelit carol service on Thursday 21st December at 7pm. Please think and invite anyone you may know who would appreciate these services.
- We will shortly be looking for unwrapped gifts for those being supported by Safe in Sussex. More details will follow so please watch Welcome and notice boards for more information.
- Mini Fishes is thriving 41 children visited last Monday. Thank you to those who came forward to help and are being safely recruited, the team look forward to you joining us soon.

Synod meeting:

- The meeting was coming from Temple URC, St Mary Cray and also on Zoom, Giles Wilson delivered his report. See Appendix 3.
- Giles has stepped down from going to the Synod meeting, Val C said she would be prepared to go to the meetings for the church on Zoom but no further than Crawley URC.

Property 1:

- Health and Safety report was delivered by Bett Swierk, See Appendix 4.
- The question arose that some of the points in the H&S are not being adhered to by those using the premises. Matthew Smith answered for the Hall lettings that when the hirers sign up for the hall they are given and should read the the Health and Safety Policy.

Property 2:

- Paul Redman gave the second part of the Property Report.
- Service of Gas and heating is being done on 7th November and the company will also quote for 2 radiators on the stage.
- Keith Best Electrical has been in and done various jobs.
- The fire exit signs and safety lighting is not working as they should so Keith Best gave a quote of £1386 to put them right. This was deemed urgent and necessary work and the Church Meeting Agreed to it being done asap.
- KB also looked at 2 lights in the Sanctuary that are not working, he thought they had fused and it would cost £480 to fix. The meeting decided after Paul had switched on the lights that it wasn't a problem therefore it would be left for a while and review it again particularly if others stop working.

- Lesley, manager of Little Fishes reported to Paul some issues as a result of the bad weather. The back of the car park was flooded in the heavy rain and leaves blocking drains etc, some were cleared by parents.
- There has also been a mud fall from the bridge which needed clearing and has been swept away but it is an issue to keep watching.
- Other problems in the heavy rain are windows leaking, the kitchen guttering has been cleared and some silicone is loose. Window firms being contacted and hopefully will come in soon to give advice and quotes.
- Matthew also reported that the guttering has been blocked on the Church roof and the soak away is not always working. He suggests that we get someone to check this out as it may effect the buildings all round including the Car Park.

Work Completed:

- A ramp has been put into the Choir Vestry to the Cornwall Room, so is no longer a step and notices have been put to this effect.
- The kitchen hatch has been fixed, both the veneer put back or new where necessary and it now shuts properly and has a bolt to lock it. This was important because as it prevents draughts and the spread of fire.
- Room to room thresholds have been marked with hazard tape to avoid tripping where there are carpet tiles.
- The broken window in the Sanctuary has been repaired
- Stair gates have been installed in some doorways for the safety of small children at Mini Fishes.
- A rubberised mat is to be purchased to cover the electric cable to the lectern as this is a trip hazard.
- If you spot anything in the church please let Paul or Bett know.

Finance and Hall lettings:

- The update on the last report will be at the next meeting as the Finance meeting is Tuesday 7th November.
- Ministry and Mission (M&M) Matthew has written to Synod again and the reply was the same as last reported, He will speak again to them on Monday 6th November. Therefore a more detailed report at the next church meeting will be delivered.
- As regards the Vestibule roof and Sanctuary Windows the next step is to bring the Quinquennial survey forward as it needs a proper survey but Synod is awaiting a new surveyor.

Hall Lettings:

- The Curtain Call Academy have a discounted rate for the use of 2 halls; they are using one hall on Monday and two on Wednesdays in the afternoon.
- AFM ladies are holding a prayer meeting in the Sanctuary from 11 - 12 on Thursdays.
- Rowland singers have booked the Sanctuary for a concert on 13th December at 7pm and also a date in November to be confirmed for rehearsal.

Notices and Correspondence:

- 4 people have resigned from their jobs in the church.
- Giles Wilson from the Synod meetings, Hilary from the Flower distribution. Eileen Rhodes from Duty Elder and Margaret Butcher from the Welcomers. Heartfelt thanks go to them all for their hard work over many years and for their loyalty in the service of God, in this place.
- A suggestion was made by Val C that we approach the council for double yellow lines to be painted on to the south side of Barrington Road opposite the church as it is always full of large Vans and Motor Homes which makes Barrington Road a single carriageway and is very difficult for larger cars to get into church property. It also means that a fire engine could not get in either, should the need arise. This situation will be made worse by the new housing estate as the traffic will probably double or treble. Accidents may occur and the query of for those who need a Blue Badge also arose. Geoffrey Redman informed the meeting that those with blue badges in cars can park anywhere. The question to the meeting was 'Do we look into this issue?' The meeting agreed we should.
- Matthew also asked that perhaps a Zebra Crossing could be mentioned at the same time to help Elderly or wheelchair bound people and people with small children and babies in prams and buggies.

