



ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

2011

Somerset Churches Together is a Registered Charity No. 1133175

www.sctog.org.uk

SOMERSET CHURCHES TOGETHER **ANNUAL REPORT 2011**

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

In early 2010 the County Ecumenical Officer, (CEO) Mr Robin Dixon retired. Appreciation for all his care and support of the churches and Church Leaders was acknowledged at 2011's Annual General Meeting on 27th January 2011.

The first half of the year was one of 'holding the fort'. All correspondence files and office equipment was held at St. Bonaventure's Church, Bristol in a room made available by the Revd. Michael Robertson. The Revd Elsie Howell handled correspondence for South Somerset, Taunton Deane and West Somerset and the Revd Tim Richards did the same for other areas. Links were maintained through our email lists, and publicity was satisfactory, given that there were fewer calls during this year.

Ms Gabrielle Grace was interviewed for the post of CEO in March and took up her appointment on 1st July. She was Commissioned at a special service in Street URC on September 22nd. The Methodist Church in Wellington has made its vestry available as her office in return for a modest financial contribution. The files and equipment were moved from Bristol to Wellington in early August.

Mr Ian Freemantle of 1stop PC solutions is still the person who updates the web-site; in December he completely re-designed and updated it.

CEO's Reflections

Overwhelmingly my first impressions of ecumenical life in Somerset are positive. During my first six months in post I visited LEPs, Churches Together groups and Ministry fraternals in Brean, Clevedon, Frome, Glastonbury, Horton, Langport, Minehead, Nailsea, Pill, Sandford, Somerton, Taunton and Wellington. In some cases, these visits were in response to specific requests for help or advice. In every group I found people who clearly trusted each other and enjoyed one another's company. There was both prayer and laughter – it felt healthy. Some are involved in big projects, others in more modest endeavours, but none seemed to be meeting 'just for the sake of it'. Of course it may be that invitations come more readily from the most active groups, and the number of places to which I have not yet been far outweighs those mentioned above, so my impression could be an overly 'rosy' one – I hope not.

The greater portion of my time so far has been spent in the less exciting tasks of administration and communication. I was fortunate that Robin Dixon left matters in very good order and that Elsie and Tim 'held the fort' very ably for well over a year. However, mailing lists and other data get out of date quickly so working on those has taken quite a lot of time.

Almost from the start I began sending monthly Updates to all members of the Forum and to secretaries of Churches Together groups and LEPs. Most communication is now by email but there are a significant minority of secretaries of LEPs and Churches Together groups who do not use email which makes the task more complicated.

After a break of 18 months, a Newsletter was sent by post at the start of Advent to about 500 recipients all over the county. A questionnaire was enclosed asking whether a regular Newsletter would be appreciated in addition to the monthly Updates and whether this could be by email; sadly few questionnaires were returned so the results were inconclusive.

Support of Local Ecumenism

In order to support the local churches in their ecumenical work, Somerset Churches Together had hoped to organise an Autumn Forum in September but this was cancelled owing to a clash with an important conference organised by the Diocese of Bath and Wells. However, plans are already underway for an all-day Forum on 29th September 2012 in Taunton.

Somerset Churches Together continued to support the churches in the development of a shared mission strategy on new housing developments in Yeovil and Weston-super-Mare. Full and early ecumenical consultation on the best use of resources in mission is essential in new and fragile communities.

Local Ecumenical Partnerships

During 2011, Somerset Churches Together has continued to serve as Sponsoring Body for all eleven Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) in the Somerset area. This total now includes a Local Ecumenical Partnership between Broadway Hill Methodist church and St Peter's church, Horton. However, by the end of the year the total had reduced to ten with the termination of the LEP in Worle.

On behalf of Somerset Churches Together, designated Support Groups and individuals have been available to provide ongoing advice and support throughout the year. However, the Reviews of several LEPs in Somerset are now overdue and the support system for them is not working as well as it might. It has therefore been decided to hold a gathering of representatives from all 10 LEPs on the morning of Saturday June 23rd 2012. Our aim is to decide together about the most useful ways in which LEPs can be both supported and appropriately reviewed over the next few years.

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 once in 2011.

Hopes for the Future

In the recent past, the focus of ecumenism in Somerset and elsewhere has often been on creating and supporting appropriate local structures. While these are an important component, they are not the purpose of our work. In looking forward over the next few years, our focus will be more on mission. In particular, we are discovering the ways in which we are being called to celebrate the marvellous diversity within our unity; we believe that the dynamic impetus of Holy Spirit will use our great diversity of gifts and graces for the building of God's kingdom.

Looking specifically to 2012, both the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the London Olympics will be providing opportunities for churches to work together and grasp some imaginative mission opportunities. 'More Than Gold' has already taken off in various parts of the county and even where it has not, it is still not too late to start.

