

Church Council Update – The following update reports on the discussion at the June and July CC meeting. There is not normally a CC in August, so the next one will be during early September. If you have any questions or comments on any items covered here, please speak to Peter or speak to any CC member.

Sunday Club

We met with Marion Haynes who shared with us about the work of Sunday Club. Attendance is slowly increasing at Sunday Club which is encouraging. If you are a parent of a Sunday Club member we would encourage you to remember to let one of the leaders know if your children will be absent as this helps greatly with planning. Additional Youth Bibles have been purchased for the Munchers group as well as Scripture Union prayer books for leaders to use. Hazel Beaver has been a leader for more than 17 years and is stepping down at the end of this term. We are greatly blessed by the dedication of all who work with our children and we want to say a particular thank you to Hazel for her years of work. There is now an urgent need for leaders. We are looking for at least 2 leaders at the moment, one of whom we would like to be a man. Please seriously and prayerfully consider joining the team of leaders. You would be asked to be available for no more than one week a month although more regular commitment would be a bonus. Training and support will be available. Please consider if you can help. If you would like more information please speak to Marion Haynes or to Peter.

Building Tithe Fund – Following the wonderful news that the building has been fully paid for the Building Tithe Fund has been launched. We spent quite some time considering the administration and the applications that we received for support from this fund in the first round of grants. Many thanks to all those who took the trouble to submit bids. The following has been agreed.

- Target for the fund is £60,000 (10% of the building cost).
- The fund has been primed from general church funds so we anticipate that £20,000 can be given away now.
- The criteria we will look for in choosing bids to support will be as follows, in no particular order.
 - Involves building work
 - Seeks to build community
 - Seeks to bring church growth
 - Has a Christian ethos
 - We have established or easily establishable links with the charity for updates and feedback
 - There is a sound charitable status
- As funds accumulate we will call for more bids.

The following projects will be supported

- Abingdon Baptist Church – Building extension
- Oxford Young Steps Youth Project
- Viva – Children at Risk in Zimbabwe or Nepal
- OYS Jeevan Jyot Society – Hospital and Orphanage Project – Punjab India

Church Away Day – This will take place on Saturday 2nd October at Ardington between Rowstock and Wantage. The venue has been chosen to be within easy access of Abingdon and so we would encourage as many as possible to come, especially if you have not been able to attend Church Weekends in the past. The day will include time for worshipping, learning and having fun together. It provides a great opportunity for us to get to know one another better as a church family, so please put this in your diary and make it a priority – booking forms are out now. If you have any questions please see Noreen Carvel.

Alpha – The Alpha course at the Christian Centre this autumn will be slightly different to previous years as it will be shortened to 7 sessions plus an Away Day this year. It will deal with the basics of belief and will use the Alpha course that has been adapted for students. Now is the time to be thinking and praying about who you need to invite to come along and of course help will be needed for catering, childcare and with the Alpha small groups. The Church in Abingdon Alpha Supper will also be different this year as it will be taking place in the Dil Raj restaurant in Ock Street. This event provides an opportunity to introduce people to Alpha and acts as a publicity focus for the many Alpha Courses taking place in and around Abingdon. Please remember the organising group in your prayers.

Pastoral Care and Homegroups – we received a report on pastoral care, including the very successful marriage Course which has recently concluded, within the church and an update on Homegroups. If you are interested in joining a Homegroup please speak to Peter.

Youth Work – We were delighted to hear more news of the progress of work among a small group of the 14-2-17 age group at and after the youth café. We are pleased to have been awarded a significant grant from the Youth Evangelism Fund to run a basketball tournament and outreach event for local youth groups. This will probably take place in February next year.

Work with Immerse, church based young people, is still a challenge. We are seeking to build more solid and consistent friendships within this group and with the group of young adults attached to the church through informal social events across the summer before considering what the next step should be in September.

Criminal records checks – You may have heard on the news that changes to the vetting system have been temporarily suspended. New CRB forms are now available and CRB checks will continue to be required for everyone who works with our children's and young people's groups.