The Meeting ended at 11.35 with prayer
the next meeting is Saturday 25th November at 10.30.

Signed byVal Gill on 25th November 2023

The Mission Statement

Following the Synod deployment process, a Visionary Companion will be appointed to each church after their Minister retires or is called to a new position. The Visionary Companion is appointed to a church by the Area Pastoral Committee according to the church's requirements once that church's Mission Statement has been reviewed. Research showed us that "a mission statement should be reviewed every three years to ensure that it is relevant, especially during challenging periods". Our current Mission Statement was last reviewed and rewritten around 20 years ago.

As you heard at last month's Church Meeting, the Elders were called to meet with Rev. Andy Twilley, Synod Training and Development Officer, to do this. We did this by following the "Three Cs", Christ, Church, Community, presenting our thoughts to the last Church Meeting, following up with the request for written comments prior to the Elder's Meeting last Thursday.

We thank those of you who took the time to think about and respond to the drafted Mission Statement, valuing the comments made, prayerfully spending a good chunk of our meeting on them.

We have altered one word from the original draft that was put to September Church Meeting, so the proposed Mission Statement reads:

Goring United Reformed Church

We are here to

^{grow}
~~God~~ closer to God,

Support and encourage one another,

Share the love of Jesus.

- We need to vote that*
- The membership acknowledge that the mission statement had to be reviewed + refreshed. nearly all.*
 - Can I then propose that we vote to decide on this as our new Mission Statement?

Appendix 2.

Hilary Redman <hilli@amos.org.uk>

27/10/2023 10:53

Church Family Report to Elders meeting.

To Val Gill <val.gill@ntlworld.com> Copy Val Berry <rickval@talktalk.net> •
Ryan Thomas <ryan@mcmouse.co.uk> • Caroline Hibbs <cb.hibbs@icloud.com> •
Mary Redman <mary@redlee.co.uk> • Valerie Cooper <vhcooper@hotmail.co.uk>

Church Family news to Elders Oct/Nov meeting 2023

Happily there is no new news of illness or sadness to date (Oct 27), but neither any celebratory news !!

However,

Attendees:

Lindsey and Brian Parsons have confirmed that they find it difficult to continue worshipping at GURC following Andrew's retirement and wish to move on.. Val B visited them to see if all was well, and as a result of that visit I wrote them a letter expressing our sadness, and our understanding.

I delivered the letter by hand and was invited in for a chat.

They have not found anywhere else to worship as yet.

Of course I said that if they would like to come to GURC at any time they would always be very welcome.

I also discovered that Lindsey's father, Ian Hennell, was a serving elder in this church. He was a member here from 1993 until his death in 2006. I hadn't realised the connection.

Membership: Alf Parsons has asked to be received into Church Membership. Val G has this in hand.

Hand Book/Directory: There will be a new edition of the Handbook as soon as possible but we are waiting for news of new inclusions to be confirmed - Shaune, Barbara and Jean (Joan?). This is positive news from the Coffee and Cake meetings. Val Berry is onto this, and we will proceed when we get back from our holiday next week.

Flowers: You will have seen the emails about this, and I pray that a solution will be found soon.

The present system is creaking but holding up till the end of November .

With your blessing, and as usual, I will ask Matthew to fund the distribution of plants for Christmas.

Flowers Back

David Eames has been coming to Coffee and Cake and found a companion in Alf!!

Apologies: Unfortunately Graham and I have to give our apologies to the church meeting on Saturday, 4th November because we will be away.

Please will someone précis this report for that church meeting?

With every blessing, in Jesus' Name

Hilary

Val, Alan C.

Appendix 3

Report for GURC on Synod Together Meeting 21 October 2023 Temple URC, St Mary Cray

On Saturday 21 October I watched the Synod Together meeting held at Temple Church, St Mary Cray on one-way Zoom.

