

The Partnership Enabling Group

The Partnership Enabling Group (PEG) exists to co-ordinate, oversee and enable the working together of the four churches in the Summertown-Wolvercote Church Partnership – St Michael's and the United Reformed Church in Summertown, and St Peter's and the Baptist Church in Wolvercote.

During 2017, PEG was chaired by Revd Gavin Knight, vicar of St Michael & All Angels. Caroline Harding graciously took on the role of Secretary which she has filled with considerable skill and tenacity!

The new FairPlay network spoke at PEG through Michael Taylor from St Michael's. He set out the plan to facilitate a Social Justice Fair. This was held in September at Summertown URC – see the FairPlay report below. The event was definitely successful in providing an opportunity for social justice charities to publicise their work and to learn about each other's work, and it is hoped that it could be repeated in two or three years' time.

The Kimberley & Kuruman Diocesan Conference took place in September with Jan Cook and Sue Smith flying out to South Africa. The Partnership was delighted to have representation at the conference. Jan and Sue had a very rewarding time and they shared their experiences of the Conference in November 2017 in St Michael's Church Hall.

David Hare, the new County Ecumenical Officer, was invited to share his thoughts about ecumenism and we were grateful to welcome him to our Partnership meeting in June. David said that he felt that it was essential for Christians working ecumenically to pray together, but he stressed that it was not necessary to do everything the same, but to show unity when reaching out to the world.

A Lent study course was planned for 2018 on the Beatitudes. This three-session course would be hosted on separate weeks at St Peter's, St Michael's and Wolvercote Baptist Church.

At the end of the year we shared some thinking around the joint Partnership website, Val Tate asked a key, challenging question, “what is PEG’s USP?” Charles summed this up well in last year’s report which I would like to quote again:

“The Partnership is both about our joint activities ... and also about growing our relationship of trust, and sharing in one another’s activities. The Partnership is a real strength and support to all our four churches, and it is a pleasure and a privilege to be part of it.”

Gavin Knight

Cotteslowe Church Partnership

Last year, I reported that the main activity was “a renewed focus on the shared work in Cotteslowe with St Andrew’s Church”. This work has continued with Charles, Dan Heywood (Vicar of St Andrew’s) and Gavin praying together. Gavin and Dan then saw the opportunity to share their hopes and visions about Cotteslowe. These conversations have now led St Michael’s and St Andrew’s to commit to a wider meeting of church members. Please pray for these continuing developments and how we, as a Partnership, can support what may well turn out to be an exciting future in Cotteslowe.

Jess Casey continues to lead the Cotteslowe work on behalf of St Andrew’s. Jess and Gavin have also committed themselves to meeting with the Cotteslowe & Wolvercote Youth Partnership. This group oversees a variety of youth work in our Partnership area. A main objective of this committee is to integrate the good work that is being done with the key agencies in this part of north Oxford, including the police, the Council and the churches. Much more needs to be done and this work remains a key priority.

The Cotteslowe/Templar Road Pavilion Service held on the first Sunday of each month continues to provide the opportunity for worship and fellowship for older members of the local community

(on average 20-25 people) who cannot always get to church. Coordination is sometimes a little haphazard. We share the tasks of collecting keys, playing the piano, organising the tea and cakes and leading worship between the Partnership churches. The Pavilion Service is always well received and thanks go to a small bunch of volunteers with large pastoral hearts. More volunteers are always needed!

The engagement with the elderly in the community is also enabled by the Tea & Chat events, again, sponsored by various folk in our churches. Please pray for those members of our churches who serve the vulnerable – young and adult – that they may be blessed. Pray also for more workers to serve God's vineyard.

Gavin Knight

Open Fellowship Group

The Open Fellowship Group has continued to meet on alternate Monday afternoons with breaks for Christmas, Easter and the summer holidays. The venue is St Peter's Old School Room and we are always pleased to welcome people from our local community as well as St Peter's and the Partnership churches. Sadly, this past year has seen a decline in the numbers of our regulars owing to illness and the problems of advancing years. However, there have been some newcomers who are now becoming regulars.

We have had some interesting talks, including the work of chaplains today, planning and development in Wolvercote, and personal reminiscences of Christopher Fletcher-Campbell, Ann Spokes Symonds and Vivien Edwards, whilst others have given us an insight into life around the world: Nigeria, the Côte d'Ivoire, Hong Kong and the Balkans. A lively discussion always follows, continuing over tea and cake. The last meeting of each series is a "Bring and Share" lunch and most people bring a poem or reading to share afterwards.

Margaret Williams, Tony Lemon

Traidcraft

You have been supporting Traidcraft in our Partnership of Churches for 25 years. During this time, from the sale of fairtrade goods we have been able to send £70,000 to Traidcraft, supporting Traidcraft Exchange and guaranteeing fair prices to our producers around the world.

