

**Minutes of a Meeting of the  
Combined PCCs for Harwell and Chilton**

**held on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008 at 7.45pm in All Saint's Church Chilton**

**Present**

Chris Stott (Chair)

**Harwell**

Kate Evans

Allan Macarthur

Frances Taylor

Sid Gale

Tim Roberts

Jane Woolley

Tony Hughes

Martin Speed (Co-opted  
Secretary) - minutes

**Chilton**

John Berry

Liz Morris

Avril Butler (Co-opted  
Secretary)

Naomi Gibson

Jeff Nesbitt

Hazel King

Carol Pigott

Linda Lambon

Pam Rolls

**1. Opening**

Chris opened the meeting with a reading from 1 Corinthians, a reflection of the work of John and Henry Venn, and prayer.

**2. Apologies for absence**

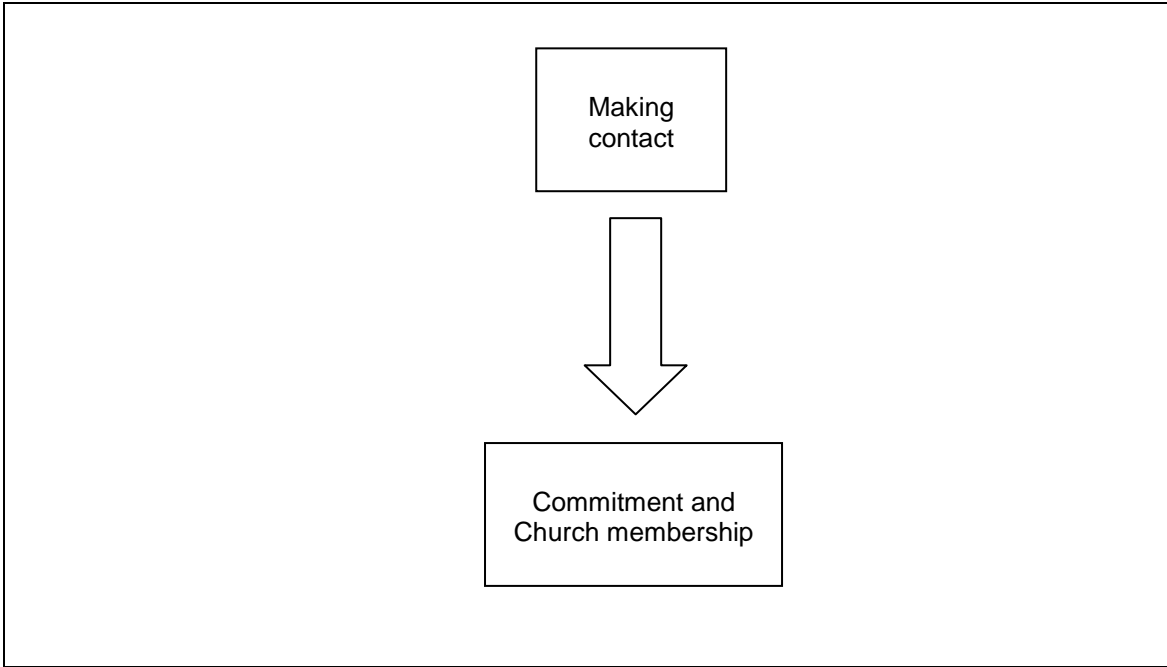
Apologies were received from John Pigott, Steve Tunstall, Georgina Greer, Clive House, Andrew Hayes and Stuart Gibson.

**3. Living faith day**

The meeting watched the Living Faith DVD which was distributed at the recent 'Living Faith Day' for viewing by PCCs. Chris introduced the DVD by showing a diagram.

