

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF LUXEMBOURG CHURCH COUNCIL

Wednesday 21 March 2018, 7.30 pm,
Centre Jean XXIII, 52 rue Jules Wilhelm, L-2728 Luxembourg

MINUTES

Present: Rev'd Geoff Read (Chaplain), Lynn Barclay, Tania Buhr (Secretary), Gabriel Chelladurai (Treasurer), Gerd Gebhard, Victoria Hodgson, Moira Hogg, Lauren Marshall, Simon Norcross (Churchwarden), Isabel Page, Tristan Pâris de Bollardi re, Philippa Seymour (Churchwarden) and Evelyn Sweerts (Lay Pastoral Assistant)

1. & 2. Welcome & Bible reading and prayer

The Rev'd Geoff Read, as Chair, opened the meeting at 7.37 pm with a reading from John 12, followed by a prayer.

3. Apologies for absence – none

4. Approval of Minutes of 19 February 2018 meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2018 were agreed to be an accurate account of the proceedings, subject to one amendment.

5. Action Points Review and Matters Arising

Action Points Review: Philippa Seymour had spoken to John Overstall about the storage of the church archives he currently kept in his house. They both thought it better for the archives to be stored in Luxembourg rather than at the Guildhall in London (where some of our archives were kept); he would measure the volume of the boxes and report back. The question was where they could then be stored.

Matters arising: None.

6. Chaplain's Report

The Chaplain reported that he and his wife were installed in the rented house in Steinsel, they had registered with the local authority and he had started a French course in Mersch. He had so far met with Evelyn Sweerts, the Churchwardens, Lynn Barclay and Elaine Birch and would gradually get to know other groups. His first Sunday services had been held on 18 March 2018.

7. Churchwardens' Report

The Churchwardens reported as follows:

- i) Congregational e-mail on property: the Churchwardens had sent the congregation an e-mail explaining the current property situation and had received positive feedback; Gerd Gebhard was looking into the question of whether the church would have to pay tax on the income from the properties it was renting out;
- ii) Other property matters: the rue de M hlenbach flat had already been let and tenants would be moving into the Jules Mersch flat once the kitchen was installed in early April; as regards drawing up a policy on property, Gerd Gebhard suggested this could be done by the autumn, together with the more general memorandum on roles and responsibilities at the Anglican Church in Luxembourg under the new Convention and the implementing law (as was discussed previously);
- iii) Mothering Sunday service and lunch: Mothering Sunday had been celebrated a week earlier than normal because the hall was not available for the lunch on the correct date; both the service and the lunch had gone well, but few people had attended;
- iv) Church linen: as Lucyna Muscat wanted to give up this task, a team of people was needed to see to the big items of linen; she would continue to organise the flower rota and do some of the linen washing; the Alexanders would take care of the candles.

8. Ministry report – Lay Pastoral Assistant

Evelyn Sweets reported as follows:

- i) Pizza Hut outing: 25 people had attended the lunch for Junior Church children and their families; the event had worked well and helped to foster connections;
- ii) Prayers for the Chaplaincy (Sunday mornings once per month): support from the Council was again requested;
- iii) Lent course: this had been a good course but peak attendance had been only six;
- iv) Adult to children ratio in Junior Church: she flagged up, for the record, the fact that the number of children attending Junior Church was rising and, for safeguarding reasons, it had to be ensured that enough adults were present; however, other adults (i.e. parents) were in fact often present in Junior Church, and in the past if a helper failed to turn up, for example, someone from the congregation had been called upon to step in.

9. Treasurer's Report

Gabriel Chelladurai presented the receipts and payments account for February 2018, as prepared by the *fiduciaire*; there had been a slight decrease in the church collections, whilst the standing orders had remained the same. The amount shown under 'Property charges, vacation and removal expenses' included the removal expenses for the new Chaplain, extra charges for the flats for the previous year as well as charges for this year, the cost of moving the new Junior Church tables and the final settlement for the Howald house. The Church of England quota of €10 292.04 had been paid. Philippa Seymour asked the Treasurer whether the monthly accounts prepared for the Council could show the rental income and other property-related items separately from the other items and the Treasurer agreed to do so.

