

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF LUXEMBOURG

CHURCH COUNCIL

Wednesday 14 May 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, Simon Norcross, John Overstall, Sarah Parkhouse (Treasurer), Philippa Seymour, Paul Townend and Edward Seymour (guest).

1. & 2. Welcome & Bible reading and prayer

The Chaplain, as Chairperson, opened the meeting at 7.58 pm by welcoming everyone, especially Simon Norcross, the new Council member, and Edward Seymour, the new editor of the "Konvikt" magazine, who had been invited to contribute to the discussion on communication policy (item 5 of the agenda). He read from Mark 4, starting at v.1, and said a prayer.

3. Apologies for absence

Moira Hogg, Evelyn Sweerts, Chris Vaudrey (Churchwarden).

4. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 9 April 2014 were agreed to be an accurate account of the proceedings, subject to a couple of corrections and to the following sentence being added at the end of the first paragraph of item 5 "Vicarage redevelopment": "The discussion was extensive, lasting for over an hour, and the views of the absent Treasurer were read out by Chris Vaudrey".

5. Discussion on Communication Policy

As the new editor of the "Konvikt" magazine, Edward Seymour explained that the next issue, which was being finalised, would have 24 pages and show a picture of last year's Church Fair on the cover, in line with the Chaplain's wish for the magazine to focus on coming events. He was planning on 4 issues a year, to highlight 4 major events: Christmas, Easter, the Fair and the new school year. The magazine would be printed as usual but also be available in .pdf form so that it could be posted on the website. The maximum size was 32 pages, as otherwise the postage charges were higher. He intended to change the title to something more appealing and was running a competition in the coming issue to find a new name. The pew-sheets and the website were better for communicating information about events coming up quickly.

The Chaplain was keen for the magazine to be proactive, thoughtful and accessible, whilst avoiding content that was actionable, "saccharine" or overly pious. As there was a time-lag in producing a printed magazine, it was not so suited to speedy communication. A blog might be easier to produce.

This led on to a broader discussion of communication by other means than the magazine. The Communications team had met for the first time in February and explored various aspects of the whole issue. E-mail was regarded as a useful and immediate means of communication, pew-sheets were handy for churchgoers, Facebook was a possibility as a forum for discussion, but needed moderating, whilst a blog was easier to control. Facebook

and blogs were seen as appealing to younger people, and could be a means of generating discussion and thus enabling conversation. The AGM discussion had shown that some people did not read the "Konvikt" magazine. The Chaplain said the website needed updating and it was important to ensure the information being circulated was consistent. The important thing in general was for people to interact more with each other; we had to communicate with the wider world but also amongst ourselves.

6. Action Points Review and Matters Arising

Action points review:

See separate Action points spreadsheet.

New action points:

- the Finance Committee to set up a "Treasurer" rota.

Matters arising:

- Outstanding Contact forms: The Chaplain said the Church office was in the process of identifying who needed to be contacted and told that the Church presumed they assented to their details being kept on record.
- Social event in the Vicarage for Officials and Group Leaders in May/June: Of the dates proposed by Lynn Barclay for this "fun" event, the date eventually decided on was Wednesday 25 June.
- AGM review: The Chaplain considered there had been a good discussion at the AGM but we had run out of time. Philippa Seymour suggested starting next year's meeting earlier, if we had to vacate the premises by 10 pm.

7. Vicarage redevelopment

a) Offer received from IMMO DPI

The Church had received an offer from IMMO DPI who had invited us to sign the "*compromis de vente*" they had drawn up (circulated at the Council meeting) and to accept their offer of €1.25 million for the sale of the Vicarage site. They suggested we have a lawyer look at the "*compromis de vente*".

b) Counter proposals (concerning conditions)

The Chaplain explained some of the terms used in the "*compromis de vente*" and went through the conditions (the "*clause suspensive*" and the "*clause pénale*"), highlighting the points which could potentially prove problematic for the Church. One was that IMMO DPI would have to take out a loan in order to pay us; if they were unable to obtain a loan, the deal would be off. Also, the Ville de Luxembourg needed to grant planning permission, but that should proceed quickly. The penalty clause stated that if either party were to pull out of the deal, that party would have to pay the other party 10% of the price within one month. One special condition was that the buyer could cede the "*compromis de vente*" to another party and could designate a future buyer (this might mean that another party would be asking the Ville de Luxembourg for planning permission), but no time-limit was specified. Cheryl Fisher said it was important for the Church to stipulate a date by which the deal would be done (a "long-stop" date) so that we were not left hanging around for a long time waiting for IMMO DPI to obtain a loan or planning permission. If the "*clause suspensives*" were not fulfilled by the long-stop date, both parties could walk away from the deal.

