



ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

2014

Somerset Churches Together is a Registered Charity No. 1133175

www.sctog.org.uk

**SOMERSET CHURCHES TOGETHER
ANNUAL REPORT 2014**

Aims and Purposes

Somerset Churches Together seeks to be a visible sign of the Churches commitment to one another, to support local ecumenism, to serve as Sponsoring Body for Local Ecumenical Partnerships and to encourage shared worship, service and evangelism.

Other aims include the facilitation of early ecumenical consultation, the development of good relationships with other faith communities and the support of the churches in their response to the needs of society.

Objectives and Activities

In order to advance the Christian religion for the benefit of the public, Somerset Churches Together seeks to support the common Christian witness of its member churches, to provide ways in which they may consult with one another and work and pray for Christian unity.

In accordance with the requirements of charitable status and with its Constitution, Somerset Churches Together Standing Committee has considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when planning activities for the year. In particular, it has considered the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

County Ecumenical Officer's Report

Support of Local Ecumenism

During the year I attended meetings and events organised by Churches Together groups or Leaders' groups in Bath, Batheaston, Bridgwater, Burnham & Highbridge, Crewkerne, Frome, Keynsham & Saltford, Midsomer Norton, Minehead, Pill, Somerton, Taunton, Timsbury, Wellington, Weston-super-Mare and Wrington. These included both special events and regular meetings. I also met with various individuals and attended events organised by denominational groups and other organisations around particular issues such as New Housing Areas and Church Planting.

The Monthly Update now goes out to over 200 people, most of whom forward it to many others, and continues to be widely appreciated. The Update and the events Diary are both available on the SCT website thanks to our excellent website manager, Ian Freemantle.

Our AGM and Forum this year were held at the Salvation Army citadel in Bridgwater where, despite the flood crisis which was going on at the time, we were welcomed with warm hospitality. The theme was Ecumenical Spirituality and we were imaginatively led by the Revd Annie Naish from Lee Abbey and four young people from the community there, each of whom came from a different country. Afterwards participants said that they felt richly blessed and challenged by the speakers and enthused to move forward in their work.

In 2013 we held our first Mini-Forum and we organised another primarily for churches in another North Somerset this November. The theme was 'The Rags & Riches of our Traditions: Exploring Receptive Ecumenism' and we were hugely helped by the Revd Rowena Francis who moved to Somerset to take up her new ministry during the year.

Strategy Document

Following the Standing Committee's Away Day in late 2013, in which words such as 'encourage', 'listen' and 'communicate' came to the fore, our Chair drew up the following strategy document:

Somerset Churches Together – "Serving the Local"

What should be the strategy and make-up of our Ecumenical leadership and co-operation through to 2020?

1. Suggested drivers behind what we do:
Building up confidence among local teams of church leaders;
Offering encouragement to local churches;
Aiming to help bring benefit rather than create burdens for local churches as they seek to engage in Mission.

Thinking of an airport as a model to illustrate our role, SCT should strive to be more like a Terminal rather than an airline i.e. facilitating the work of others.

2. Possible Key Tasks for SCT:
Looking where energy is and supporting it;
Identifying what we might better

- do together
- publically speak about together
- PAY FOR together?

Identifying where there is energy from which others might benefit and /or be able to build on;
Encouraging churches to be co-operative rather than competitive;
Facilitating mini-strategies/fostering networks;
Nurturing trust and co-operation among Church Leaders who then become models for others who lead.

ONLY DOING /SPEAKING TOGETHER WHEN WE JUDGE IT IS BETTER DONE TOGETHER

3. Delivering on agreed Key Tasks:
Establishing that any proposals we have are checked out as being helpful to local churches;
THEN:
Undertaking an audit of what churches are currently doing within their local communities;
Encouraging Local groups of churches to explore where/how they can add value to Community?

Sharing information about up and running projects which might inspire action elsewhere.

4. Questions which follow on from 1-3:
WHAT resources do we require to deliver on this strategy?
HOW do we best deliver it?

5. Regularly examining our activities:
As SCT examining our plans and reviewing our activities against the question
"What contribution is / has this particular piece of work made to the building of the Kingdom?"

This was discussed first by the Church Leaders and then by the Standing Committee and adopted as a guidance paper. Our aim of facilitating the ecumenical work of local churches is particularly important – the model being that of an airline terminal which enables people's journey and where they intersect, rather than an airline which actually takes them on their journey. Our Forums and Mini-Forums are key ways of implementing this vision.

