

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF LUXEMBOURG

CHURCH COUNCIL

Wednesday 19 March 2014
7.30 pm, the Vicarage

MINUTES

Present: The Rev'd Chris Lyon, the Rev'd Andy Markey (Assistant Chaplain), Catherine Allen (Churchwarden), Lynn Barclay, Tania Buhr (Secretary), Cheryl Fisher, Moira Hogg, Rani Roloff, Paul Townend, Philippa Seymour.

1. & 2. Welcome & Bible reading and prayer

The Chaplain, as Chairperson, opened the meeting at 7.54 pm with a reading from Jeremiah 31, starting at v. 31, followed by a prayer.

3. Apologies for absence

John Overstall, Sarah Parkhouse (Treasurer), Neil Ross, Evelyn Sweerts, Chris Vaudrey (Churchwarden).

4. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 11 February 2014 were agreed to be an accurate account of the proceedings, subject to amending item 8 to read "Claudia Granger" instead of "Patrick Grainger".

5. Action Points Review and Matters arising

Action points review:

See separate Action points spreadsheet.

Matters arising:

Andy Markey had not asked Barry Crisp if he would act as the Church Fair organiser.

New action points:

- Catherine Allen to ask Clive Munn to be Church Fair organiser.

6. Treasurer's Report

The February 2014 accounts were discussed in the absence of the Treasurer, Sarah Parkhouse, who was not at the meeting owing to illness.

Income for the month was stable, but expenditure was high (heating oil for the Assistant Chaplain's house, repairs at the Vicarage, administration fees paid to the salary company, the Chaplain's expenses on stationery, cleaning of the Vicarage and lighting for the Vicarage, and a new loan to the Chaplain). The accounts for the month showed a deficit of 13 044€.

A payment of 536€ had been made to the Children's Society (Christingle collection) and the sum of 1 025€ paid to the Church of England for the Advent collection.

Cheryl Fisher pointed out that the Church appeared, from the accounts, to be running at a deficit, but that had not come across at the recent stewardship meeting at which Dennis Robertson had said we did not need to worry about the current financial situation, although there was indeed a need to raise money for other activities.

7. Ministry Report

The Chaplains reported as follows:

- a) Pastoral situations: the Chaplain said that pastorally it had been a particularly busy time, with a number of ongoing issues, including a suicide and its repercussions. There was a huge demand for pastoral care.
- b) Lent: a study group entitled “The Bible and life basics: land, blood, sex and food” had just started, it was being run jointly with the Catholic church by the Chaplains and Father Ed Hone and would take place twice a week during Lent.
- c) Michael Lapsley: he would be giving a talk in the Konvikt Chapel at 7 pm on Sunday 23 March about his work and its relevance to us in Luxembourg; the Chaplain emphasised the value of the work Father Lapsley was doing with his “Institute for Healing of Memories” charity and said our Church would also benefit pastorally from greater awareness of this life issue. He therefore proposed that our Church support this charity, and he would like to raise this matter again with the Charities Committee.
- d) Youth work and Junior Church: the Assistant Chaplain reported that the Youth Group had four new members and was going well. A guest speaker, Simon Norcross, had talked to them about environmental issues, and the charity “Handi’chiens” had given a presentation of their work. This had also been attended by the Junior Church children. Two people had volunteered to become Junior Church helpers. Some issues concerning the Salle Rheinsheim (flooring, furniture, cleanliness, cupboard) were also discussed.

8. “Responding positively to an uncertain future” – feedback and reflections on the congregational meeting held on 26 February 2014

The Chaplain reported that 56 people had attended this meeting, at which he had given a presentation of our Church’s current situation and had outlined the three big uncertainties facing us, namely possible changes to the “*convention*” arrangements, the Vicarage tax liability and redevelopment and the fate of the Konvikt Centre. Dennis Robertson had given a short talk about the Church’s finances and then there had been discussion in groups. Most of those attending were satisfied on the whole with what the Church was doing. Some said they would like a big project to work towards. The Chaplain said there had been some good feedback and some interesting ideas had been aired. Other Council members who had attended said it had indeed been a convivial event but there had been a surprising lack of financial focus and some felt it had lacked impact. There had been some technical problems with the computer which had held up proceedings for half an hour. The Chaplain was pleased at the overall positive response but acknowledged we needed a more professional approach.

9. Vicarage redevelopment

At the Chaplain’s request, Dennis Robertson had suggested someone who could give us some professional advice on this whole matter. The person concerned, Alain Devresse, had made some progress in looking into matters. He had talked to IMMO DPI and established that the value of the Vicarage was reckoned to be between 1.1 and 1.3 million euro; we could sell the Vicarage to IMMO DPI for redevelopment at that value; in any case we would have to declare a value to the tax authorities. Alain Devresse had also pointed out that a block of flats and offices was currently under construction in the same road as the Vicarage; this raised the question of whether it would be feasible and worthwhile to simply sell the Vicarage and buy a flat and offices in that new building; this would have the benefit of the same convenient location as the Vicarage and the actual move to the building would be easy; the downside was that it was expensive. There was some discussion as to the pros and cons of this whole idea. Catherine Allen wondered whether it would be better to renovate the Vicarage to make the Chaplain’s accommodation and the offices more suitable.

The Chaplain thought the idea worth considering but pointed out that the Vicarage was not well built and would always be expensive to maintain.

As regards the tax situation, the responses from the tax authorities had so far been contradictory, so it was no clearer whether the Church would actually have to pay tax on the Vicarage redevelopment.

10. Vicarage – present issues

- a) boiler, chimney and gutters: The boiler had been repaired but still needed a “certificat de conformité”. The chimney needed repairing (estimated cost: 1 200 €) and the guttering required repairing and cleaning. The Council agreed to have the chimney seen to by the firm Cottyn-Kieffer from Foetz, whereas the Chaplain suggested a different firm for the guttering.
- b) computers and WiFi: The Chaplain reported that there was no WiFi signal in part of the Vicarage and so he wanted to buy a high-speed HD router and two more routers for the office to give a full signal. Three routers and someone to install them were therefore required. Furthermore, he said new computers were needed for Elaine and Lynn in the church office. There was some discussion about the relative merits of buying new equipment or upgrading the operating systems on the existing computers. A computer specialist was coming to the Vicarage the following day to assess the situation and the Chaplain would then refer the matter to the Council again.

11. AGM elections

The Chaplain asked the Council to consider possible new candidates who could be nominated to replace the two Council members who would be stepping down at the AGM. He reminded them that it was important to have a balance between male and female, and younger and older members.

12. Church Fair

As an organiser still needed to be found for the Fair (to be held on 15 June), it was suggested, after some discussion, that Clive Munn and/or Stuart Alexander might be asked. (**Action point**: Catherine Allen to ask Clive Munn).

13. Any other business

In the light of Geoff Thompson’s suggestion that the group of volunteers he organised be called the “Community Group”, the Council agreed to this name being used in preference to the name “Events Group”.

14. Dates of next meetings

Wednesday 9 April 2014 at 7 pm for food, with the meeting to start at 7.30 pm;

(**NB**: AGM – Tuesday 29 April 2014).

15. Closing prayer

The meeting closed with a prayer at 10.20 pm.