



Minutes for HCT Forum - web version

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Date: Tuesday 16th April 2024

Time: Doors open at 7pm for 7.30pm start (finish by 9.30pm)

Venue: Brighton Road Baptist Church, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 5BD

The following documents were distributed by email in advance of the meeting:

- Agenda
- Minutes of Meeting 8th February 2024
- Development Co-Ordinators Report
- Horsham Matters Report
- Finance Report
- A Message from Horsham Refugee Support Group

Opening Worship

Clive Urquhart (CU) welcomed everyone to the Forum, and introduced the song, In Christ Alone, recorded at Brighton Road Baptist Church. Jon White led the Forum in prayer.

Welcome to New Delegates

New Delegates were welcomed to the Forum for the first time from St Marks, Holbrook; Horsham URC; and St Andrews, Nuthurst/The Church of the Good Shepherd, Mannings Heath.

Minutes of last meeting (Thursday 8th February 2024)

No amendments or matters arise. Minutes signed CU.

Moderator's Comments

CU spoke about the open-air Good Friday Service in the Carfax, thanking the Lord for the witness in the town and for those who responded to the gospel message. Special thanks to Kath Jones (Southwater Connect) for speaking and the musicians from Trafalgar Road Baptist Church for leading the sung worship.

Presentation from Horsham Refugee Support Group

CU welcomed Joanna Eames (JE), chair of Horsham Refugee Support Group (HRSB), which is a registered charity.

HRSB began in response to the shocking news of the drowning of a young Syrian refugee boy in September 2015. HRSB supports refugees living in the Horsham area, including those from Syrian, Afghanistan, and Ukraine. Currently, they are working with nineteen refugee families (including forty-one children) and forty-five asylum seekers (including eighty children). HRSB have thirty-five volunteers, helping people learn English, navigate around the local area and signposting to different services. West Sussex County Council have been good at finding school places for children, and the volunteers help with homework during the week, recognising that they will grow to become the



future providers of the family. Urgent requests for things like clothing are posted on their Facebook group, and churches are invited to get in touch if they can help supply essential items on short notice.

JE thanked everyone for their support, including the churches that offer the use of their buildings. HRSG is not constituted as a Christian organisation, but many of the volunteers are from the local churches. Please let HRSG know of any community activities that people could be signposted to, such as church cafes or children's groups. JE would also welcome ideas on how to improve communication channels with the churches.

Visit www.horshamrefugeesupportgroup.co.uk for more details on how you can get involved, donate or sign up to their newsletter. You can also contact HRSG via admin@horshamrefugeesupportgroup.co.uk.

Development Co-ordinator's Report

In addition to the information distributed before the Forum in the Development Co-ordinator's report, Pete Dibdin (PD) outlined the three key areas of his work through the Development Co-ordinator role.

1. Witnessing Together

PD thanked everyone involved in the open-air Good Friday Service in the Carfax, and shared dates of upcoming events.

- **Watoto Children's choir**, Friday 17th & Saturday 18th May at St John's Broadbridge Heath
- **Rotary Funday Sunday**, Sunday 7th July, where HCT are planning a children's craft and information stall.
- **Worship and Prayer Evening**, 6pm on Sunday 21st July at Kingdom Faith, Foundry Lane

PD is currently reviewing the HCT Safeguarding policy for working with children and vulnerable adults.

2. Working Together

The role encourages partnership and collaboration between churches and organisations. In addition to networking and personal relationships, HCT uses a range of communication channels, including email, website, weekly notices, and social media. PD would be interested to hear how people use the weekly notices in their church. Additionally, PD will be working with Anna Pisani to ensure that HCT have up to date contact details for churches and their representatives.

3. Influencing Together

This area involves engaging with Horsham District Council and local charities, and Pete has several upcoming meetings planning with local organisations. HCT are planning to hold hustings for the next General Election due to be held before the end of January 2025. If anyone is interest in helping with the early planning, please contact Pete.

Finance Report

Michael Hogg (MH) presented the financial report prepared by Veronica Horvath (VH).

MH highlighted the 2024 budget deficit of £813 and that letters have been sent to member churches inviting them to increase their annual donation by 5% compared to the previous year. Churches are asked to donate based on the size of their congregation, but please contact VH with any questions about church contributions. Contributions are freewill donations from churches towards the work of HCT and not invoiced membership fees.

The £1000 evangelism fund came from the One Good Friday and is being held to seed evangelistic work in the area. An invitation was made for any suggestions for how this could be used and to contact MH, CU or PD.



Thank you to VH for her finance work behind the scenes.

Horsham Matters Report

In addition to the Horsham Matters Report distributed before the meeting, Amalia Lovett spoke about the Mobile support vehicle that will soon be visiting various locations around Horsham districts, offering face to face support for those who are unable to access existing services. The service will include advisors from Horsham Matters as well as other organizations, such as Citizen's Advice Bureau. The pilot scheme will visit Slinfold, Warnham, Barns Green, Pulborough and Mowbray before expanding across Horsham District. Volunteer drivers with a standard car license are required.

Last year, Horsham Matters gave 10,000 food parcels to those in need. So far this year, they have already distributed 3,000 food parcels.

Future Dates

- Heart of Communication by Rob Parsons, 8th May at Brighton Road Baptist Church
- Watoto Children's Choir, Friday 17th & Saturday 18th May at St John's Broadbridge Heath
- Rotary Funday Sunday, 7th July in Horsham Park.
- HCT Worship and Prayer Evening, 6pm on Sunday 21st July at Kingdom Faith, Foundry Lane
- Philippa Hanna at Cornerstone Methodist Church London Road. Saturday 14th September 2024.

Dates of Future Meetings

- AGM & Forum: Tuesday 16th July 2024 at Cornerstone Methodist Church London Road (*Note change of date previously published*)
- Forum: Thursday 10th October 2024 - St Mark's Church, Holbrook

Any Other Business

On the Funday, can we do a prayer walk around the park or use the staging for a service? PD to follow up.

Closing Prayer

The meeting ended with prayer in small groups.

Attendance

There were 25 attendees present, representing 13-member Churches.

Minutes taken and typed up by PD