Local Ecumenical Partnerships

In 2014 the existing Covenants between churches in Combe St Nicholas and in Horton were recognised as LEPs. We also discovered that there is an eleventh LEP in Somerset. It is Rode Chapel and has been in existence since 1997 but, being close to the Wiltshire border, was formerly listed there. We are very happy to welcome them and so Somerset Churches Together is now their Sponsoring Body.

The LEP in Locking Castle celebrated its tenth anniversary this year and is thriving under the care of its new minister, the Revd. Tom Yacomeni. This year St Andrew's Bournville has been very pleased to welcome the Revd Tim Erridge as Priest in Charge.

A third LEP Gathering was held on 7th June this year. Although only four LEPs were represented (including Horton) we welcomed representatives from two places which are exploring closer ecumenical ties – Congresbury & Banwell and Timsbury. Each group told the story of 'where we are on our pilgrimage' which led to a rich sharing of ideas. These included:

- the role of social media as a communication tool for churches;
- that jointly serving the local community is frequently the way in which the deepest kind of unity is formed;
- the movement away from national ecumenical initiatives towards those which are more local and relational;
- Reflection on Acts 2 and how, after Pentecost, the church grew as a result of what the believers did.

We will be holding a similar gathering on 18th April 2015 in Sandford.

Churches and Society

Following the devastating floods at the start of the year, the SCT Standing Committee held an important meeting with the Senior Force Chaplain to Avon &

Somerset Constabulary about the Major Emergency Plan. He said that the crisis had tested those involved to the limits but there had been a great team of volunteers and co-operation with the Salvation Army had worked well. There had been many other offers of help, including some from Islamic groups, but it was not possible to deploy people from outside the area. There is a continuing need for pastoral care for those still experiencing anger, fear, homelessness, insurance problems and long-term farming or business implications.

The MEP now has its base with the Diocese of Clifton but there is a need for better liaison with the Churches and this should include continuity of care. Ways need to be found to better equip not only clergy but also communities to provide help in emergencies. There are currently 86 trained MEP volunteers but more are sought; the greatest need is for good listening skills.

The same meeting also discussed the need for 'Appropriate Adults' to accompany any children or vulnerable adults who are detained in Police Custody. Such people are hard to find and the need is now even greater with the new Custody Suites having opened in Bridgwater and Keynsham. Recently retired people, both clergy and lay, would be ideal for such a role and also for many other volunteer opportunities to put their faith to work in practical ways.

There has been a Church Tent at the Glastonbury Festival since 1968 and SCT has been involved for the past ten years. The organisers' guiding statement is: "As part of the Christian Church we intend to demonstrate the love of Christ in Action by offering festival goers a warm welcome, space to reflect and a willingness to listen." The steering group for the Church Tent and the volunteers come from a wide variety of churches in Somerset. There are worship opportunities every day in the tent and it offers a safe space for any who need to sleep, talk or just find some peace.

Church Leaders

Somerset Churches Together has continued to provide a meeting place for the Church Leaders in Somerset and enabled its Presidents to meet together twice in 2014. For the first time in over five years there is a Somerset Church Leaders' 24-hour retreat in January 2015, led by Roy Searle of the Northumbria Community.

The Revd Ward Jones will step down as Chair of SCT in February 2015 and we are delighted that his place will be taken by Major Ian Harris, Commander of the South Western Division of the Salvation Army.

Health Chaplaincy - Fay Wilson-Rudd writes: Times are a'changing

Way back in 1999, Somerset Churches Together, through the local Churches Together group, invited me to take up a post with Somerset Partnership which included visiting two mental health in-patient wards (48 beds), a Drop-in Centre and 3 day hospitals all in 3.5 hours per week.

By 2014 the scenario was quite different. Somerset Partnership had become a Foundation Trust and acquired most of the activities of the Primary Care Trust, including managing 13 Community Hospitals, each with a different arrangement for Chaplaincy.

Over the last 18 months I worked at consolidating Chaplaincy across SomPar's area. There have been many significant changes: all Chaplains are now paid directly by SomPar and are required to comply with Trust policies. It has also been necessary to review and, when appropriate, due to the reduction in bed numbers, to revise the number of hours allocated to Chaplains. This has been done in accordance with national guidelines.

At the end of October the Revd John Rothwell took up the fulltime post of overseeing Chaplaincy across 13 Community Hospitals and 11 Mental Health Wards. In addition he will be working to ensure that the links with the two District Hospitals (Taunton and Yeovil) are also developed in a more consistent way thereby ensuring greater integration of spiritual care for patients, not just throughout their hospital stays, but in the community as well.

I am looking forward to a fulfilling retirement after 15 exciting, rewarding but challenging years.

