

**Minutes from a meeting of the Justice and Peace Group  
held on Monday 2nd February 2015 at St Peter's Church, Bearsted.**

**Present:** Marie Quarman (Chair), Daphne Bower, Margaret Conan, Janet O'Neill, Ann Smith and Helen Judges (notes).

**Apologies:** Father Geoff and Wieslaw Kordek

**1. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting on 2nd September were approved. There were no matters arising.

**2. Traidcraft/Charity Stall**

Last summer £200 raised by the stall at St Peter's had been sent to Missio to support their programme training priests for Cambodia. The possibility of changing the beneficiary of the next donation of money raised by the stall was suggested, but the discussion was delayed until we had some idea of what the amount that the stall currently had in its kitty.

It was confirmed that the Methodists no longer ran a Traidcraft stall while Holy Cross had started having a monthly stall.

**3. Advent Appeal 2014**

The appeal had raised a total of £1029.52, including a contribution of £150 from a separate fund-raising event. This money had gone to the Maidstone Churches' Winter Shelter. Both the Methodists and Holy Cross had also supported this ecumenical project.

**4. Lent Appeal 2015**

In 2014 the appeal had been for Missio and there was a discussion about whether to support them for another year. It was agreed that this would be a good idea and that therefore it would also be the beneficiary of the next donation from the charity stall.

**5. News from Methodist and Holy Cross Churches**

The food bank at the Methodist Church continues, as does their monthly coffee morning, which raises money for a variety of charities, including the chaplaincy at Bluewater and Tools with a mission (TWAM). It was confirmed that the school they had been supporting in Uganda had now been built.

Holy Cross had split their Christmas collections between three charities: Christian Aid's Christmas appeal for maternal healthcare in Kenya, the Maidstone Churches' Winter Shelter and the Princess Project ([www.princessproject.co.uk](http://www.princessproject.co.uk)), a local charity that works to support single mothers. The church also had a permanent collection of food and toiletries for Maidstone Day Centre.

**6. Annual Report**

There was a discussion about the draft report which Marie had circulated. It was agreed that the headings of poverty and homelessness should be amalgamated. Helen commented that fewer names were now available for the Christmas cards for the prisoners of conscience. While the group would continue

to support that campaign for the moment, it was wondered, given the decrease in the number of names and the increase in the cost of postage, how long the campaign would continue in its current format.

Under 'Supporting families' it was agreed that there should be a mention of the fact that several members of Holy Cross sponsor children through the church's long-standing Uganda link.

It was confirmed that the Christian Aid Week volunteers had come from across the churches.

## **7. Asylum Seekers**

It was noted that, as has previously been the case, the issue was frequently mixed up with the issue of migration when covered in the media. It was agreed that it was important to seek clarity whenever possible, in order to help people understand these were separate issues. This was particularly important in the run-up to the General Election.

## **8. Christian Aid**

Christian Aid would be running its annual Lent scheme 'Count your blessings' and copies were shared with the group. This was being actively promoted at Holy Cross.

From an advocacy perspective, the main foci continued to be tax and climate change. A coalition involving Christian Aid, CAFOD, Action Aid and other organisations had been launched to work on the 'Tax Dodging Bill', a campaign to get MPs to pledge that they would introduce legislation to address the issue of tax dodging, were they to form the government following the General Election. Christian Aid was also heavily involved in the Climate Coalition, again with Action Aid and CAFOD among others. The next big moment for that was 14th February when they would be running the 'Share the love' campaign, encouraging supporters to express their love for things that could be lost or damaged by climate change.

Christian Aid was holding a workshop 'Faith in Politics?' in London on 28th February. The day would feature workshops and speakers including Giles Fraser, Rowan Williams and Rose Hudson-Wilkin. The event was being held in City Temple and tickets were £15 (including lunch – discounts were available for students and unwaged). For more information people could contact Helen or visit [www.christianaid.org.uk/ActNow/find-out-more/how-strong-is-your-faith-in-politics.aspx](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/ActNow/find-out-more/how-strong-is-your-faith-in-politics.aspx)

## **9. Action Aid**

There was no update other than the coalition work which they are working with Christian Aid on.

## **10. Housing Justice**

Daphne reported that the latest figures had shown a significant increase in homeless people in Maidstone, with an increase of 37% since 2010. It was important that people understood that homelessness was not just a crisis at Christmas. It was confirmed that the previous Borough Council –led housing forum had been disbanded.

### **11. Parish Magazine**

There were no definite plans for any articles at the moment, but Helen hoped to put something about the climate coalition's work in at some point this year, to build awareness in advance of the UN talks in Paris at the end of the year.

### **12. Parish Newsletter**

It was agreed that information needed to be shared in the newsletter about the following issues:

- The Lent appeal
- CAFOD Climate Campaign which was currently focusing on reducing the amount of energy that they used.
- CAFOD fast day – 27th February

### **13. Correspondence**

The latest newsletter from the diocese had been published and can be found [here](#). Particular attention was drawn to the Spring Assembly which was to be held at Aylesford on Saturday 25th April. The theme for the day was 'From prayer to action and back again – learning and doing together.'

It was noted that the next quarterly meeting for the diocesan Justice and Peace group would be on 22nd February at West Malling.

### **14. Any other business**

There had been reports of ecumenical vigils being held against ISIS and it was wondered whether we could organise one in Bearsted.

Helen informed the meeting that the Revd David Post would be speaking at Holy Cross on Friday 13th February on the subject St George's Church in Baghdad as he had close connections with Canon Andrew White.

### **15. The next meeting**

The scheduling of meetings over the next few months was difficult as Marie was no longer able to make Tuesdays and it was hard to find a day that worked for everyone. It was agreed that the next meeting would be on Monday 2nd March and people were asked to bring diaries to that meeting so that future meetings could be planned.