

United Reformed Church

Wessex Synod

World Church Group

Minutes of the meeting held at Elvetham Heath URC, Fleet on Saturday 24th September 2011 at 10.30 am

Present: Martin Waldron, Clare Downing, Helen Everard and Philip Bonnier.

Opening: Martin opened the meeting with thoughts about challenges facing the Group and with prayer.

Welcome: Martin welcomed Philip Bonnier to the Group. Philip has become our link person with the Council for World Mission (CWM).

Apologies: Received from Ian Simpson and Peter Pay.

WC 11.11 The minutes of the meeting held at London Street URC. Basingstoke on Monday, May 16th 2011 were approved.

Matters arising

WC 08.04 Derek Lindfield had updated the register following the last meeting. It was agreed that we should circulate it to Ministers and Church Secretaries.

Philip suggested that we use a world map to plot all the links using a title such as 'Are you here?' to attract attention. Helen agreed to produce a map.

Action: Martin to seek the Synod Office's help with distribution.
Helen to produce a world map for the November Synod.

WC 11.12 Council for World Mission: Derek had written to Steve Cox and Roberta Rominger about the problems with Revd. Dr Collin Cowan's visa. Soon after our last meeting the issue was resolved and Revd. Cowan took up his post.

Philip Bonnier had agreed to become our CWM link person and had met Martin for a briefing. Following that meeting, Philip arranged to meet Revd. Cowan and had a wide-ranging discussion. Since our last meeting CWM had taken the decision to move their headquarters from London to Singapore and this will take place during 2012. Most of CWM's energies will be directed towards this move. Our requests for an information pack and material for a CWM Sunday service will be delayed until the move is completed but it is very much on Revd. Cowan's agenda.

In view of the understandable delay in producing material for a Sunday service, Philip agreed to put material together which will be made available to

all churches in the Synod with a request that they hold a service on a date suitable to themselves.

Martin had discovered a CWM Sunday service pack for 1996 and agreed to send it to all members of the Group.

Philip has arranged for copies of the latest issue of 'Inside Out', CWM's magazine to be available for all church representatives at our November Synod.

Martin reported that he had not made contact with Alison Gibbs who is the URC's only serving missionary with CWM. Alison is Head Teacher at a school on the Zambia/Tanzania border. Philip will contact her by email.

Action: Philip to produce material for a CWM Sunday service.
Martin to send copies of the 1996 Sunday service paper to Group members.
Philip to have copies of 'Inside Out' available for the November Synod.
Philip to contact Alison Gibbs by email.

WC 11.13 2012 Olympics: In John's absence there was no update. Martin will ask him what progress has been made in producing material for the Synod's website.

Ian had discovered that the father of one of the Zambians on the Youth Exchange programme is involved in management of the Zambian Olympic Team and Phil Ray will be asked to follow this up.

Action: Martin to request progress on material for the website.
Ian to contact Phil Ray for information on Zambian athletes who will be at the 2012 Olympics.

WC.11.14 Links with the Église Réformée de France (Nord Normandie) and Le Weekend: Helen reported that David Butler had agreed to give her support on Le Weekend arrangements but it was agreed that David did not need to attend meetings of the Group.

Helen had been informed that the 2012 Le Weekend will probably take place from 5-7 May at Amiens. This is a provisional date.

Helen reported that since the last meeting a number of young people from the church at Luneray had stayed with her family.

A meeting for Clare Downing, together with Helen, to meet her counterpart Olivier Filhol had not yet taken place. Helen was asked to arrange this as soon as possible and certainly before the end of 2011.

Helen requested a short slot at the November Synod to give Le Weekend some publicity. It was agreed that a flyer would be helpful.

The Youth Exchange programme had finished with a 3 week visit to France with young people from Zambia, here and France taking part. A highlight was a stay at Taizé where the periods of silence and meditation were especially appreciated. Philip agreed to ask Georgina Fenson whether she would compile some material, including photos, for the website.

Action: Helen to arrange a Moderators' meeting.
Martin to ask for a slot at Synod for Helen to publicise next year's Le Weekend.
Philip to ask Georgina Fenson for material for the website.

WC 11.15 Links with the Lusaka Presbytery of the United Church of Zambia: Ian had submitted a written report to the Group. The main issues were:

- A lack of progress in developing links requested by Fareham & Sarisbury Green and Marston URC. Martin had personally given copies of Ian's emails to Revd. Mwape Chilekwa during his recent visit to Zambia. A speedy response seemed unlikely which was disappointing.
- During Clare's visit to Zambia with Andrew Wood, they were given pen pictures of UCZ congregations. Bryan Coates from the Methodist Church and Ian will try to match them to congregations in the Synod/Southampton District with a view to promoting the idea of setting up congregational links.
- Clare reported that ways in which links could be developed included:
Linked congregations sharing prayer requests;
The use of text messaging for more prompt responses;
A combined presentation to the November Synod following her visit, the Youth Exchange visit and the Chandlers Ford visit.

Action: Ian to continue to pursue the proposed links between Fareham & Sarisbury Green and Marston congregations with specific congregations in the Lusaka Presbytery.
Ian and Bryan Coates to pursue 'congregational matching'
Clare to organise the presentation to Synod in November.

WC 11.16 Belonging to the World Church Programme (BWC): Jane Rowell had agreed to produce a quarterly newsletter on BWC issues and the first edition had been issued in July. It was not widely circulated (Martin did not receive a copy) and is not on the URC's website. Martin will follow this up with Jane or Helen Garton.

Action: Martin to follow up circulation of the BWC newsletter and to send Philip a copy.

WC11.17 Website: Martin was awaiting an update from John on 2012 Olympics.

Action: Martin to follow up with John.

WC11.18 Committee Membership: Martin had already reported that Philip Bonnier had joined the Group.

Since our last meeting, David Webb had resigned as the Methodist representative on the Group. Martin had written to him thanking him for his valued contribution over a number of years. We were waiting to hear who would be replacing David.

Martin had spoken to Ian Scott at London Street, Basingstoke and their World Church Group will consider our need for a Secretary at their forthcoming meeting.

Martin had written to the FURY Youth Exec. asking whether they would like to send a representative to our meetings. No reply has been forthcoming so Phil Ray will be asked whether anyone from the recent Youth Exchange programme might like to join us.

Action: Martin to contact Ian Scott about the vacant Secretary's position and Phil Ray about a FURY rep.

WC11.19 Display Boards: Helen and Philip will produce material for our display boards which will be on show at the November Synod. Ian also has material available. We agreed that we should have one member of the Group available at lunchtime to deal with any questions. Helen took one of the 2 boards to enable her to prepare her material.

WC11.20 Short-Term and Medium Term Strategy: Our strategy document was updated to reflect our plans for 2012-2015. Martin will circulate a draft for comments.

Action: Martin to circulate draft document for comments.

Any other business: It was agreed that we should suggest to Peter Pay that one of the 'Good News Story' slots at the March 2012 Synod should involve a world church issue.

Dates of 2012 meetings:

24th January at 7.30 pm at London Street, Basingstoke (provisional venue)

21st May at 7.30 pm – venue tbc

22nd September at 10 am- venue tbc.

Close of meeting: The meeting closed with members saying the Grace with and to each other.