



ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

2010

Somerset Churches Together is a Registered Charity No. 1133175

www.sctog.org.uk

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, provide ways in which they may consult with one another and work and pray for Christian unity.

In anticipation of the requirements of charitable status and in accordance with its new 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, and so this year has been one of 'holding the fort' until a new appointment has been made. Mr Dixon's years in office had brought much encouragement to the churches in Somerset as he supported the various Local Ecumenical Partnerships and Churches Together groups in their respective ministries, and challenged others to consider working more closely together. Appreciation for all his care and support of the churches and Church Leaders will be acknowledged at 2011's Annual General Meeting on 27th January 2011.

During the time of vacancy the Standing Committee made arrangements for the continuation of the work until such times as a new CEO began their work. All Correspondence files and office equipment is being held at St. Bonaventure's Church, Bristol in a room made available by the Revd. Michael Robertson.

The Revd Elsie Howell is handling correspondence for South Somerset, Taunton Dene and West Somerset and the Revd Tim Richards doing the same for other areas. Links are being maintained through our Email lists, and publicity has been satisfactory, given that there have been fewer calls during this year.

Mr Ian Freemantle of 1stop PC solutions is still the person who updates the web-site.

Church Leaders:

Amongst many things that SCT does is to provide a meeting place for the Somerset church leaders. The seventh church leaders retreat was held at Downside Abbey during March, which was led by Revd. Graham Sparkes, Baptist minister and National Ecumenical Officer for the Baptist Union which focussed on Faith and Art.

Relationships with other faith communities:

The fostering of good relations among the faith communities is one of the aims of SCT.

The Somerset churches together newsletter regularly publicises Faithnet southwest's work.

SCT would be glad to hear from local churches that meet with other faith groups.

A multi-faith group meets in Langport for regular discussion and has recently hosted an evening open to the public to discuss the subject of free speech.

This follows on from a previous 'Any questions' evening at which five faith groups were represented.

Appointment of new CEO:

The Standing Committee set up an Appointments Committee to oversee the finding of a new County Ecumenical Officer. Particular care was taken over the drawing up of a suitable job description.

Advertisements for this post went out to all church denominations during October and we had twelve applications for the post. Four were selected to be short listed, of which two subsequently withdrew before Interview.

The interviews were held on December 16th, but it was felt by the panel that no appointment was to be made.

Members of the standing committee would meet prior to the Annual General Meeting to consider the way forward.

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, one member 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. 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 autumn one had to be cancelled because of low numbers in what was a very busy month. 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.

ACCOUNTS

Income & Expenditure

Income	2010	2009
Denominational receipts	£	£
Anglican	10,366	10,064
Baptist	1,636	1,589
Methodist	4,036	3,919
Religious Society of Friends	109	106
Roman Catholic	4,802	4,662
Salvation Army	328	318
United Reform	545	529
	<u>21,822</u>	<u>21,187</u>
Conference & other receipts	1,212	883
Bank Interest Earned	5	6
Voluntary Donations	966	686
Total Income	<u>24,005</u>	<u>22,762</u>
Expense		
Equipment & Insurance	213	776
Magazine	455	960
Meetings and Other expenses	955	1,376
Secretarial & Administration	998	600
Special Gift	680	-
Staff Costs		
CEO Expenses	1,376	4,305
CEO Salary	4,327	12,975
Subscriptions	320	320
Total General Expense	<u>9,324</u>	<u>21,312</u>
Cash Surplus/(Deficit) for year	<u>14,681</u>	<u>1,450</u>

Statement Of Assets and Liabilities

	2010	2009
Funds Held	£	£
Balance brought forward 1 Jan	17,126	15,676
Surplus for year	<u>14,681</u>	<u>1,450</u>
Balance Carried Forward 31 Dec	<u>31,807</u>	<u>17,126</u>
Represented by		
HSBC Community Account	22,650	7,674
HSBC Business Money Manager	9,157	9,152
Cash	-	300
	<u>31,807</u>	<u>17,126</u>

Although not a requirement under changed legislative limits, these accounts have been independently examined, and were approved by the Trustees at the Annual General Meeting held on 27 January 2011.