The Chaplain said that the "*compromis de vente*" had been checked by Alain Devresse, the consultant we had engaged to assist us in this matter. Usually, the buying process did not take long.

c) Approval of Diocesan Board of Finance and timetable for signing of contracts

The Chaplain would write to the Diocesan Board of Finance in London to seek their permission and approval for the Vicarage deal (the Board would next meet on 3 June 2014), and once that was obtained we could go ahead with signing with IMMO DPI.

d) Tax situation

On behalf of the Church, Paul Tulcinsky of the law firm Stibbe had sent a letter to Guy Schroeder at the Luxembourg Tax Office (circulated at the Council meeting), arguing that our Church, as a juridical personality in law, should not be required to pay tax on the Vicarage sale; the Church was not an ASBL and did not submit tax returns. Schroeder would be asked to give a reply orally and in writing and to inform the tax authorities of his opinion.

e) Search for alternative premises

No action yet taken.

Once the Vicarage was sold, the plan was to move to rented office accommodation and a flat for the Chaplain nearby, whilst looking for office space and a clergy flat to buy, possibly in the rue de Muhlenbach. Alain Devresse would be asked to look for somewhere for us. We could take out a loan to buy a flat soon if something suitable came up. The Chaplain stressed the importance for the congregation of having somewhere to meet, so we would look first for office space/meeting rooms, and then for a flat. Cheryl Fisher expressed concern about making a commitment to buy an office without knowing if there would be sufficient funds left to buy a flat, and insisted on having a cash-flow forecast and a proper plan before moving forward. The Chaplain said Chris Vaudrey and Dennis Robertson were working on a cash-flow forecast. After discussion the Council was broadly in agreement with the strategy of looking first for offices/meeting space and then for a flat.

The Chaplain explained that only his name was on the "*compromis de vente*" as he was representing the Anglican Church. He had the power to sign on behalf of the Church and the Church was then bound by that.

The Chaplain said a special, extra meeting of the Church Council would be needed just before signing the "*compromis de vente*". Sarah Parkhouse said it would be useful to have an information package about the whole issue prior to signing.

8. Treasurer's Report

The April 2014 accounts were presented by the Treasurer, Sarah Parkhouse.

Income for April was good as the monthly donations included a significant amount from one donor. Accommodation costs were high as they included the costs of the gutter, chimney and boiler repairs. The Lent appeal collection amounted to €556.70 (much lower than in previous years) and a further amount of €836.25 was raised by the Lent lunches.

The Chaplain thanked Sarah Parkhouse for all her work since 2009 and announced that Felix Rusere was willing to take over the post. The Council agreed to Felix Rusere becoming Treasurer. A hand-over date would be arranged. Somebody else (possibly Ian Kent) would be acting as Treasurer for this year's Church Fair and dealing with the floats and money counting.

On a separate issue, the Chaplain wanted to set up a rota for counting the collection money after the services, so as to ensure a water-tight system whereby a designated group of people would be responsible for counting the money, signing for it in the book and paying the amount into the bank. Catherine Allen said the Finance Committee should meet, lay down rules for this arrangement and set up a rota. (**Action point:** Finance Committee to set up a "Treasurer" rota.)

9. Konvikt Chapel and keys

The Chaplain said a new system would be set up so that the keys to the Konvikt Chapel and the hall which were kept by the Goeres hotel would be distinctively marked and the hotel would only hand them over to Anglican Church people who could identify themselves in a pre-arranged manner.

10. Events organising

A redrafted version of the Chaplain's paper entitled "Event planning and co-ordinating", discussed at the previous Council meeting, was circulated to the Council. It had been sent to Geoff Thompson, who was happy with it.

11. Church Fair

Clive Munn, the Fair organiser, had arranged a meeting for stall holders and helpers to be held on Monday 19 May at the Vicarage.

12. Ascension Day Walk (29 May)

Geoff Thompson and Julia Kelly were arranging this on the basis of the new rules referred to in item 10.

13. Ministry Report

The Chaplain reported as follows:

- a) Pastoral issues: were going all right.
- b) Breakfast Bible study: the Chaplain had agreed to a proposal by Isobel and Graham Weller to start a breakfast Bible study session.
- c) Phil Harvey: the Chaplain sought the Council's approval to ask the Bishop for permission to allow Phil Harvey to be on the communion roster and the Council agreed.
- d) Junior Church and Youth Group: Andy Markey said the Junior Church would be looking at some Old Testament stories over the summer period; the Youth Group had expanded to three Sundays a month and had some 7-8 regular attendees; they planned to repeat the shoebox campaign in the autumn and perhaps to go on an outing to tie in with the First World War anniversary.
- e) Holidays: Lynn Barclay would issue a chart of the Chaplains' and Church office staff's holidays.
- f) Staff issue: The Council discussed a staff issue and placed it in the hands of the Finance Committee.
- g) Charte de la Diversité: the Chaplain would sign this on behalf of the congregation on 27 May 2014.

14. Any other business

Paul Townend said he had received a nomination form from John Dimond for election as a member of the Church Council. A form had also been received from Claudia Granger. A by-election for the one vacant post was to be held on 18 May 2014 after the 11 am church service.

15. Dates of next meetings

Wednesday 11 June 2014 at 7 pm for food, with the meeting to start at 7.30 pm;
Wednesday 2 July 2014.

16. Closing prayer

The Chaplain thanked Philippa Seymour for providing supper and Catherine Allen for supplying cakes. The meeting closed with a prayer at 11.30 pm.