Financial Review

From September 2011, The Bath & Wells Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF) assumed the former role of The West of England Baptism Association (WEBA) in providing 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, payment of all supplier invoices and other expenses. The fee for such services from WEBA and DBF in 2011 was £500 (2010 - £500).

At the same time Mr Tom Dunne stepped down as Honorary Treasurer and Mr Nick May was appointed in his place. Somerset Churches Together records its thanks and gratitude to Tom for his support and advice over the past five years. 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.

2011 income was £22,183 and expenditure was £11,011 resulting in a surplus for the year of £11,172. Cash funds held at 31 December 2011 totalled £42,979.

The 2011 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 four times during the year with an average level of attendance of 80%. 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 during the year. The meetings are open to all churches in the ecumenical area. The January Forum included the Annual General Meeting.

Given its wide range of responsibilities, Somerset Churches Together has a small number of committees which deal with a particular aspect of ecumenical life. All are responsible to the Standing Committee and report back to it regularly.

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 2011 until the date this report was approved are:

The Rt Revd Peter Maurice (President)

The Revd Brian Milloy (West of England Baptist Association)

The Revd Elsie Howell (South West Baptist Association)

The Revd Annie Naish (Bath and Wells Church of England Diocese) until 31 Sept.

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 Michael Whitfield (United Reformed Church)

Ruth Jackson-Gash (Religious Society of Friends)

The Revd Tim Richards (United Reformed Church)

Mrs Emma Kendall (Scripture Union)

The Revd Angela Steele (United Reformed Church)
Mr David Maggs (Bath and Wells Church of England Diocese)
Mr Tom Dunne (Honorary Treasurer) until 3 November
Mr Nick May (Treasurer) from 4 November

Forum Members who have served from 1 January 2011 until the date this report was approved are:

Presidents of Somerset Churches Together

The Revd Nigel Coles (West of England Baptist Association)
The Revd Jeremy Brown (South West Baptist Association)
The Rt Revd Peter Price (Bath and Wells Church of England Diocese)
The Rt Revd Peter Maurice (Bath and Wells Church of England Diocese)
The Revd A Ward Jones (Bristol Methodist District)
The Revd Peter Pillinger (Plymouth and Exeter Methodist District)
The Rt Revd Declan Lang (Diocese of Clifton)
The Revd David Grosch-Miller (United Reformed Church)
Major Martin Hill (Salvation Army)

Representatives from each of the Member Churches

The Revd Jenny Langdown (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)
Janine Atkinson (United Reformed Church)
John Gamlin (Religious Society of Friends)
Howard Wright (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 Alison Fry (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)
Nita Gee (Castle Cary and Ansford)
Kim Anderson (Clevedon)
The Revd Jonathan Morris (Crewkerne)
Kenrick Fearn (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 (we:network)
Alistair Beattie (Faithnet.southwest)
Mr John Bradley (Churches Together in England)
Gillian Alexander (Christian Aid) until 31 August
Fay Wilson-Rudd (Mental Health Chaplaincy)
Mr Tony Vassalo (CAFOD)

Approved by the Somerset Churches Together Forum on 2nd February 2012 and signed on their behalf by Bishop Peter Maurice (Chairman Somerset Churches Together)

Somerset Churches Together

<u>Income & Expenditure</u>	2011	2010
	£	£
Income		
Denominational receipts:		
Anglican	10,000	10,366
Baptist Union of Great Britain	1,636	1,636
Methodist	4,036	4,036
Religious Society of Friends	109	109
Roman Catholic	4,802	4,802
Salvation Army	328	328
United Reform Church	545	545
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	21,456	21,822
Conference & other receipts	99	1,212
Bank Interest	5	5
Voluntary Donations	623	966
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Total Income	22,183	24,005
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Expenditure		
Equipment & Insurance	691	213
Magazine	-	455
Meetings and Other Expenses	631	955
Office, Secretarial & Administration	1,907	998
Special Gift	-	680
Staff Costs:		
CEO Salary	6,481	4,327
CEO Expenses	981	1,376
Subscriptions	320	320
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Total Expenditure	11,011	9,324
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Surplus for year	11,172	14,681
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<u>Statement of Assets and Liabilities</u>	2011	2010
	£	£
Funds Held		
Balance brought forward 1 January	31,807	17,126
Surplus for year	11,172	14,681
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Balance carried forward 31 December	42,979	31,807
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Represented by		
HSBC Community Account	35,160	22,650
HSBC Business Money Manager	9,160	9,157
Creditor - Bath & Wells Diocesan Board of Finance	(1,341)	-
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	42,979	31,807
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Although not a legal requirement, these accounts will have been independently examined in time for the AGM and approval by the Trustees on 2nd February 2012.