



**ANNUAL REPORT AND  
ACCOUNTS**

**2015**

**Somerset Churches Together is a Registered Charity No. 1133175**

**[www.sctog.org.uk](http://www.sctog.org.uk)**

## **SOMERSET CHURCHES TOGETHER** **ANNUAL REPORT 2015**

### **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*

In May of this year, Gabrielle Grace concluded her work as the County Ecumenical Officer. The first words of this report must be to thank her for all her enthusiastic work and support of ecumenism in Somerset over the previous 4 years.

In June Major Alan Dixon of The Salvation Army was appointed to succeed Gaby and commenced work on the 21<sup>st</sup> June.

During the early part of the year Gaby continued to attend meetings and events organised by Churches Together groups or Leaders' groups in numerous places, as well as meeting with various individuals and attending events organised by denominational groups. She produced the monthly newsletter which continued to maintain a healthy readership.

Since my appointment in June I have visited Churches Together groups in Backwell, Batheaston, Castle Cary, Chard, Clevedon, Crewkerne, Keynsham and Saltford, Minehead, Paulton, Pill Covenant Group, Wellington, Weston-Super-Mare, as well as the breakfast meeting of the Taunton B! Group and a planning group meeting for the Glastonbury Festival. These included both special events

and regular meetings. I have also met with various individuals and attended events organised by denominational groups and other organisations.

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 is available on the SCT website thanks to our excellent website manager, Ian Freemantle.

At the request of Churches Together in England Somerset Churches Together prepared a response to the consultation document *A New Framework for Ecumenism*.

Our AGM and Forum this year were held at the Standerwick Centre, Frome Market. The theme was *Who Is My Neighbour? Community and Chaplaincy*. There were a variety of presentations: chaplaincy to the farming community; town centre and retail and the elderly; giving examples of the theme many noting that they felt chaplaincy was a good expression of being 'the Church without walls' Afterwards participants said they felt richly blessed and challenged by the speakers and enthused to move forward in their work.

In 2015 we held another Mini-Forum, organised primarily for churches in West Somerset. The theme was *'Together in Action; Church and Community Working Together* The report of the event records "This was a day of creative encounters. 100 people, between them connected to at least 15 different churches from across West Somerset and 25 different organisations providing support and initiatives to people in this area". I would express my thanks to the organising committee for arranging an excellent event.

#### *Local Ecumenical Partnerships*

Locking Castle LEP - Deed of Variation

The revised document has been drawn up by the lawyers and agreed by the three denominations concerned.

The Methodist and URC churches in Somerton have both voted on the proposal to unite in the Methodist building. The proposal was passed unanimously by the Methodist Council and by sixteen votes to three in the URC meeting. Plans are in hand for them to unite as a single congregation LEP on Pentecost Sunday 2016.

A fourth LEP Gathering was held on 18 April in Sandford. Although only five LEPs were represented, the encounter with each other was helpful. Each group told the story of 'where we are on our pilgrimage' before engaging in a conversation about 'What is 'church'? This led to a rich sharing of ideas. These included:

- It is not just Sunday morning worship but it includes activities such as messy church, young people's clubs, coffee mornings etc.
- Change can be very hard for the elderly and, in particular, those living with dementia who need familiarity.
- In most village churches the congregations are largely elderly and there is little capacity to meet conflicting needs.
- The need for vision

#### *Churches and Society*

Following discussions at the Church Leaders meeting's a small sub-group has been formed to consider new housing areas and faith schools. An initial meeting of the working group held in November identified three potential areas for church engagement;

1. The need to engage with planners, developers, LAs and others so the church can be advocates for a community that doesn't yet exist.
2. Incarnational ministry.
3. Working for the long term – including flexible mission engagement

### *Glastonbury Festival*

There has been a Church Tent at the Glastonbury Festival since 1968 and SCT has been involved for the past eleven 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. In 2016 it is hoped to expand and enhance the work already undertaken. 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 the year. Their 24-hour retreat (the first for many years) in January, under the leadership of Roy Searle of the Northumbria Community. proved to be a time of spiritual enrichment.

The Revd Ward Jones stepped down as Chair of SCT in February and was succeeded by Major Ian Harris, Divisional Commander of the South Western Division of the Salvation Army.

*Health Chaplaincy* - Rev. John Rothwell writes: Times are a'changing .....

