



## MILTON KEYNES MISSION PARTNERSHIP

**Minutes of the Mission Partnership Assembly AGM** which took place on **Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018** at Whaddon Way Church, Bletchley

1. **Opening Worship** was led by Steve Summerfield.

### 2. **Business**

- a) Minutes of last AGM held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017 and last Assembly meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018 – These were agreed and signed.
- b) Matters Arising
  - At our last Assembly in we looked at the issue of *Loneliness*. We are looking to find someone who can take a lead on this topic and build a team around them. Please do contact John if you would like to be involved.
- c) Mission Partnership Annual Report – This is available on the Mission Partnership website. Paper copies are also available. The report covers the current nine areas of MKMP plus sector team ministries reports from the Chaplaincies and MK Christian Foundation.
  - Questions on Report – None received.
  - Acceptance of Report – Proposed by Dawn Saunders. Seconded by Mike Davidge.
- d) Elections
  - Election of Trustees – MKMP is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and we have a trustee body made up of 5 ex-officio members (the Presidents), who are the denominational area leaders, plus up to 8 elected Trustees. We can elect a further 2 Trustees outside of the MKMP membership. Under the rules of the CIO the trustee body needs to rotate so a third of that body have to stand down each year. The 3 trustees standing down this year are Alison Drury, Pauline Gray and Steve Chilcraft. (Steve is an appointed trustee as he is a member of a church outside of MKMP.) No new proposed trustees came forward. Alison, Pauline and Steve were willing to stand again and have therefore been re-appointed. We have one further trustee vacancy and there is the opportunity to co-opt during the year. Do contact the MKMP office if you are interested in being a trustee.
- e) Appointments
  - Treasurer – Adrian Prisk is willing to stand again as our Treasurer. Proposed by Wendy Carey. Seconded by Sophia Pond. He was duly appointed. Adrian does a superb job for us and we offer him our grateful thanks.

- Auditors – We are very happy with the work done by our auditors Mercer & Hole and would like to continue using them. Proposed by Mike Davidge. Seconded by Lynn Castle. Mercer & Hole were duly appointed.
- f) Commissioning
- Mission Partnership Representatives – Each church is entitled to two Reps. We value them highly as they are our means of talking to the churches in MK, and to let us know what the churches are doing. This is very much a two way process. Do allow the Reps some time in your church meetings. John prayed for the MKMP Reps.
- g) Ecumenical Oversight News – Dawn Saunders gave an update on Ecumenical matters. The EOG consists of a representative from each of the five denominations. Currently these are: Tim Norwood (Anglican), David Lewis (Baptist,) Dawn Saunders (Methodist), George Mwaura (URC) and Francis Higgins (RC). John Robertson (MKMP Director of Ecumenical Mission) and Alison Drury (MKMP Lay Chair) sit on the group as observers. The group continues to meet regularly, to support each other and to share denominational news. A second meeting has taken place between the EOG and the National Ecumenical Officers to discuss CIOs for the LEPs and we have essentially reached an in principal agreement with them.
- h) Date of next Assembly: The next Assembly will be held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018. The next AGM will be held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019. The Spring 2019 Assembly date tbc. Venues to be advised.

### 3. **Towards 2050: Shaping the Future.**

Milton Keynes is changing:

- Changing *scale* of the city: Current population - 250k. Future population in 2050 - 500k.
  - Changing *nature* of the city: Hub of Oxford/Cambridge arc. New University.
  - Changing *gap* in the city: “Two Speed City”. Wealth and Poverty *both* increase.
- **Vision:** To address the challenge of the change in scale, nature and gap, we need to keep our vision front and centre at all times. Whatever we do, it has to contribute to the vision. It is primarily a vision for the city, not the church. It keeps forcing us to raise our horizons towards the kingdom of God so that we don’t get stuck in “church stuff”, so that we don’t get defensive about the status quo. It is primarily a vision about God, not ourselves. It keeps forcing us to keep asking the question “*why are we doing what we are doing*”. That is a question that keeps requiring us to go deeper all the time, to peel back the onion layers of our motivations until we get back to the kernel which is about our faith in God and our vocation to live for God.

So what questions are raised for the church by all that and what should our response be?

In our annual report and in the most recent newsletter, six significant themes have been identified that have been emerging from various conversations and meetings at different levels:

1. **Sustainability.** Will there be a church in 2050? If there is, it won’t be a church doing the same things that the church is doing now. And that matters because without the church we have no means to engage with the city at all; without the church we have no means to show what a people alive to God might look like. Sustainability is not a question about keeping the church show on the road, it’s a question about God’s mission through us in the world. And as a question it applies not only to the existing churches we have,

but also to new ones that may arise. They need to be sustainable; if they are not, that energy has been misspent. The question of sustainability is foundational for all the others.

2. **Capacity Building.** This feeds sustainability. We have addressed it many times here as we have explored prayer, adult learning, community engagement, leadership and vision.
3. **Church Planting.** It is crucial that we look to multiply church and multiply new ways of being church. It extends our reach, it enhances sustainability, it makes God more visible in the city. The need for it is not in doubt: the particular shape of it in any given place needs deep and strategic thinking.
4. **Resourcing.** The scale and nature of the change in the city, the growing gap we are experiencing make the resourcing question critical. Is that about more clergy? Releasing more lay people? Investing in buildings? In leadership? In training? In young people? Again, we need to discern our calling in the light of the vision and resource accordingly.
5. **Community Engagement.** We have explored this a great deal in this forum, particularly through a Community Organising approach. At our last Assembly we focused on loneliness and this topic came through as a strong theme at the last United Area meeting. Can we find ways of addressing it seriously? Can we develop and encourage the leadership in that and other projects? If we are truly to see the city become alive to God, we must continue to press our community engagement.
6. **Changing Ecumenism.** Ecumenical life is changing. The fading of the dream of structural church unity and the rediscovered vibrancy of unity in and through mission towards a common goal should be well known. But along with that, we need to recognise a rebalancing between the churches and the denominations as some flourish and others decline numerically. That produces some challenges, and we need to honour one another as those changes take place. How we do that will shape our character and thus the way we act in the world.

At this Assembly we looked primarily at the theme of **sustainability** and whilst looking at that the attendees were asked to keep the vision firmly in mind, particularly to keep insisting that our horizon is the city not the church and keep interrogating responses, asking why they are doing what they are doing. To look at how sustainable our churches are, what are we trying to sustain and what one thing would most increase sustainability.

Attendees at the meeting then broke into small discussion groups round tables to look at this.

Further thoughts: What **church planting** strategy would be most effective?:

- **“New Resource** - eg Gas Street Birmingham, a very large completely new church brought in from outside that would be an engine to plant more churches).
- **Fresh Expressions** - “grassroots” new church starting from very small base eg pioneer, often associated with particular cultural group, eg Church Without Walls in Broughton/Brooklands, St. Mark’s.
- **Repotting** - introducing additional people into an existing small/aging/declining church eg St. Frideswide/Holy Cross
- **Classic** - group from existing church move to a new venue

What do the existing churches/our current church need to do to enable planting to be successful? What are we prepared to sacrifice?

**4. Closing Prayer**

We returned to Jeremiah 29 vv 7ff. The sustainability of the people of God under the adverse conditions of exile.

The meeting closed with the Grace.