



The Church in Abingdon



Report of the Governing Body for the Year Ended 31 December 2022

Nature and Purpose

The forerunner to the Church in Abingdon (CiA) was The Abingdon & District Council of Churches. The CiA was formed in 1988 when the Ministers and Congregations of eight churches signed THE LOCAL COVENANT and in that Covenant they agreed:

- to work together to proclaim the gospel and encourage neighbourly care;
- to pray for unity and yet to value the spiritual traditions of all the churches;
- to share the ordained ministry and Holy Communion according to the disciplines of each denomination.

Subsequent to the original Covenant, six further churches have become part of the CiA.

Mission Statement

The mission statement of the CiA was developed in February 1992 and is:

- to bring a fresh global vision of hope through God's love to the people of Abingdon, offering them good news of forgiveness, reconciliation and new life through Jesus Christ;
- to rediscover, live out and present the gospel through our fellowship and worship, unity and diversity;
- to express this message through relevant words and actions in the community and by cooperating with others to identify and meet specific needs so that lives are changed, the Church grows and our local community increasingly reflects the values of the Kingdom of God.

Governance

The current governing structure of the CiA has been in place since July 2007, and was reviewed by the Governing Body in November 2015. Based on the decision of that meeting, the following adapted structure was accepted in February 2016:

The **Governing Body** comprising:

- all staff members and one lay representative from each church
- an Administrator (employed by the CiA and non-voting)
- the CiA Treasurer and a Finance Committee to assist them, appointed by the Governing Body.
- a Minute Secretary (non-voting if co-opted)
- the quorum required for meetings and decisions of the Governing Body will be 10 members, representing at least 5 of the 14 member churches.

Representatives from any CiA Task Group may also attend when required. The Chair shall be appointed from among the Governing Body at the AGM each year. At the AGM in Feb 2018, it was decided to have a 'rolling clergy Chair' as no clergy member was able to take up this role for a full year. Hence, clergy volunteered to act as Chair for date-specific GB meetings, according to their availability, and to hold this role until the next date-specific GB meeting.

The Governing Body should meet at least four times per year and in addition as required. In a case where a decision is required without sufficient time for the Governing Body to gather, a virtual decision can be taken by agreement, with electronic responses collated by the Administrator.

The Governing Body will:

- be the main decision-making and action group of the CiA;
- advance and develop strategy for the ongoing mission of the CiA;
- accept and approve the financial accounts of the CiA;
- set the annual budget of the CiA and monitor it to ensure proper use of all monies. The budget will be set to maintain, at year end, a reserve sufficient to cover all agreed salaries and associated costs, but not exceeding a full year's expenditure of the CiA.
- review and give oversight to special community projects and other CiA-supported groups, ensuring that monies received from churches for these purposes are distributed accordingly.

The first meeting of the Governing Body each year will be the Annual General Meeting, which will be open to all.

An **Executive Team** consisting of:

- the Administrator
- the CiA Treasurer/member of the Finance Committee
- the Governing Body Chair (see above)
- an additional voting member of the Governing Body elected at the AGM each year.

This team will not have a fixed pattern of meeting but will be available for consultation as needed by the Administrator, making decisions virtually (for example, by email) in most cases.

The role of the Executive Team will be:

- to enable decisions to be made between Governing Body for the work of the CiA to continue as agreed;
- to ensure the decisions of the Governing Body are implemented, according to previously agreed protocols;
- to support the Administrator in his/her work and act as a sounding board where clarification of tasks agreed by the Governing Body is needed;
- to work with the Administrator in preparing for Governing Body meetings, thereby ensuring that the Governing Body is able to discharge its responsibilities efficiently;
- to make urgent decisions as required between meetings of the Governing Body, with three member votes constituting a quorum for decisions to be taken;
NB: The Governing Body will set a limit on the financial costs of decisions taken by the Executive Team between GB meetings, this is currently £200.
- to call an extraordinary meeting of the Governing Body when an urgent decision is needed, which is beyond the remit of the Executive Team.

The **Staff Group** comprising:

- all the employed and voluntary leaders in the CiA member churches, including the Administrator.

Staff members will take it in turn to lead the monthly staff meetings. The Staff Group will generally meet monthly except August. The Staff will also attend meetings of the Governing Body.

The Staff Group will:

- pray for the town, CiA member churches and the mission of the CiA;
- offer mutual support through prayer and deepening relationships;
- engage in Bible study and theological discussion;
- feed ideas, suggestions and concerns to the Executive Team/Governing Body via the Administrator/Governing Body Chair.

Review of the Activities of the CiA

1. **Member churches and staff:** Much of the life and work of the CiA, and the individual churches, has resumed slowly in 2022 following the COVID-19 pandemic dating back to March 2020, with some people still reticent to attend church and activities in person.

There have been a few changes in the clergy over the past year: Revd Rachel Hughes was appointed as the new minister of Abingdon Baptist Church in November 2022. Revd Rebecca Peters left Peachcroft Christian Centre in December 2022 - a new minister is yet to be appointed. Nessa Watts left Christ Church in June 2022 having completed her term there. Andrew Gilmour and Ros Steel started their curacies at Christ Church in July 2022.

One new church has joined the CiA: the Lighthouse Parish, part of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, under the lead of Michael and Lillian Davies, joining:

Abingdon Baptist Church, Abingdon Community Church, Abingdon Vineyard Church, All Saints Church, Christ Church, Peachcroft Christian Centre, Quakers, Salvation Army, St Edmund's Church, St Helen's Church, St Michael's Church, St Nicolas' Church, Trinity Church

The Governing Body has seen a few changes in lay members:

- Chris Chris-Moore joined the GB as the lay rep for Abingdon Vineyard Church.
- Chris Chater replaced Margaret Hancox as the lay rep for St Edmunds RC Church - we are very grateful for Margaret's input and support for the CiA over the years she has been their representative
- Jane Cadogan stood down as the rep from St Michael's – no other rep has been appointed as yet.
- Sue Holligan replaced Julia Bishop as the lay rep for St Nicolas' Church.
- Ruth Savage replaced Sandra Pike as the lay rep of Christ Church.
- Liz Matthews stood down as the rep for the Quakers.