Fay Wilson-Rudd retired at the end of October 2014 after fifteen years of dedicated service, hugely valued by the patients on the wards where she served. My time had started just a few days earlier with a service of licensing, by the newly consecrated Bishop of Bath and Wells, at the Trust's training centre in Bridgwater.

During the year a number of other, part-time, chaplains were appointed at South Petherton, Bridgwater, Chard, and Crewkerne. The model of chaplaincy provision at the mental health units and the community hospitals continues unchanged, but the service is beginning to look outwards. The Reverend Doris Goddard, the new chaplain at Bridgwater, is developing a service at Wessex House (the recently reopened unit for young people with a range of mental health needs); The Reverend Christopher Rowley, our chaplain at Dene Barton, is now supporting neurological rehabilitation patients in the care of the Taunton & Somerset N.H.S. Foundation Trust in their newly opened unit there; and

opportunities are being explored to support those patients who are being cared for by the Partnership, in their home, at the end of their lives, and who have no other source of spiritual support. Specifically, this is being done through local task groups which are introducing Advance Care Planning, and through the county-wide best practice group for end of life care. Eventually, we hope to support mental health patients based in the community, rather than at in-patient units, but resources at present could not sustain this.

The trust is now well into "Integration Phase 2" following the assimilation of the community hospitals and health services into the mental health and social care trust in 2011. Organisationally the chaplaincy now resides in the new East Division reporting to management based in Frome Community Hospital. We have had good management support here during the year, not least with funding for our new twice-yearly gatherings for all the chaplains and chaplaincy volunteers – the inaugural meeting at Monks Yard last June being an excellent opportunity to foster collaboration between chaplains from the different areas of the trust, and to learn together.

Throughout the N.H.S. cost pressures are becoming even more severe, but the Partnership has fared significantly better than many trusts. Within the chaplaincy there are many opportunities for developing the service such as the health campus at Shepton Mallet. Volunteers will be key in helping us to develop the service – and I should be delighted to hear from anyone who feels a call to this type of ministry in a secular, diverse healthcare organisation.

*Christian Aid* – Fiona Daborn writes:

Thank you to all our Somerset supporters for your generosity during 2015.

#### 1. Emergency Appeals launched 2015

##### Refugee Crisis Appeal

- In August 2015, responding to the growing and desperate crisis across parts of Europe, we launched our Refugee Crisis Appeal. The funds raised through this appeal will be divided between our ACT Alliance partners' work in Serbia and Greece, our partners' work supporting Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Iraq, and our partners' work to support internally displaced Iraqis in Iraq (owing to the ongoing conflict there).
- Our Syria Crisis Appeal (launched in February 2013 and still active) funds our partners' work with Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Iraq. The appeal has raised more than £1million so far

##### Nepal Earthquake Appeal

- Launched April 2015 Through partners on the ground, Christian Aid has reached over 400,000 survivors across five of the hardest hit districts: Sindhupalchok, Rasuwa, Gorkha, Dhading and Lalitpur. So far, we've distributed 22,000 high quality tarpaulins and we've also supported 5,355 people with tool kits for shelter repair and reconstruction in time for the

monsoon season. We've provided shelter for 124,000 people from extreme weather conditions. 5,267 transitional shelters have been built, and we're now looking at insulating temporary shelters against the winter cold.

Churches and groups in Somerset raised a total for both appeals of over £19,000 by end of 2015

## 2.Christian Aid Week

Total raised in 2015 was over £11million with approximately 20,000 churches taking part. Thank you to everyone in Somerset who took part.

## 3.Campaigns

### Spring

As the Tax Dodging Bill campaign ramped up, we saw the success of another tax ask that began back in 2014. On 24 March, the UK Parliament passed new anti-secrecy laws, meaning tax dodgers now have one less place to hide. In March, constituents visited their MPs' offices asking them to vote in support of the Aid Bill. The result was that the aid commitments are enshrined in law, meaning guaranteed, reliable support from our government for the poorest communities for years to come.

### Summer

Thousands of us welcomed the new government with a mass lobby on climate change in June and more than 300 MPs were met by campaigners

### Autumn

In October The Riding Lights theatre company brought their popular new play "Baked Alaska" to a packed out Cheese and Grain in Frome, raising awareness of climate change. We ramped up the pressure on the UK Government to phase out coal, with campaigners from Christian Aid, Oxfam, WWF and Greenpeace collecting over 50,000 signatures and in November the UK announced the phase out of coal.