He would be meeting again with the Honorary Auditor after Easter to finalise the 2017 accounts. The Chaplain thanked the Treasurer for his report.

10. Report writing

Evelyn Sweets passed on a message from the Diocesan safeguarding team which invited anyone who had to write a report about a safeguarding incident to do so in a way that they would not mind seeing in print if the report were about them personally, i.e. reports should preferably be expressed in a neutral way and should not be judgmental.

11. Safeguarding

Evelyn Sweets said that we as a Council should be aware of what stage the various people required to have safeguarding clearance had reached in the safeguarding process (i.e. who had completed the background checks). The Chaplain said that we needed to be aware of our responsibility in this respect, without getting involved in the details. Safeguarding should be on the agenda every month so that we fulfilled our obligations. Moira Hogg, as Safeguarding Officer, reported that as yet hardly anyone had completed all the checks but they would be doing so soon; training sessions for level 2 would be held in Luxembourg on 2 June 2018. As regards the data we collected, a new law on data protection would be coming into force in May 2018.

12. Communications Committee report

The Committee had met on 26 February 2018 and discussed Lumen and updating the website.

13. Preparations for the AGM

Philippa Seymour said we needed to fill two gaps on the Council, some people had reports to write and the accounts were in the process of being prepared.

14. Fun and Fundraising Group report

Philippa Seymour said the Group would be meeting the following week to plan the Sports and Fun Day to be held on 17 June 2018 near the Coque.

15. ACAT interfaith human rights project

Lauren Marshall said that a round-table event coordinated by ACAT and intended for the faith community representatives would be held on 16 May 2018. A JPIC meeting at the Seymours' house was planned for late April or early May to talk about human rights matters.

16. Any other business

i) Funeral fees: this subject had been discussed last year; locums who had conducted funerals had not requested a fee, so the church office had not invoiced the people concerned; an Archdeaconry table of fees existed but our church was not obliged to charge a fee, and the Chaplain said that he would not do so; Lynn Barclay said that people requesting baptism or funeral services had been asked to make a donation to the church or to the church flower fund.

ii) Hopes and expectations: the Chaplain said he felt called by God to be here in Luxembourg. The Council needed to be aware of his hopes and expectations for the next few years and vice versa, so he asked the Council what they expected/wanted for the church, what our roles were and how we should work together.

Victoria Hodgson said she would like to see a dedicated family service once a month, not necessarily on a Sunday, perhaps on the lines of 'messy church' and possibly together with other churches, as this would create better links with other churches and better links with our families.

Gerd Gebhard liked the formal Anglican tradition and wanted that to be kept.

Simon Norcross wanted our church to be visible in the wider society and attractive to the outside; he would also like our church to be generous and well informed in its charitable giving.

Isabel Page felt that people in our church lacked spirituality and a deep emotional and spiritual connection, they struggled to be a community and there was no vibrancy. Evelyn Sweerts, however, thought that people in our church did in fact care for and love each other.

The Chaplain said that according to the parish profile other churches in Luxembourg were growing but our church was not. He asked the Council why they thought this was the case. Isabel Page mentioned All Nations as a very successful church. In Victoria Hodgson's view it was important to work together with other churches rather than competing with them; we should be present in the community and doing our bit. The Chaplain considered that if the international community in Luxembourg was growing, we should be growing proportionately and we needed to be clear about what we could contribute.

The Chaplain proposed that Council meetings should include time for talking about key issues; he was keen to listen, get to know people and understand the situation. After the AGM they would determine how they could all work together strategically as a Council. His would be a collaborative ministry, working together and using the talents available. He would play an enabling role and would not be chairing every group or committee. He asked the Council to think about what we needed to talk about over the next six months. A possible resource might be 'Evangelism for the local church'.

17. Dates and times of future Council meetings

- Wednesday 18 April 2018 at 7.30 pm, Centre Jean XXIII;
- Monday 14 May 2018;
- Tuesday 19 June 2018;
- Wednesday 11 July 2018;
- **AGM** Wednesday 25 April 2018

18. Closing prayer

The Chaplain closed the meeting at 10.00 pm, the Council joining together in saying the Grace.