South Leicestershire Group

United Reformed Church

**Minutes of the Strategy and Ministry Group Meeting**

 **Held on Wednesday 4 November 2020 via Zoom**

**Present** *President*  Revd Richard Eastman

 *Past Acting President*  Eileen Williams

 *Group Secretary* Di Statham

 *Treasurer* Noel Oldershaw

 *Resource Minister* Revd Martin Ferris

*Church Representatives (Not included above)*

*Saffron Lane* Sandra Clay

*Wigston Magna* Sheila Stephens

*Oadby* Tony Hudson

The meeting was opened by a prayer led by the President

1. **Apologies** Apologies were received from

Whetstone URC

1. **Confirmation of Minutes**

The Minutes of the Strategy and Ministry Meeting held on Wednesday 23 September 2020 were taken as read and confirmed. These will be signed at a future meeting.

1. **Matters Arising**

The Preaching Plan for 2021 has now been completed by the Ministry Team and has been circulated to the individual churches.

Revd Eastman advised that he had sent an email to OMCG/Lay Ministries regarding the review of Eileen Williams’ Lay Leaders Covenant. Eileen confirmed that she has received a message from them to make arrangements to discuss the covenant.

Wigston Magna, Saffron Lane and Whetstone have all been holding services during October but will now be closed again for the new lockdown period.

1. **Finance**

A copy of the Finance Report to 31 October 2020 had been circulated prior to the meeting. Noel Oldershaw explained the figures. There is currently a deficit for the year of £1,208.59. This is expected to have increased to £2000 by the end of the year as we have not yet received any request for expenses payments for Revd Martin Ferris. The shortfall is not unexpected as the payments made by the churches have been reduced as a result of the Covid 19 restrictions.

Noel Oldershaw advised that the church treasurers have all met to look at the Group Budget for 2021. The anticipated costs have been calculated and each Church has provided details of the amount they feel they are able to pay into the funds each month. Based on these figures it is anticipated there will be a shortfall in the year which would be met with money from the reserve fund.

After discussion it was agreed that we would offer an M & M Payment of £40,104.00 to Synod which is a 20% reduction on the figure calculated using the Synod formula. This figure can be reviewed if churches start to receive more income and can increase their contributions. The Treasurer will notify Synod of this decision.

**Action – Noel Oldershaw**

1. **Training**

There is currently no training taking place or planned.

Eileen Williams advised that there is online training available via the Synod including Safeguarding Training. Information about on line training is included in the Synod newsletter.

Revd Eastman reminded the meeting that if any of the courses include a fee Synod do have a lay training funding which can be applied to for help with the cost.

1. **Ministry Team Report**

Revd Richard Eastman and Revd Martin Ferris have had a “getting to know you” meeting.

Revd Eastman attended a Zoom Ministers Training session instead of the usual Ministers Retreat.

1. **Extension of the Ministry of Revd Richard Eastman**

Revd Eastman advised that he has received confirmation from the OMCG that his Ministry can be extended to 30 November 2021. It is assumed that the Group will receive information confirming this extension.

1. **Christmas Services Around the Group**

Any events will be dependent on the Covid 19 restrictions.

**Wigston Magna** – Hope to hold a Carol Service on 20 December in

the evening. This may be in the courtyard outside.

 There will be no Christingle Service this year,

 MAY hold a service on Christmas Day

**Whetstone** Plan to hold service on Christmas Day

**Saffron Lane** Hope to have a Carol Service on 13 December

 Hope to hold Christmas Eve Service at 11.30 pm

**Oadby** May host a Christmas Eve Service at 11.30 pm

jointly with South Wigston.

Revd Martin Ferris advised that he will send out links to the Zoom Services which Abbots Road are hoping to organise for the Christmas period.

1. **Group Anniversary Service via Zoom**

This suggestion came up at the South Wigston Elders Meeting. However, Sandra Clay subsequently reminded the Group Secretary that the Strategy and Ministry Meeting had previously agreed that the Service would take place at Saffron Lane on 24 January when the Moderator is coming to preach. (This visit is delayed from the visit planned for September for the Church anniversary).

It was commented that there are concerns that a number of our members do not have computer access or are not able to access on line services. We need to keep in mind how we can keep as many people as possible involved with our services etc.

Revd Martin Ferris advised that the elders at Abbots Road are preparing and sending out a survey to their members to identify how they feel about accessing on line services and also how they feel about returning to the church building to attend services.

1. **Dates for Strategy and Ministry Meetings 2021**

A list of the suggested dates for the 2021 meetings had been circulated prior to the meeting. The proposed dates were accepted but it was agreed that they would be reviewed as the year progresses.

1. **Dates for Group Services**

It has already been agreed that we will hold a Group Service on 24 January 2021. Arrangements for the remaining services were left in abeyance while we see how the Covid 19 restrictions progress.

1. **Updates from the Group Churches**

At the moment there are no plans being made for future events or activities

1. **AOB**

The Secretary confirmed that the next Group Magazine will be for December 2020 and January 2021 and she is hoping that it will be possible to get printed copies.

1. **Prayers for the Group**

Revd Richard Eastman led a period of prayer for those associated with the Group needing support.

Revd Martin Ferris closed the meeting with the Grace

NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 6 January 2021 – 2.00 pm