### Winter

In December, world leaders announced that they have agreed a climate deal. For the first time, almost 200 countries have come together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and deal with the impacts of climate change.

For further information, please contact Fiona Daborn, Regional Coordinator Somerset [fdaborn@christian-aid.org](mailto:fdaborn@christian-aid.org)

Together for Bristol – Roger Allen writes:

In November 2014 over 40 key leaders from the Christian community gathered to seek the next steps in the "unity for mission" movement in the Bristol region. The senior regional Church leaders invited leaders from the prayer networks and the spheres of life.

The leaders said they have been greatly encouraged by the growing "unity for mission" movement across the Christian community over many years, to help bring God's love to every aspect of life in the Bristol region.

Following on from the city-wide gatherings in Bristol at the last three Pentecosts (at Ashton Gate stadium, Castle Park and College Green), they wanted to gather key senior Church Leaders as well as Christian leaders from the prayer movements and the spheres of society (Sport, Health, Education and Young people, Family, Politics and Social Action, Arts, Media and Business and Workplace) to seek God for the next steps in the "unity for mission" movement in the Bristol region.

Several had recently attended a "Gather Global" conference which brought together Christians to share stories about what God is doing in towns and cities across the UK and world .

Roger Sutton, the co-ordinator of "Gather" recently wrote: "This is a move of the Spirit. All over the globe Church and Christian leaders in the cultural spheres are coming together in... unity for mission movements... seeking God in prayer and working together for the social, cultural and spiritual transformation of their cities and towns."

### *Hopes for the Future*

Last year's report stated "*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*". I am pleased to report that many community initiatives such as Food Banks and Street Pastors provide ministry opportunities that clearly impact on people's lives. SCT continues to support these opportunities.

When interviewed for the position of CEO I indicated that I was thrilled by the fact that mission was at the centre of SCT and from an ecumenical perspective consideration was being given to the idea of *Receptive Ecumenism*. *Receptive Ecumenism* starting 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?

In travelling around the county, meeting with individuals and groups, I want to emphasise mission (in its broadest sense) and receptive ecumenism whilst

- Affirming our unity – our oneness in Christ
- Embracing our diversity – different but having things in common
- Engaging the emerging reality – the changing ecumenical scene

### **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 2015 was £500 (2014 - £500).

Mrs Imogen Taylor, Head of Finance & Operations at the DBF , is Honorary Treasurer. The Honorary Treasurer' role includes the monitoring of actual receipts and payments versus budget together with the provision of advice to the Standing Committee on any financial issue.

In accordance with the new SORP2015 accounting regulations for charities, the accounts for 2015 (and associated comparative figures for 2014) have been accounted for on the receipts and payments basis. The costs to prepare accruals accounts in accordance with the SORP2015 regulations are considered to outweigh any benefits to readers of the accounts.

2015 receipts totalled was £19,419 (2014 - £18,886) and expenditure was £25,613 (2014 - £18,233) resulting in an excess of payments over receipts for the year of £6,193 (2014 – excess of receipts over payments £653 ). The budget for the year had assumed a an excess of receipts over payments of £6,843.

Receipts increased in the year as more subscriptions were collected from member bodies; Conference receipts and Voluntary donations also increased slightly.

Payments included £6,350 rebate to denominations which had paid their 2015 subscriptions in full. This was agreed to reduce the level of reserves held by the charity. Normal operating expenditure increased by 5.6 % year-on-year primarily related to higher costs of conferences and meetings offset by lower office and administration costs, although there were some expenses and charges outstanding at the year-end.

Cash balances held at 31 December 2015 totalled £21,081 (2014 - £27,274). Funds held at 31 December 2015 represented 11.5 months' budgeted future expenditure cover. The reserves policy is to hold sufficient funds to cover 6 months' future expenditure. The charity aims to reduce reserves to this level by restricting subscription increases over the next few years.

