

**Loughton Methodist Church**  
**Minutes of Church Council meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

**Attendance and apologies were as per the appended sheet.**

1. The meeting opened with Rev. Sue Creighton leading devotions.
2. **Preliminary Matters**
  - 2.1 The 'Working Together' agreement tabled by Sue Creighton (SC) was agreed as a guide for all Church council meetings.
  - 2.2 Charlotte McKernan (CK) was welcomed in her new role as Co-ordinator of Family and Children's Work.

The composition of the Church council was agreed as in the Year Book 2018-19. Following a paper from Sue Creighton it was further agreed that going forward we would change 'non-voting' members of council to allow all members of LMC whether they also held a paid position or not to be able to vote in line with CPD and District information. Where paid employees were not members of LMC they would be able to be 'in attendance' as observers (not Trustees) with no voting powers.
3. **The minutes of the meetings held on 12<sup>th</sup> July and 12 August 2018** were agreed and signed.

As a matter arising from the minutes not arising elsewhere it was agreed that a letter of thanks would be sent from church council to Victoria Williamson (VW) for all the work she had done in an HR capacity.
4. **Safeguarding**

It was agreed that LMC would have a Safeguarding team as the responsibility is too great for one person. Safeguarding is often seen as a 'tick box item' but it is very real and should be something we should all want to do as Christians, making a safe place for everyone. It was agreed unanimously (subject to Safeguarding recruitment) that Kim Schofield (KS) would continue to be the verifier with Anne Spong (AS) being the main rep and named person for contact and Christine Whatson (CW) to be on the team.

The stewards and the communications group will discuss 'lone working' in relation to our staff members and strangers using our premises.
5. **Matters requiring decisions**
  - 5.1 Finance Martin Howarth (MH) talked through the tabled papers and voiced thanks to the office staff for all their efforts in letting our premises to maximize income and the fact that we have no 'bad debts' to write off. Attention was drawn to the fact that giving is down again for the third year, particularly from envelopes and standing orders. This trend is of concern and ways to increase offertory will be considered.

In response to questions, the purpose of both the Vision Fund and the Minister's Discretionary Fund were explained. The difference between restricted funds may only be used for the purpose for which they were donated, and designated funds such as the Vision Fund can be used more widely.

The budget deficit for 2018-19 of some £40,000 will be partly offset by the generous donation of £25,000. This is the final year of a three-year donation of £25,000 per annum. The Accounts and the budget were agreed unanimously.

The Reserves Policy was also agreed unanimously.

The Financial Governance and best practice for Trustees has been updated and this too was agreed.

MH and the finance team we thanked for all their hard work.

5.2 Property Chris Beament (CB) reported that the access road would be closed for a week from Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October for the installation of a gas main. He also reported that the car-parking scheme is being implemented currently targeting times when the church is closed.

5.3 HR As there is no job specification for this role Sharon Heather (SH) agreed to draw up one. It was agreed that MH would take on the HR role subject to satisfactory Safeguarding.

5.4 Permanent Co-ordinator of Family and Children's Work This position will need to be filled from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. MH had presented a paper detailing the timetable and selection team for this and it was agreed unanimously. There will need to be an extra Church Council meeting in December to approve the Job Description and Person Spec. Whether the council will need to meet to ratify any offer of employment or whether this can be delegated will also need to be decided at this time. This was agreed.

5.5 Development Plan SC suggested that she might use the plan in a service, particularly in relation to possible new church members.

It was proposed that Steve Perry (SP) join the Steering Group and this was agreed, with Maggie Buttress (MB) and Keith Aldred (KA) being re-affirmed for this year.

The Terms of Reference for the Steering Group were also approved unanimously.

A communications task group is to be set up to look at what and how we communicate within LMC. It was reported that elderly people are missing The Grapevine and the links it provided. Younger people are to be encouraged to join this group and others whenever possible.

5.6 Wesley's Café Review SP asked that people should feed back ideas through him for taking this forward.

AS spoke about the changes she has made since taking over as manager including – different music in the afternoons, the option of soya milk, toast and jam. She plans to reduce the number of herbal teas offered whilst running down stocks of chocolate and cereal bars as these are not popular. A free copy of the Evening Standard collected from Morrisons is also proving popular.

People appreciate the quality of our coffee and it was felt that a new coffee machine should not compromise this but AS would endeavor to source fair trade coffee. When a new machine is purchased the current one, which is too complicated, could be sold online.

SP wants to form a group to take this forward and CB and MH will join this. Matters about communications should feed into the communications task group.

5.7 Roots on Sunday Co-ordinator This role will be discussed at the Stewards' meeting.

5.8 Ratification of appointments the appointments of MH as Treasurer and Jill Angold-Stephens (JAS) as Church Council Secretary were agreed unanimously.

## **6. Reports from committees**

Pastoral Andrea Moles requested a role description for Pastoral Visitors as it was perceived that this would be helpful for them. It was agreed that this would be prepared.

## **7. Circuit/District/Connexional Business**

7.1 President's Inquiry The President's Inquiry into matters in the London Forest Circuit had thrown up a large number of actions needing to be taken within the circuit, some with immediate or short-term effect. Concern was expressed about the way forward as to date nothing from the report has been addressed.

7.2 Superintendent for the Circuit Rev. Tony Malcolm has been appointed as Superintendent for our circuit and will join us from 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019. As his wife will not be joining him

until September so SH requested that we provide some hospitality for him. She had also volunteered to hold his Welcome Service at LMC.

**8. Stewards Report**

SH spoke about the steward's wish to move the Annual Church Meeting (correctly called the 'General Church Meeting') from November to April or May. After considerable discussion a proposal was made that the Annual Report would be prepared in the autumn and distributed on a Sunday in November with the General Church Meeting (GCM) being held in April or May to elect stewards and the Church Council for the following year. This was proposed by SH seconded by SP; voting was 7 in favour, 0 against and 6 abstentions. The proposal was carried.

**9. Any other business**

9.1 Holiday Club Jenna Thorne (JT) picked this up following Tom Donoghue's resignation and worked with SH and VW to produce an excellent experience for everyone. The service on the following Sunday was particularly good with some seven families attending who have since gone on to join Messy church services. The council requested that a letter thanking JT for this is sent.

Last weekend JT had organised a production with two performances in Waltham Abbey as part of their King Harold celebrations and these had been well received and she is to be congratulated on this.

9.2 Auditors MH brought forward a proposal to re-appoint Clay Ratnage as our auditors for the year 2019-20 and this was agreed unanimously.

10. The meeting closed with a prayer.