Christian Aid – Fiona Daborn writes:

Christian Aid would like to thank everyone in Somerset who was involved in supporting our work through Giving, Acting and Praying in 2014.

Highlights of 2014 included

- In March we were delighted to welcome Sarjon Toma from Iraq who shared with us about the work of Christian Aid partner REACH at events across the south west, including Taunton
- In September we launched the new Haiti "I Witness" photo exhibition in Minehead
- In October we brought out our walking boots for a sponsored walk along the canal towpath Bridgwater – Taunton
- Starting in November, we were delighted to receive match funding from the UK Government for our Christmas appeal, meaning that every pound we raised became two! The appeal highlighted the inequalities in healthcare provision for mothers and babies in rural Kenya and a range of new resources were produced including an Advent Journey booklet and nativity scene collection box!

2014 was also an active year for campaigning in Somerset:

- Climate justice – supporters all over the county took part in the Hunger for Justice weekend in October organising events in churches and town centres and inviting their MP to join in.
- Tax justice – this Autumn Christian Aid partnered with the Wells Mission Development group to organise a tour of the film *The UK Gold*. The film was shown in Bath, Clevedon, Bridgwater, Crewkerne, Wells and Taunton and at the time of writing more than 270 people had seen the production. Significant progress has been made in the tax campaign with a public register of companies now being made law.

2014 has been a challenging year; supporters across Somerset showed their compassion for those in need, responding to an unprecedented number of emergency appeals this year including Gaza, Iraq, Syria and, most recently, Ebola.

We look forward to 2015, bringing a fresh focus on climate change, new ideas for Christian Aid week and a re-commitment to challenge poverty as we mark the 70th anniversary of Christian Aid.

CAFOD – David Brinn writes:

It has been a busy and fruitful year for CAFOD Clifton. Our supporters have been very active raising money and campaigning on behalf of our brothers and sisters in the Global South. The massive response to our appeal for the people of The Philippines, following the typhoon, has been followed by generous responses for the people of Syria, Gaza and those countries affected by the Ebola virus outbreak. Many parishes and individuals organised petition signings around the situation in Gaza.

Our Lent appeal focussed on Sierra Leone, and we were very lucky to be able to welcome partner Patrick Jamiru from Kenema to talk to supporters around the Diocese. As always they enjoyed meeting him and hearing about the work which their donations are supporting. He, his team and their partners remain very much in our prayers as that area of Sierra Leone has been badly hit by the Ebola virus. In the summer we welcomed more partners, this time from Northern Ethiopia. This led to an increase in engagement by parishes with our Connect2 scheme.

We held a very successful football tournament during The World Cup for Primary Schools, which was won by St Mary's Bath. As we look ahead to the next year, alongside our usual work we are starting a three year campaign on Climate Change. Called *One Climate One World*, it will have various strands to it including actions linked to the forthcoming General Election.

Hopes for the Future

All over the country and, it seems, in every denomination ministers and pastors are becoming increasingly stretched by additional duties and this is certainly evident in Somerset. One solution seems to lie in increasing lay and voluntary involvement in various kinds of pastoral ministry. This is already very evident in initiatives such as Food Banks and Street Pastors but there are scores of other opportunities including many kinds of chaplaincy roles. SCT hopes to put together some kind of 'package' of such opportunities with which to challenge Christians in the county.

During the year we have been enriched by the idea of Receptive Ecumenism. This starts from the premise of two questions 'What does this Church tradition need to receive from others to be more like Christ and more authentically church?' and the reverse: 'What does this Church tradition have to offer to the whole body of Christ that it may become more faithful to God?' These questions can lead to creative exploration of some of the sharpest issues which cause tension and division within and between our Church traditions. We would like to channel this kind of experience and level of commitment into Churches Together groups all over the county and also 'expand our walls' beyond the people who are already committed to the ecumenical vision.

Financial Review – Imogen Taylor writes:

The Bath & Wells Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) provides financial and accountancy support services to Somerset Churches Together. Services include the preparation of the annual budget, maintenance of accounting records, preparation of the annual accounts, notification of annual subscriptions to member bodies, payment of salary and expenses to the County Ecumenical Officer (CEO), payment of all supplier invoices and other expenses. The fee for such services from the DBF in 2014 was £500 (2013 - £500).

Mr Nick May resigned as Honorary Treasurer in October 2014 and Mrs Imogen Taylor was appointed in his place. The Honorary Treasurer's role includes the monitoring of actual income and expenditure versus budget, also the provision of advice to the Standing Committee on any financial issue.