NB: No other volunteers have come forward to join the Finance Committee so this continues with just two members – the Administrator and the Treasurer.

2. **Task groups and associated projects:**

The CiA has continued to support a number of community projects and working groups that concentrate on specific areas of cooperation. These include:

- 35 Ock Street, a hospitality centre for the community offering a café and a listening ear, and meeting rooms for local groups and agencies.
- The Abingdon Bridge, which has continued to reach out to the youth of Abingdon, providing support, advice and guidance to an increasing number of vulnerable young people in the community.
- Abingdon Street Pastors who are out on the streets of Abingdon on Saturday nights
- The Christian Aid group in Abingdon held several fundraising activities as well as Christian Aid Week.
- The Christian Forum column continues to appear in the Abingdon Round & About monthly magazine under the direction of the CiA Administrator Debra Mcknight.
- Several exchange visits of the Church Twinning group have taken place – one to Abingdon and one to Schongau.
- The work of Desire continues in a slightly different format having been limited by a lack of youth workers.
- A 'virtual' Experience Easter was again organised by Trinity Learning.
- The Alpha launch-type event could not take place but various online Alpha courses took place.
- The work of Prayer Spaces in Abingdon schools is slowly starting up now the pandemic is largely over.

Communication: The CiA News and a newly launched website have continued under the direction of the CiA Administrator Debra Mcknight, while publication of the Christian Focus magazine has ceased until a new editorial team can be set up.

3. **United activities 2022**

January

Christian Aid had their annual New Year's Day walk which was self-directed. £880 + 197.50 GiftAid was raised for the Christian Aid Christmas Appeal. Christian Aid also organised a post-Christmas online quiz, which raised £690 + 162.50 GiftAid.

During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, no in-person events took place but a prayer leaflet was prepared by the CiA Administrator for use during the week instead of the usual midday prayers.

February

The CiA AGM took place.

March

The CiA Lent Lectures did not take place in person due high risk aversion among congregations but the CiA Administrator prepared a list of various online courses and other resources for people to follow at home as people so wished singly or in groups.

The World Day of Prayer service took place at the Salvation Army organised by the CiA Administrator and volunteers from the previous WDP committee. The service for 2022 was prepared by the women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland with the theme 'I know the plans I have for you'.

April

The procession of witness took place on Good Friday stopping in the Market Place to sing a hymn before proceeding to ST Nics for a united service led by Deacon Selina Nisbett.

TrinityLearning again ran a 'virtual' Easter Experience which allowed children to take part from their classrooms supported by resource packs and teacher packs.

May

The Christian Aid week activities took place with adaptations, raising just over £4000.

Christians across Abingdon were encouraged to join in 'prayer walking' as part of the Thy Kingdom Come initiative.

June

Abingdon's Fun in the Park event was replaced by the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in Rye Meadow in which various churches came together as normally done for Fun in the Park.

July

The South Abingdon Play & Activity Day event took place in Southern Town Park with Abingdon Vineyard and Abingdon Community churches taking part.

August

September

October

The Michaelmas fair service took place with Revd Kath Cooke leading.

Church Twinning ran their 'eco' event in Abingdon for visitors from twinned towns.

November

The Annual Bereavement Service took place at Christ Church in collaboration with the Footprints Bereavement group who usually hold an annual bereavement service for their members.

Several churches started offering warm spaces as part of the Warm Welcome campaign.

December

People from all the churches gathered in the Market Square to sing carols and give out leaflets detailing all the Christmas services taking place across Abingdon.

3. Finance

The agreed policy on the General Fund is to limit the retained balance to a maximum of one year's expenditure, but maintain an amount that covers all agreed salaries and associated costs for the year ahead. The balance at 31 Dec 2022 was £6,545.70. This includes £45.16 being held as funds for the World Day of Prayer.

The expenditure for Community Projects is normally funded by church donations indicating that only a small balance in hand is necessary (about £3k). A new three-year phase of funding to cover 2021-2023 was agreed in 2020. £1,000 per annum was awarded to Thrive but in 2022 their remit changed and they no longer had a dedicated youth worker in South Abingdon. After a discussion, the GB members agreed that Thrive would not receive further grants and £500 extra would be sent to the Abingdon Bridge and £500 held over. Therefore the grants paid in 2022 were:

- The Abingdon Bridge £2500 for their work with disadvantaged young people
- DESIRE youth network £1000 to help run schools weeks and larger events
- DESIRE prayer spaces £150 to provide prayer spaces in schools
- Abingdon Street Pastors £1000 to fund their ongoing help for people out at night
- Experience Easter £750 to help school children and their teachers explore the Easter story
- Salvation Army Drop-in Centre £100 to provide drop-in centre for the homeless and needy

Officers

We would like to record our thanks to all our officers in 2022, for all the work that they have put into this aspect of their Christian work:

Debra McKnight	(Administrator)
Linda King	(Treasurer)
Revd Dr Charles Miller	(Rolling GB Chairs)
Revd Keith Dunnett	
Pastor Ellie Ball	
Revd Rebecca Peters	
Marion Haynes	(GB Member elected as member of Executive Team)
The Finance Committee:	Treasurer and Administrator

February 2023