Before the meeting proper we were welcomed to Temple URC, by a member of the church, who apologised to those attending in person for not having mentioned in the Calling letter that the church was inside the London ULEZ and expressed the wish that no-one had encountered a problem.

As the Moderator, the Reverend Banks, had only just come out of hospital after an operation and subsequent complications, the Convenor of the meeting was the Reverend Russell Furley-Smith.

The opening worship was led by members of Coplestone Church and Community Centre on the theme of "Go out!"

The opening worship was followed by the induction of the Reverend Martin Hayward as Synod Clerk.

After the minutes of the meeting on 11 March 2023 had been unanimously agreed Pastoralia was dealt with swiftly with a mention that the Moderator will need at least six weeks recovery time before returning to work.

The first paper before the meeting was the Synod Council Report dealing with Synod personnel matters, the still to be completed Staffing Review, Synod strategy and the merger of West Kent and Surrey Synod Area with the East Kent Synod Area among other matters. In 2018 Synod Together recognised 3 Priorities for Southern Synod over the next 5 years:

- 1. Supporting Walking the Way as the cornerstone of our planning and activity.*
- 2. Encouraging local churches to review their local mission and ministry and to identify their own priorities within Walking the Way.*
- 3. Working for an equitable use of resources within the Synod and across the URIC.*

Synod Officers will bring updated priorities for the Synod to Synod Council in February 2024 for consideration and discussion at the Synod Together meeting in March 2024. The report was approved unanimously, as was the Synod Ministries Report.

Next there was a presentation dealing with Church Related Community Work (CRCW) Ministry, which works in parallel to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Ministers of CRCW are not ordained but are trained community workers. They have to help tackle any perceived injustices and help churches become relevant to their communities. They can also assist people with learning difficulties find work and generally help churches engage with the local community.

The last presentation before lunch was the report of the Synod's Children's and Youth Work Committee. This started with a welcome to Zeerak Shahbaz as Synod Youth Representative, who had taken over the role from Heather Moore. Zeerak then ran through a number of events in which he had taken part including a week long tri-national youth exchange (France, Germany and the UK) staying at Lee Valley Youth Hostel. He has been invited to attend a similar event in Germany in 2024. The Committee report, among other topics, also dealt with a report on the Greenbelt Festival, an on-line course on mental health first aid training and the Synod Youth Executive. 2023 Advent Resources are available from CWW.

During the lunch break delegates were asked to discuss the possible consequences of RAAC being discovered in church buildings. Unfortunately there was no feed-back afterwards. However, Synod has funds to cover costs of surveys.

After lunch the Training and Development Officer presented a report on Stepwise, confirming that the programme is still running and that events and courses are planned.

The meeting then moved on to formally approve the merger of WKESSA and EKSA, which will take place on Saturday 3 February 2024.

Moving on to the General Assembly report it was noted that General Assembly strongly encourages the United Reformed Church at all levels and in all teams to use the revised Design and Digital Visual Identity to ensure quality and consistency across the work of the denomination. Full details of this and the use of the URC logo are in the General Assembly 2023 papers.

The final item for discussion was the Treasurer's Report on Synod finance and the 2024 budget. The crisis fund available for energy costs closes on 31 December. The accounts for 2023 were accepted. If there are any potential difficulties with the M& M contributions for 2024, Church Treasurers should speak to the Synod Treasurer. The budget for 2024 was approved unanimously.

After setting the date of the next meeting for Saturday 9 March 2024 at a location still to be decided the meeting closed at 3.15pm with an act of worship.

Giles Wilson, Synod Together representative.

Appendix 4.

Health & Safety Report
November 2023

- Update of all yearly and 6 monthly
- Gas Appliances: Bourke & Cooper
- Electrical: Keith Best
- Fire Alarms: Craysfire. 6 month. In house check of all alarm points – 2 months
- Fire Extinguishers: Merryfields

All copies of above records can be found on the Church website

Church Premises

Property Group are checking on a regular basis, inside and outside, anything that is or could become a Health & Safety issue.

Please do not leave doors wedged open or left open. Check windows are closed and locked.

We have a possible damp issue on the stage ceiling which we are investigating. If you need to close the stage curtains, please ensure they are open when you leave.

No chairs are to be left stacked on the stage. Would groups who use tables please wipe them down before putting away. Spray and cloths are available in the Cornwall Room and Main Hall Kitchen.

If you find anything that needs attention, please contact the Property Group.

Thank you

Bett Swierk – Health & Safety Rep.