

**The Methodist Church at Coventry Central Hall
General Church Meeting 7 July 2019**

Chair: Rev. Mark Rowland

1. **Opening Devotions** – led by Mark.
2. **Apologies for Absence** – John, Pam. 21 attendees. Attendance sheet available from Church Council Secretary.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting 20 May 2018** – accepted and signed as a true record.
4. **Matters arising not covered on the agenda** – none.
5. **Declaration of A.O.B for the end of the meeting** – emails, first aiders, notice board in Wesley's.
6. **Conversation on the ministry and witness of the Church** – Mark said he was saddened to hear S cannot join us due to her husband's illness and asked we hold them in our prayers. John has been reassigned here from September 2019. Also, Deacon Sheila will have some of her time reassigned here from September 2019. It is likely a Minister will be 'pulled out' early and will start here in February 2020 but this has not yet been fully confirmed.
Mark advised he has been looking back over his 5 years here. Highlights –
 - a) Lifegroups – embedded in the life of the Central Hall, strengthen fellowship and care, study of scripture, and prayer.
 - b) Hosting of the Winter Night Shelter – Mark said Central Halls were designed to offer help and support to the most needy and it was good to be a host in this project and have people from here volunteering to help.
 - c) Inclusive Church – Mark advised it had been good to have our Policy approved, his work with Coventry Pride and was proud we are diverse in all sorts of ways. He acknowledged it is always an on-going issue.Areas needing more consideration –
 - a) Finances – Need to find a model to be financially sustainable. He said there are 3 main areas of work – ministry with the congregation, ministry of the building and ministry of the city centre. Mark advised he increasingly wonders if they should be looked at separately to give each area greater freedom. If they are knitted too closely together they become a burden to each other.
 - b) Volunteering – Marks said there is an inherited culture that things are done by staff and a small group of volunteers from the church. He said everyone has gifts to bring and need to look at how they are used. He said it is not a workable model for a small team to deliver everything.Mark advised that Marcus and Noah leaving has been a great loss and he has found this personally challenging. He feels there is great potential and need to look at how we are called to shape the future.

People discussed the issues and any other concerns in small groups and comments included the following –

Keep going for now until new staff in place and then build on what they can offer. Good mix of services. When at a low ebb it is good to try new things, be brave, creative. Build up passion. Hold services in Wesley's and open the doors to attract passers-by. Ideas are not enough, need more people helping. Need to motivate other people. Need better communication. Each lifegroup could focus on one special interest or area of concern. Break-out services led by lifegroups have been successful and should continue. How do we make people feel needed and wanted and an important part of the church?

Personal invites. Empower people to be more active in their faith. Why aren't any of the faithful large black community here this morning? Need to look at when meetings are scheduled, consider people's work commitments.

Conference calls? Why keep worship and meetings separate? Could have time limited discussions within as service. Try something different.

Encourage African choir to sing more in church.

Mark thanked everyone for their comments, everyone needs to look at what, as an individual, they can do. He thought the suggestion for lifegroups looking at issues is a good, should focus on 1 item at a time. There are on-going conversations to have.

7. Appointments –

- a) Church Stewards – all steward appointments **accepted**.
- b) Congregational Reps – Cliff and June have resigned. Doreen to ask Shirina if she wants to continue. No nominations. **Accepted**.

8. Financial Report – John stated deficit budget is on target. Sunday offerings have increased by 6% from last year. Room hiring has improved during the year and nearly up to budget. Wesley's is the biggest concern and are struggling despite the upgrades. In the last few weeks there has been a focus on marketing, publicity, menus and prices. The refurbishment was grant funded. Repairs and maintenance budget is higher but this does fluctuate annually. Mark thanks to John for all his hard work and commitment.

9. A.O.B.

- a) The Messenger is not being sent out by email and the plan is not accessible.
- b) First aiders – how does the congregation know who is the assigned first aider? Mark advised the stewards should know.
- c) Notice board – several people have asked for it to go back up in Wesley's. John said the tv screen can be used and information could be put on tables.

10. Closing prayer – led by Mark