



Minutes of the meeting of The Seven Towers Joint Council

Tuesday 16th January 2024 at 7.30 pm
at Nature in Art

Present: Revd Joe Knight, Simon Trapnell (Chair & Benefice Warden), Revd Philippa Donald, Carolyn Wright (Benefice Warden), Phil Cotton (The Leigh), Ellie Stevenson (Down Hatherley), Jean Smith (Norton), Janine Smith (StavBodd), Adrian Hawkins (Sandhurst), Ali Moseley (Worship Team), Lynda Chan (Prayer Team), Jordan Murrison (CYP Team), Derek Wright (Treasurer), Carol Baldwin (Safeguarding Officer), Graeme Hunter, Hazel Cotton, Graham Limbrick, Tony Crawshaw, Andrew Wilkins.

Apologies: Gareth Moseley

1. **Welcome and opening prayers** Rev Joe led the meeting in lectio divina of our Benefice verses this year, Philippians 4: 4-9.
2. **Approval of minutes** Minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2023 were approved.
3. **Matters Arising** A replacement has yet to be appointed for Nathan at Sportily.

4. **Christmas events feedback**

On the whole all our Christmas gatherings went well and were appreciated. Special mention was made of the BCP Holy Communion service in the morning of Christmas Eve and the suggestion made that this could be held every fourth Sunday in Advent. The Christmas Tree Festival at Norton also went well and the support appreciated. However, numbers for the Christingle Pilgrimage around Twigworth were very low and there was no community involvement this year at all. The SMT will look at other ways we can connect with new housing residents.

5. **Revd Joe - Journeying Together in 2024**

Our Benefice statement "Connecting people to God and to one another through the transforming love of Jesus Christ" is still at our heart. Our focus this year will be on three key passions: the Bible, Prayer and Holy Living, for example through our Home Groups, our new Explore! gathering, and monthly 24 hours of prayer. Our Family Holy Communion gatherings will focus on ten different "Holy Habits" connected to Eco-church and care for creation.

Among groups that we'll nurture this year are our Benefice Teams, the new groups set up in parishes in place of PCCs, Home Groups (new one starting after Easter), and outreach activities like Friendly Fridays and Warm Hub lunches. The SMT will look at other ways we can connect with our communities.

We will have two Lent courses this year: Ageing Gracefully (daytime) and Saying Yes to Life (evenings). Home Groups will pause during Lent. There will be a Holy Week programme similar to last year's. JC members were asked to report back to Joe regarding their preference for Maundy Thursday: an agape meal, a service in church or something else?

Action: all JC members

Joe is putting together a flow chart of Seven Towers governance.

6. Reports from the Benefice Teams

Pastoral In his role as lead of this team, Gareth will co-ordinate support across the Benefice. Meeting dates have been planned for the year. The focus is on developing links with our communities in times of need, e.g. the recent floods. Discussion revolved around the use of Whatsapp groups and social media.

Prayer Post-gatherings prayer ministry, pewsheet prayers and monthly prayers for the Benefice magazine are ongoing and will be shared around the Prayer Team this year. The importance of confidentiality within the Prayer Circle was reiterated. **24/7 prayer once a month?**

CYP The aim is to consolidate what we've been doing. A core team has now been set up of Joe, Kim, Graeme and Claire led by Jordan. A gathering has been planned to explore our vision for ministry and mission in this area.

Worship Ali now leads this team, which will focus on a wide range of worship gatherings around the Benefice, including Taizé and Evening Prayer. Ali is looking for at least one more member to join the team.

7. Reports from the Parish Reps

Sandhurst Adrian is finding his way around this new role. Evening Prayer led by Andrew Wilkins went well. Work is progressing with the Legacy Project to install glass doors at the bell tower and the vestry.

StavBodd Attendance at Evening Prayer at Staverton is growing. Links with the Parish Council work very well and contribute to successful outreach. The mulled wine and carols event at Christmas attracted a very large number of villagers.

The Leigh A new PA system is being investigated and a meeting planned with AV Direct.

Norton A new group, Norton Friends, set up in place of the PCC, is now involved with the regular coffee mornings and raising money for the bells. A series of monthly events to help with fundraising is planned.

Down Hatherley Roof repairs are ongoing. Ideas for the Legacy Project are still being discussed.

8. Treasurer's report (representing Finance & Property Committee, F&PC)

Finance

- I. Fees for weddings and funerals have been set by the diocese. A list of these will be posted on church noticeboards.
- II. Most Standing Orders and funds have now been transferred to the new JC account.
- III. A proposal to continue waiving additional fees for funerals of longstanding church officers in consultation with Parish Reps was approved.

Property

Different projects are being planned across the Benefice. Details of these should be sent to the F&PC in order to establish priorities. A list of F&PC meeting dates will be circulated to Parish Reps.

Action: Parish Reps and Derek

9. Feedback from Deanery Synod

The last meeting was on 16/11/23 in Longhope. Dan Button spoke about the Gateway Theological School. The Deanery Strategic Plan was discussed and the Parish Share for 2024 set. A meeting is planned for 30th January between Archdeacon Hilary and the Severn Vale Deanery Standing committee to discuss the 2025 Parish Share.

10. Safeguarding

- I. Posters are now available for all church noticeboards giving information about our safeguarding officer and procedures.

- II. All JC members need an up-to-date DBS check. Carol will email everyone regarding their current status and how to complete the DBS process online.

Action: Carol & JC members

- III. Most people have now received their certificates from the Basic Safeguarding Training course held last September. Joe will chase up the remaining missing ones. **Action: Joe**

11. AOB

- I. Epiphany "Thank You" drinks at the Rectory will be rescheduled following their postponement due to the floods.
- II. Information about our Ash Wednesday gathering will be included in our February Benefice magazine.

The meeting closed at **9.25 pm** with the Grace.

Dates of next meetings: 12th March, 14th May, 9th July.