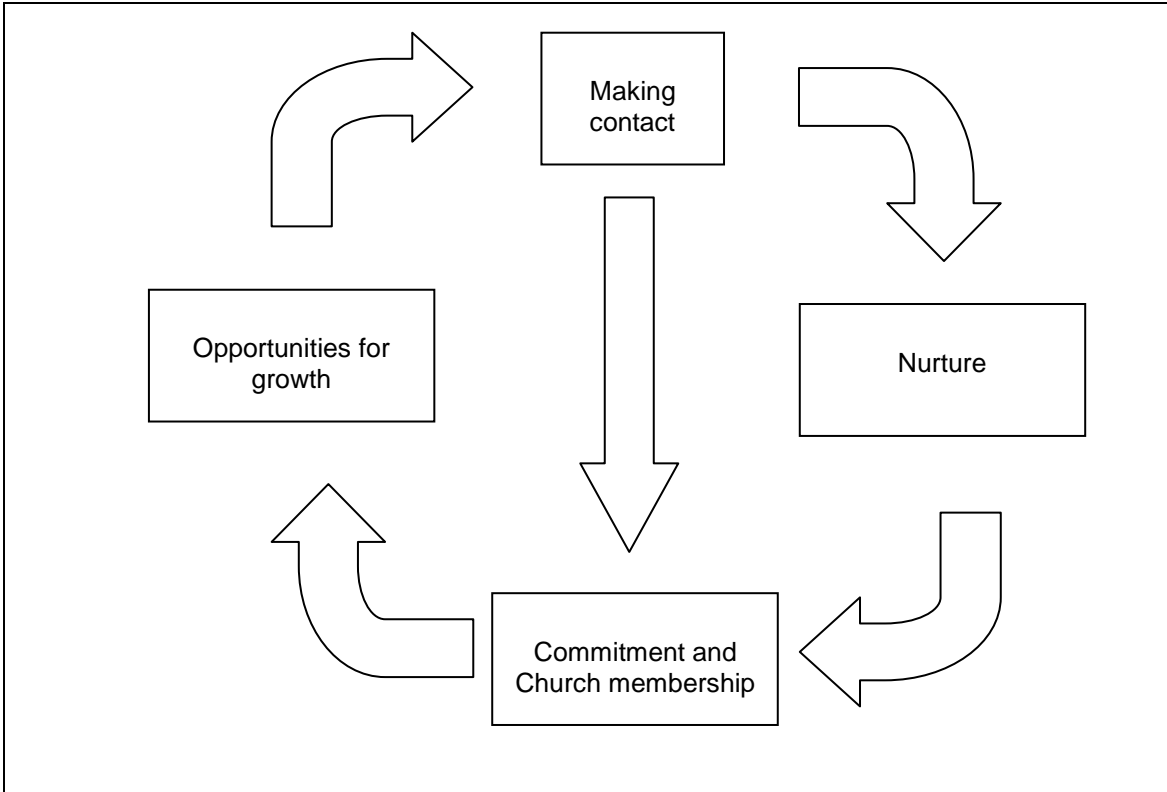
He said that the traditional view of evangelism implied a 'straight line' from 'making contact' to 'commitment and church membership'.

This 'traditional view' could be represented with diagram that looks like the one below.



The model from the Living Faith day, Chris said, recognised that this was more of a process than a 'one-off' event. Relationships required nurture before a commitment was made, and opportunities for growth were needed after a commitment was made.

The diagram was more appropriately drawn like this....