The 2015 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, 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 62%. 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, the Standing Committee, representatives from each of the member churches, 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 8 Applewood Close, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 0JG and the website address is [www.sctog.org.uk](http://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 2015 until the date this report was approved are:

The Revd Ward Jones (President) until February

Major Ian Harris (President) from February

The Revd Brian Milloy (West of England Baptist Association)

The Revd Tim Langdon (South West Baptist Association) since September

The Revd Clive Jennings (Bath and Wells Church of England Diocese) until November

The Revd Peter Mortlock (Bristol Methodist District)

The Revd Ivan Selman (Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District) until May

Glenys Allinson (Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District) from September

The Revd Michael Robertson (Clifton Roman Catholic Diocese) until September

The Revd Tim Richards (United Reformed Church)

Major Margaret Fozzard (Salvation Army)

Ruth Jackson-Gash (Religious Society of Friends) until May

Zoe Ainsworth-Grigg (Religious Society of Friends) from September

Mr David Maggs (Bath and Wells Church of England Diocese)

Cheryl Govier (Church of England)

The Revd Angela Steele (United Reformed Church) until May

The Revd Tim Richards (United Reformed Church) from May

Mrs Imogen Taylor

Forum Members who have served from 1 January 2015 until the date this report was approved are:

#### *Presidents of Somerset Churches Together*

The Revd Nigel Coles (West of England Baptist Association)

The Revd Gary Woodall (West of England Baptist Association)

The Revd Nigel Manges (South West Baptist Association)

The Rt Revd Peter Hancock (Bath & Wells Church of England Diocese)

The Rt Revd Ruth Worsley (Bath & Wells Church of England Diocese) from September

The Revd A Ward Jones (Bristol Methodist District) until June  
The Revd Jonathan Pye (Bristol Methodist District) from September  
The Revd Graham Thompson (Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District)  
The Rt Revd Declan Lang (Diocese of Clifton)  
Major Ian Harris (Salvation Army)  
The Revd Ruth Whitehead (United Reformed Church)

*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 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)  
The Very Revd Protopresbyter Kyrillos Leret Aldir (Orthodox Church)  
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)  
Revd Frank Fisher (Castle Cary and Ansford)  
Kim Anderson (Clevedon)  
The Revd Jonathan Morris (Crewkerne)  
Helen Wade (Glastonbury)  
Beryl Fedder (Peasedown St John)  
Catriona Woollorton (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, we:network)  
Fiona Daborn (Christian Aid)  
The Revd John Rothwell (Mental Health Chaplaincy)  
David Brinn (CAFOD) until September  
Elizabeth Baldwin (CAOD) since October

**Approved by the Somerset Churches Together Forum on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and signed on their behalf by the Revd Gary Woodall (President, Somerset Churches Together)**

<b>Somerset Churches Together</b>				
<b>Receipts and Payments Account</b>			<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
			<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Receipts</b>				
	Denominational receipts			
	Anglican		9018	9018
	Baptist Union of Great Britain		1058	730
	Methodist		3409	3409
	Religious Society of Friends		95	95
	Roman Catholic		4178	4178
	Salvation Army		285	285
	United Reformed Church		474	474
			<b>18,517</b>	<b>18,189</b>
	Conference & other receipts		155	30
	Bank Interest		107	102
	Voluntary Donations		640	565
	<b>Total Receipts</b>		<b>19,419</b>	<b>18,886</b>
<b>Payments</b>				
	Rebate to denominations		6,350	0
	Charity Activities			
	Conferences and Meetings		2,396	929
	Office, Secretarial & Administration		320	1,261
	Equipment & Insurance		264	264
	Staff Costs			
	CEO Salary & NI		12,629	12,872
	CEO Expenses		2,959	2,557
	CEO Pensions		346	0
	Subscriptions		350	350
			<b>19,263</b>	<b>18,233</b>
	<b>Total payments</b>		<b>25,613</b>	<b>18,233</b>
	<b>Excess of (payments over receipts)/receipts over payments</b>		<b>(6,193)</b>	<b>653</b>
	Cash at bank 1 January		27,274	26,622
	Cash at bank 31 December		<b>21,081</b>	<b>27,274</b>
<b>Statement of Assets and Liabilities</b>			<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
			<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
	<b>Cash funds- Bank current account</b>		<b>21,081</b>	<b>27,274</b>
<b>Current liabilities - creditors and accruals</b>				
	CEO expenses		272	85
	Accountancy charges		500	0
	Other		45	35
			<b>816</b>	<b>119</b>
Although not a legal requirement, these accounts will have been independently examined in time for the AGM and approval by the Trustees on 11 February 2016.				

## **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 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 which are set out on page 12.

### **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(5)(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.



John Cridland FCA  
Mill Cottage  
Croscombe  
Wells

22 January 2016