2014 income was £18,886 (2013 - £19,797) and expenditure was £18,167 (2013 - £19,388) resulting in a surplus for the year of £719 (2013 -£409). The budget for the year had assumed a small deficit.

Income decreased in the year as not all subscriptions were collected from member bodies; Bank interest was also reduced. Reduced expenditure of 6.3 % year-on-year primarily related to lower costs of conferences and meetings. Funds held at 31 December 2014 totalled £27,155 (31 December 2013 - £26,436). Funds held at 31 December 2014 represented 15.8 months' budgeted future expenditure cover. The reserves policy is to hold sufficient funds to cover 12 months' future expenditure.

The 2014 annual accounts have been reviewed by an independent examiner whose signed report is available to members.

Structure, Governance and Management

Membership of the Standing Committee consists of one of the Presidents, serving Denominational Ecumenical Officers or their equivalents for the area covered by Somerset Churches Together, one representative from each of the member Churches which does not have a Denominational Ecumenical Officer, one representative of the Social Responsibility Group of the Diocese of Bath and Wells, three members elected by the Forum and the Honorary Treasurer. Members of Standing Committee are the trustees of the charity. The Standing Committee met five times during the year with an average level of attendance of 67%. The County Ecumenical Officer attends and services meetings of the Standing Committee in a non-voting capacity.

The membership of the Forum consists of the Presidents of Somerset Churches Together, representatives from each of the member churches, Standing Committee, representatives from local Churches Together groups affiliated to Somerset Churches Together, representatives from Local Ecumenical Partnerships sponsored by Somerset Churches Together and representatives from the various Bodies in Association. The Forum met once in February and included the Annual General Meeting. The meetings are open to all churches in the ecumenical area.

Administrative Information

Somerset Churches Together covers the geographical area of the Anglican Diocese of Bath and Wells. The correspondence address is 3 Champford Mews, Wellington, TA21 8JW and the website address is www.sctog.org.uk.

Somerset Churches Together is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission (Registered Number 1133175).

Standing Committee members who have served from 1 January 2014 until the date this report was approved are:

The Revd Ward Jones (President)
The Revd Brian Milloy (West of England Baptist Association)
The Revd Clive Jennings (Bath and Wells Church of England Diocese)
The Revd Peter Mortlock (Bristol Methodist District)
The Revd Ivan Selman (Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District)
The Revd Michael Robertson (Clifton Roman Catholic Diocese)
The Revd Tim Richards (United Reformed Church)
Major Margaret Fozzard (Salvation Army)
Ruth Jackson-Gash (Religious Society of Friends)
Mr David Maggs (Bath and Wells Church of England Diocese)
Cheryl Govier (Church of England)
Mrs Emma Kendall (Church of England)
The Revd Angela Steele (United Reformed Church)
Mr Nick May (Treasurer [until October])
Mrs Imogen Taylor (Treasurer [from October])

Forum Members who have served from 1 January 2014 until the date this report was approved are:

Presidents of Somerset Churches Together

The Revd Nigel Coles (West of England Baptist Association)
The Revd Nigel Manges (South West Baptist Association)
The Rt Revd Peter Hancock (Bath & Wells Church of England Diocese) from June
The Rt Revd Peter Maurice (Bath & Wells Church of England Diocese)
The Revd A Ward Jones (Bristol Methodist District)
The Revd Graham Thompson (Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District) from Sept
The Rt Revd Declan Lang (Diocese of Clifton)
The Revd Ruth Whitehead (United Reformed Church)
Major Ian Harris (Salvation Army)

Representatives from each of the Member Churches

Margaret Gibbins (Bath and Wells Church of England Diocese)
The Revd Nicholas Maddock (Bath and Wells Church of England Diocese)
The Revd Dr John Emmett (Bristol Methodist District)
Mr David Parkin (Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District)
Mr Tim Horten-Smith (Diocese of Clifton)
The Revd David Brinn (Diocese of Clifton)
The Revd Tim Richards (United Reformed Church)
The Revd Peter Henderson (United Reformed Church)
Zoe Ainsworth-Grigg (Religious Society of Friends)

Fr Seraphim Johnson (Orthodox Church)

Representatives of Local Ecumenical Partnerships sponsored by Somerset Churches Together

The Revd Rachel Borgars (Batheaston Local Ecumenical Partnership)
Susan Dare (Christchurch Clevedon Local Ecumenical Partnership)
Jan Welling (Sandford Local Ecumenical Partnership)

Representatives of Local Churches Together Groups affiliated to Somerset Churches Together