In the discussion that followed, it was observed that

- The way the DVD showed local churches was very good
- The 'fresh expressions' linked to many initiatives from our parish, for example the children's activity days, Fledglings, and Y-Club.
- Much that was shown was not new to our parish (though some nuances may be)
- It was possible that our parish lacks the 'critical mass' of numbers needed for some initiatives – perhaps for Alpha courses. (It was noted that the 'men's group' shown required attendees from 10 or 11 villages. (However it was noted that the forthcoming 'child protection' meeting in Didcot was bringing lots of churches together to deal with an issue that would not have sufficient interested people in just our villages.)
- There was an element of the DVD 'preaching to the converted' in that in the last few years we had 'done Alpha'. Perhaps we need something more (based on our fundamental Christian values) to grow our Churches.
- Research had shown that it took 4 or 5 years for someone to be fully established as a church member – evangelism was not a quick fix.
- There possibly ought to be more that sparks interest coming from the central leadership of the church – 'to start shouting a lot more'. (Though it was noted that our bishops in both Reading and Oxford were taking a lead in this.)
- Relationships are a critical aspect of the process.
- The figure of 4 or 5 years highlights how long people are 'vulnerable' to pitfalls along their journey. This shows the importance of sustained relationships and the 'critical mass' of enough people around them.
- It was noticeable that all the people in the DVD were 'middle class.' (Though it was also observed that the DVD could have included successful projects such as that working with disadvantaged people in Reading, which would have given a different perspective. It was also noted that the same was true of the youth worker in Didcot.)
- It was suggested that when more people were needed to make a project viable it could be organised through the Deanery.
- It was observed that the projects featured didn't mention the large amount of prayer that would have been involved.
- Blewbury represented a potential church to collaborate with – they had been in touch regarding collaboration between youth groups.
- It was suggested that the Summer Holiday club could involve adults more. (It was noted that there was not an opportunity for that this year, but that is may be a point to consider in subsequent years.)
- It was suggested that the Chilton 'welcome barbeque' could be a wider village activity.
- It was suggested that the Fete on the Rectory lawn (which was successful last year in Harwell) could be tried again.
- The opportunity represented by baptism and marriage records was noted – and it was suggested that more could be done on anniversaries and with special invitations.

#### 4. Alpha update

Chris briefed the meeting on the current planning for Alpha:

- A 'taster' meeting is planned for Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September.
- This coming Sunday an Alpha DVD would be shown in Church accompanied by interviews with people who had attended previous courses.

- A display about Alpha was being planned.
- Prayer and contacts were both requested.
- It was intended that all recent baptism families and marriage couples would be contacted and the invitation would be highlighted on the broadsheet.
- The support and prayer of the whole church was required.
- The leadership team for the courses consisted of Monika Buxton, Ruth Poole, Martin & Charlotte Fell(from Chilton) Allan Macarthur and Chris.
- Roz Shipp would co-ordinate the catering.
- The courses would aim to be mainly live speakers, but may include videos.
- An 'away day' was planned for November 8th, either in Cholsey or a home in Harwell, depending on numbers.

## 5. Communications strategy

Chris told the meeting that it had been noted that a communications strategy was an important function within the organisation of the two churches, and Naomi has agreed to act as co-ordinator for this function.

Chris asked for contributions towards forming a strategy for communications. The ideas raised included the following:

- A number of issues regarding e-mails were voiced. The importance of clarity in e-mails was highlighted along with the importance of appropriate 'copying in' of the right people at the right stage (and not 'half way through' a sequence of e-mails.) It was noted that 'replying to all' was sometimes appropriate (especially when setting up meetings or changing dates), ought to be thought of, and might be suggested by the author of the first e-mail. Subject headings should be accurate and would benefit from a prefix that gave an indication of what was required: for example, "for action", or "for information."
- It was recognised that there were different issues associated with internal as opposed to external communications.
- It was noted that there were other channels of communication other than e-mails
- It was suggested that more could be done to communicate with those attending services – such as distributing written notes.
- The opinion was voiced that the role was large enough to require another dedicated person.
- It was observed that much of what was discussed represented 'good practice' but was not really 'strategy'. It was suggested that the 'strategy' should deal with projecting an image and selecting the right media and style.
- The opinion was expressed that the churches were good at external communications and examples of appreciative comments were given.
- It was suggested that perhaps as a way to approach identifying a strategy, a particular project (such as the Harwell Tower project) should be reviewed to identify what aspects of communication had worked well, and what could have been improved.

## 6. Close

The meeting closed at 9:00 pm to be followed by individual PCC meetings.

**7. Next Meeting**

*The next combined PCC meeting will take place on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2008 at St Matthew's Harwell at 7:45.*

(To be signed as a true record by the individual PCCs at their next meeting.)

..... Chairman

..... Secretary