

Date: 21 January 2016

Present: 19 attendees

Apologies: 7 apologies

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From: Mr P Craig

Subject: FACT Executive Meeting January 2016

Date of Meeting: Thursday 21 January 2016

Time: 7.30pm

Location: (with grateful thanks to Colin and Janet) St John's, Frome

Chair: Rev J Samways

1 Welcome

John welcomed us and thanked everyone for attending. It was appropriate that we meet during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. We opened in prayer and read 1 Peter 2 v 9-10 together.

2 Minutes of the last meeting (in September 2015)

2.1 Noted as accepted.

2.2 Matters Arising:

- a) We were then looking forward to the autumn Alpha which was not as big this time but nonetheless it was a very significant time for all those attending
- b) Baked Alaska was well attended and timely with the subsequent Paris Global Climate Summit
- c) Attendance at Holiday Bible Club was also down (to 21) but, as with Alpha, all agreed that it was not just about the numbers
- d) Attendance at the United Service in Rook Lane was small too but Keith Powell's message was well received and it was an encouraging evening
- e) The town centre Friday night Carol Singing competed with too many other things on the night and with only a rather short time slot available, but the location was good. Will discuss this with the Town Council for next year. The small group carol singing at various venues was rewarding.
- f) The Christmas publicity, organised by Jim, was very well received. John thanked Jim for all his hard work on this.

3 Finances

3.1 John had circulated a provisional 2015 report from Ian Crook; figures are provisional and will be finalised in time for the AGM.

3.2 Subscriptions were up on last year and largely funded Alpha, Baked Alaska, our insurance, publicity and the United Service's costs.

3.3 Much gratitude was expressed for individual gifts exceeding £3000 which significantly helped fund our Youth Worker.

3.4 The annual balance was £811 (income minus expenditure) and the balance in hand some £8000, up on last year.

4 **Web-site**

Peter apologised for the FACT web-site down time over Christmas which was caused by a cyber attack on the company hosting our web-site. Many other sites were affected and the incident was reported on the national BBC news. Peter requested content for the web-site and to be copied on event notices, etc.. Comments and suggestions are always welcome too. Updates are made weekly, usually early in the week.

5 **HOPE Frome**

- 5.1 The tea and coffee van, staffed by a very committed small group in the centre of Frome on Fridays every fortnight from 10pm-2/3am, continues to make a significant impact. The police are grateful for its presence.
- 5.2 Activities also include litter picking, and support from a number of FACT members for Fair FromeYMCA, the Food Bank and Christmas Day Community Lunch....

6 **Frome Christian Network – Syrian refugees**

- 6.1 Rob Taylor (a member of Frome Christian Network and the Frome Syrian Refugee group) provided an update on current news regarding potential refugees arriving in Frome. The situation is very fluid but a couple of families could be arriving in the coming few weeks. It was decided to give half of the proceeds from this year's Lent lunches towards the project (last year the lunches yielded a total of £1000).
- 6.2 The Refugee group is also seeking two 2/3 bedroom properties in which to house the families. Please let this be known in your church – if anyone knows potential landlords in their congregation or of any available house, please ask them to e mail the information to: john@careswell.net and dinah.bardgett@gmail.com. Please also ask for this to be added to prayer lists and included in magazines and newsletters.
- 6.3 Ideas for hospitality are also welcome.

7 **Youth Work**

- 7.1 Bryce gave an encouraging update on his work in both Frome College and Selwood Academy encouraging the Christian Unions there. He has also been afforded opportunities to mentor boys by the heads there. A Youth Alpha Series is also being run at the Sunday Cafe.
- 7.2 Hardington Vale group of Churches' children and family work is hoping to create a part time youth worker post soon.
- 7.3 The vital importance of engaging with the younger generation was acknowledged and it was conceded that much ground has been lost. Pastor Kay led us in prayer for this challenge.

8 Lent

- 8.1 Ash Wednesday is 10th February this year i.e.early.
- 8.2 There will be lunches at St Mary's on Wednesdays 12.30 – 13.30pm. Janet is keeping a rota of churches offering to lead serving on each occasion.
- 8.3 Details of suggested Lent study books and guides and planned groups will be circulated.
- 8.4 There will be the usual Good Friday gathering outside St. John's at 9.00am.
- 8.5 Jim Parsons will organise collation of Easter service details for publication in the Times. Draft service details should be sent to Jim by the **end of February**.

9 FACT AGM

The FACT AGM will be held on Thursday 28th April, potentially in Trinity – tbc.

10 “Pentecost Praise”

- 10.1 Following the success of last year's evening with Jonathan Viera, John outlined plans for this year's event on May 15 at the Cheese and Grain from 6-8pm.
- 10.2 Graham Kendrick has agreed to lead us, which is very exciting. There will be some 350 seats to fill, and this year it is proposed that they are free and that costs (circa £,3200) are covered through donations – the exact mechanism to be agreed.

11 Frome Festival

There will be a litter pick on the main event day.

12 Men's Breakfasts/Curry Nights

There is a Curry Night planned for Thursday 17 March, details to be published.

13 Week of Prayer for Christain Unity

- 13.1 Jim Parsons outlined a number of concerns he currently has in this current WPCU:
 - a) There has been a loss of unity and sense of common purpose amongst Frome's churches of late
 - b) There is a lack of involvement in FACT by some member churches
 - c) Are we becoming too centralised in our current focus?
- 13.2 Three congregations don't currently have a place of worship in the town – is this not an opportunity for us to share more?
- 13.3 Caroline Walker commented that there had been increased sharing and meeting of churches together in Hardington Vale.

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- 13.4 John reflected that the institutional church in Frome (in keeping with the national trend) faces significant challenges in the coming years; a key question is whether we have the courage and the will to address this. He referred to recent comments by the Bishop of London in which the Bishop observed that “we are *all* heading towards a post denominational church”. If this is the case (and biblically it is difficult to hope for anything else!) we need to explore new ways of relating together. Ideally, FACT offers an important context in which we can work for for more sharing and worship together – its the only practical way forward.

14 Any Other Business

- 14.1 Jonathan Viera is leading an “Easter Eve” event at Trinity at 7pm – more details to follow.

The meeting closed with prayer at 9.30pm