Julia Ratcliffe (Backwell)
Sarah Sheppard (Bath)
Geoff Hudd (Bath – North East)
Revd Frank Fisher (Castle Cary and Ansford)
Kim Anderson (Clevedon)
The Revd Jonathan Morris (Crewkerne)
Helen Wade (Glastonbury)
Mr Chris Lawson (Minehead)
Beryl Fedder (Peasedown St John)
Eleanor Jackson (Radstock)
Adrian Prior-Sankey (Taunton)
Isabel Ward (Wellington)
Gwen Cox (Weston-super-Mare)

The Standing Committee

Representatives of Bodies in Association

Roger Allen (Churches Together in Greater Bristol)
Fiona Daborn (Christian Aid)
Fay Wilson-Rudd (Mental Health Chaplaincy)
David Brinn (CAFOD)

Approved by the Somerset Churches Together Forum on 12th February 2015 and signed on their behalf by the Revd Ward Jones (Chairman Somerset Churches Together)

Somerset Churches Together

Income & Expenditure - Actual

	2014	2013
	£	£
Income		
Denominational receipts		
Anglican	9018	9,018
Baptist Union of Great Britain	730	1,423
Methodist	3409	3,409
Religious Society of Friends	95	95
Roman Catholic	4178	4,178
Salvation Army	285	285
United Reformed Church	474	474
	18,189	18,882
Conference & other receipts	30	50
Bank Interest	102	215
Voluntary Donations	565	650
Total Income	18,886	19,797
Expenditure		
Conferences and Meetings	929	1,982
Office, Secretarial & Administration	1,329	1,199
Equipment & Insurance	264	231
Staff Costs		
CEO Salary & NI	12,872	13,094
CEO Expenses	2,422	2,532
Subscriptions	350	350
Total Expenditure	18,167	19,388
Surplus/(Deficit) for year	719	409

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

	2014	2013
	£	£
Funds Held		
Balance brought forward 1 January	26,436	26,027
Surplus/(Deficit) for year	719	409
Balance carried forward 31 December	27,155	26,436
Represented by:		
Nat West Current Account	27,274	26,622
Creditors	(119)	(186)
	27,155	26,436

Although not a legal requirement, these accounts will have been independently examined in time for the AGM and approval by the Trustees on 12 February 2015.

Somerset Churches Together - 2014 Actual vs Budget

Income & Expenditure

	YTD		
	Actual	Budget	Variance
	£	£	£
Income			
Denominational receipts:			
Anglican	9,018	9,018	0
Baptist Union of Great Britain:			
SW Baptist	365	365	0
WEBA & BU	365	1,058	(693)
Methodist			
Bristol	2,387	2,387	0
Plymouth	1,022	1,022	0
Religious Society of Friends	95	95	0
Roman Catholic	4,178	4,178	0
Salvation Army	285	285	0
United Reformed Church	474	474	0
	18,189	18,882	(693)
Conference & other receipts	30	300	(270)
Bank Interest	102	200	(98)
Voluntary Donations	565	500	65
Total Income	18,886	19,882	(996)
Expenditure			
Equipment & Insurance			
Computer & internet	120	250	130
Insurance	144	125	(19)
Publicity		100	100
Conferences and Meetings			
Conferences and meetings	722	975	253
Travel	46	225	179
Speakers' expenses	90	300	210
Office, Secretarial & Administration			
Office service charge	409	400	(9)
Accountancy	500	500	0
Payroll agency	138	135	(3)
Postage & delivery	283	175	(108)
Other		70	70
CEO:			
Salary	12,704	12,750	46
ER NI	168	700	532
Travel & Subsistence	1,767	1,750	(17)
Telephone - mobile & internet	118	150	32
Training and Development	380	300	(80)
Hospitality	158	200	42
Other		100	100
Committee Members' expenses	72	600	528
Subscriptions	350	320	(30)
Total Expenditure	18,167	20,125	1,958
Surplus / (Deficit) for year	£719	£(243)	£962
Cash Reserves:			
Brought Forward	£26,436	£21,400	£5,036
Carried Forward	£27,155	£21,157	£5,998

No. of months' expenditure cover

15.8 based on 2015 Budget

Independent Examiner's Report to the members/trustees of Somerset Churches Together (registered charity no. 1133175)

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2014 which are set out on page 10 and 11 .

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and Independent Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners section 145(b)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention:

1. which give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with s.130 of the 2011 Act; or
 - to prepare accounts which accord with these accounting records have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



F.C.A

John Cridland FCA
Mill Cottage
Croscombe
Wells

26 January 2015