If you cannot get to our store, fairtrade products can be bought in all the main supermarkets. The Fairtrade Mark is internationally recognised as a guarantee of the product meeting the fairtrade standard.

Traidcraft produces a wide range of goods from toilet paper, chocolates, biscuits, to organic cleaning products. So there is no reason why you should not buy fairly traded products for use in your church.

Thank you for your continuing support over the many years.

David & Susan Smith

St Peter's Fairtrade Stall

The great change since last year is that last December the Wolvercote Farmer's Market moved from the School Hall opposite the church down to the White Hart community pub in Lower Wolvercote. Our stall was set up over ten years ago, partly for St Peter's church members to be involved in the community, so with Charles' agreement we have moved with it. We are still manned by a rota of mainly church volunteers on the first Sunday of the month and still sell on behalf of the Fairtrade@st. Michael's shop under St Michael's Cornmarket. We have lost and gained a few wonderful volunteers. Do come and buy from us – the no. 6 bus brings you close by. We still make nearly £100 a stall for the shop, and for the producers. The pub is cosy and serves coffee and food, and goodwill.

Lorna Logan

Christian Aid in Summertown and Wolvercote

A total of £8,204.03 was raised for Christian Aid in our Ward of Summertown and Wolvercote during the Christian Aid financial year ending 31 July 2017. All involved should be greatly congratulated. Of this overall sum, £6,045.03 was raised as part of Christian Aid Week collections, details of which may be seen in the September 2017 issue of the *Quarterly* and on the 'Shared Activities/Christian Aid' page of our Partnership website. Special thanks are due to our Church Representatives, Julia Goddard (St Peter's), who organised collections in Wolvercote, and Helen Dodd and Nigel Hamilton (St Michael's), who organised collections in Summertown.

Over the city as a whole, house-to-house collections raised £25,766.06, approaching half of the final total of £40,834.86 and so continue to be a critical part of our support of Christian Aid. Collections at Oxford railway station during the week, at which some collectors from our Ward helped, raised nearly £1095.10 and provided an alternative for those unable to collect house-to-house.

John Harding

Partnership Link with St Chad's Parish, Taung, NW Province, South Africa

This time last year the link committee said farewell to Samantha with thanks for her encouragement and ideas which took us forward in our journey with St Chad's. We welcomed Jan Cook to our group, Jan is a member of St Michael's Church and has brought new enthusiasm to our discussions.

Jan and Sue attended the Diocesan Summit in Kimberley in September 2017, organised by the Kimberley & Kuruman and Oxford Dioceses, and attended by both Bp Ossie and Bp Steven. The Summit looked at issues of 'Discipleship' and 'Care of Creation'. Delegates from Oxford Diocesan link parishes joined delegates from parish links in the K&K Diocese. Youth leaders from Oxford and

K&K facilitated discussions with young people and St Cyprian's Cathedral School Marimba Band kept us all on our feet! A few days were spent in Taung after the Summit where friends met again, and Tshipo School was visited much to the delight of the Principal. Jan and Sue gave a presentation of their visit in November and again in January this year.

In May we will be welcoming Fr Tsabeng, priest at St Chad's, to our churches; he will be with us from 4 to 28 May. If you would like to join our growing list of hosts willing to host Fr Tsabeng to a meal during his visit, please get in touch with Sue (559433) or Beryl (510055).

The total in the Taung Link account stands at £827.54.

Beryl Knotts, Margaret Broadbent, Gill Harper, Jill Galloway, Rosemary Williams, Sue Smith, Jan Cook

Coffee Café

The Saturday morning Coffee Café from May to September ran as usual last summer following its refurbishment on our 30th anniversary in 2016, and the proceeds of £520 this year were given to support the Sunnymead Minnows, an initiative set up under the Cutteslowe Community Association to assist with work amongst pre-school children following the closure of the Children's Centre there. In addition, a different charity each week again raised money for their funds from the cake stalls they held over the 18 weeks.

Because of the impending building work on the restoration and upgrading of the porch area of the Summertown URC from May to September 2018, we are grateful to St Michael's for kindly offering to hold the Coffee Café there during this coming summer season, and again we shall be looking for volunteers from our Partnership to help on the weekly rota of 3 friends each Saturday.

Beryl Knotts

Church Partnership Office

We continue to do the printing and photocopying for the Partnership churches in the office on Thursday mornings (except for August, and the week following Christmas and Easter), and can be contacted by telephone – 01865 236094 – or by email – officeatstpeters@gmail.com. As ever, I would like to express my huge gratitude to Jenny Gerrard and Sue Smith, for their invaluable help in getting the work done each week, for taking care of the office when I can't be there, and also for their wonderful company and conversation. The work we do in the office really wouldn't be possible without them. Thanks also to everyone else who helps periodically with collating and stapling.

Julia Goddard, Administrator, Partnership Office

Communications in the Church Partnership

1. Church-Partnership Calendar

The calendar aims to list all major events in the Church Partnership and appears four times a year as a supplement to the *Quarterly*. In recent issues the font size has been increased – this reduces the amount of information that can be included but does make it easier to read.

2. Partnership Link (formerly Teamsheet)

Now in its 39th year of publication, our thanks go to Jenny Gerrard, the current editor, who continues to keep us all in touch with activities and events of general interest to our four congregations. Our thanks also go to the team in the Partnership Office who print it, and other Partnership papers, each week, in particular to Julia Goddard who leads this team.

3. The Quarterly

The *Quarterly* enters its 17th year of publication with the March 2018 edition. We are very grateful to all those who submit or suggest material for publication – on them the quality and interest of each

issue depends. The editors, Ann Stedman, Michael Daniell and John Harding, wish to encourage the submission of original articles and responses to those published previously.

4. Church Partnership Website

The current address of the Partnership website is;

<http://www.summertown-wolvercotechurchpartnership.org/>

The platform on which the Partnership website (and also those for St Peter's and the URC) is based is now more than 10 years old and problems are arising. Our thanks to Val Tate of St Peter's, who looks after the St Peter's and now the Partnership websites, who is leading the search for a new, common, WordPress template on which our new websites will be based.

The Partnership website concentrates on activities and events involving all, or most, of our four congregations. From it there are links to the St Peter's, the URC and the St Michael's websites. The Partnership site includes pages for Wolvercote Baptist Church. We are very grateful to Steve Allen of St Michael's who hosts our websites on his server.

John Harding

Churches Together in North Oxford

Churches Together in North Oxford (CTNO) is the ecumenical forum for the local churches. It arranges occasional united worship and promotes the exchange of information and witness. Its committee meets regularly during the year.

The major event, the open-air Good Friday Service, was again held in the Summertown shopping precinct, with about 100 attending and stopping to listen. The preacher of the Easter message was the Revd Vivien Edwards of Wolvercote Baptist Church. The service began with a procession from the URC, led by the Cross with banners

representing the local churches. Hot cross buns were distributed and gratefully received.

In March there was a united service to mark the Women's World Day of Prayer, held at the Quaker Meeting House in St Giles, and using material prepared by the women of the Philipppines.

CTNO takes a keen interest in issues surrounding homelessness, and continues to support NOAAH (North Oxford Action Against Homelessness), and other initiatives. On Homelessness Sunday in January there was a service at Wolvercote Baptist Church at which the preacher was the Revd Mary Gurr, Oxford Chaplain to the Homeless. This was followed by a presentation from two formerly homeless people describing their experiences.

Christopher Hardman, Secretary, CTNO

FairPlay Social Justice Network

The FairPlay Social Justice Network of around 30 social justice charities in north Oxford as well as individual supporters was initiated in the Church Partnership in late 2016. A Coordinating Group with representatives from the 4 churches meets regularly to organise events proposed by the network at Open Meetings:

- St Michael's: Michael Taylor (Chair), Helen Dodd (Secretary) and Revd Susie Snyder
- St Peter's: Val Tate (Communications and PR) and Caroline Harding
- United Reformed Church: Nicola Aveling and John Harding
- Wolvercote Baptist Church: Revd Vivien Edwards

FairPlay had a busy year in 2017. The main event was the Social Justice Fair held at the URC in September in which 31 social justice groups in the FairPlay network showcased their work to the public and at the same time networked with others involved in similar work. For this event we received a small grant from the Midlands

Co-Operative Society. The churches have run individual events and services for the homeless and for asylum seekers and have sought to support each other with these events. Groups in the network frequently contact me for information or contact details of other groups. They can advertise their events or needs through the FairPlay Facebook page or in the newsletter which comes out twice a year for the members.

One direct offshoot of FairPlay has been the registration of St Michael's to the Arocha Ecochurch scheme. This arose directly from members' concerns about climate change, global catastrophe and social injustice. This was discussed at the November Open Meeting, and as a result, a Climate Justice Forum was held at NOA in January at which 25 people were present. From this a Climate Justice Planning Group (church and community members) has been formed to organise a campaign on this subject, to run in Summertown this summer through to the Paris Conference in December.

Helen Dodd, Secretary, FairPlay

Messy Church

Messy Church meets at 3.30pm on the second Sunday of the month in the Wolvercote Baptist Church Hall. All-age activities are based around a Biblical theme. There is a creative time of making things – art, modelling, food, colouring, painting, gluing. This is followed by a short service in the Chapel to bring the themes together and have a time of all-age worship. Finally, there is a communal tea. Messy church has a fantastic team of volunteers led by Dawn Davidson, and provides a relaxed and informal time for families to learn about God together. Recent themes have included Bible heroes, Creation and Mothering Sunday.

Anne Dorman

