

## RYEDALE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

Open Meeting by Zoom - 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2020. Report of the last year by H.G.

After Welcome. Opening prayer, and Apologies (Virginia).

It is so good to see everyone – thank you for Zooming and thank you Tim for lending your Zoom.

We pray for God's loving inspiration and blessing on our time together.

We have only had half a year but a fruitful one. Our year goes from 1<sup>st</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> June. Our last Open meeting was in July, 2019, a very good number of people came to meet together and listen to the talk by Peter Widlinski on refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. He described the wonderful work that was done by 'Justice First' on Teesside.

Our '**Quite a Quiet Day**' last September was well attended and the theme was 'Healing', and was as usual, deep and prayerful, but with lots of talk, and time in the garden for reflection, then lunch and tea together. Thank you Rosemary and Shirley Ann for delivering an inspirational day.

The **Planning Day** in October worked well, when we discuss and pray together for the year's activities and plan ahead, fixing dates where we can. We also hear about local and national ecumenical work, especially with the Quakers, and also at St Benedict's in Ampleforth, with the 'Justice and Peace' issues and the Food Bank.

The **Election Hustings** also took place, in December, again with a good attendance, most of the prospective candidates being present. It is pleasing that the churches lead the way on these meetings. I know that the evening did not happen quite as some people wanted but each candidate had a fair say in answering the varied questions and we were able to assess them in a good atmosphere.

In January during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity we held the '**Songs of Praise**' in Helmsley Methodist Church – thank you Ken. Entitled 'Unusual Kindness' and describing St Paul's shipwreck on the island of Malta and unexpected kindnesses shown to the sailors. Our singing was lively, robust and tuneful; young and old delivered the readings and Fr George gave an uplifting

talk. Several people commented that it was our best Songs of Praise ever. Thank you to the energetic planning group, and for the refreshments after the service.

We are most grateful that Shirley Ann recovered well after a long illness and time in intensive care, and apologies from me that I did not manage to collate all the Lent Groups, that usually take place, which is a task that Shirley Ann does so well. And of course we only had 2 meetings when the great LOCK DOWN happened – an unusual and challenging time for everyone.

The main event planned was the **RCC Climate Change Conference** in April. All was in place, which had taken a year to plan, and people were booking in. We had excellent knowledgeable speakers and 10 Workshops and many displays. We all hope that maybe we will be able to have it next April but nothing is fixed.

We also missed the **Spring Service**, our usual meetings, and of course the Ryedale Show, which is an ideal opportunity for people from all our churches to come together.

However one activity that we did achieve was in the Special books from Scripture Union that we give to all the Primary school leavers in the area – nearly 100. Thank you to David Cragg- James for ordering them in good time. I took them round to all the schools (usually a group of people give them to the different schools in the end of term Leavers services) and the head teachers greeted me very warmly, and were exceedingly pleased to receive them. They are valued from year to year.

Finally, we **are** having our **Open Meeting** tonight – not quite as we planned it!

And to finish, I would like to thank very warmly all the members of the Ryedale Christian Council who work together in such a harmonious atmosphere, and especially Les, for his wise support, and Virginia in her very busy life, also to Mike for being Treasurer, and a support for more than 20 years. We need each other from other traditions, bringing together all our different experiences and perspectives, with our different gifts. It is a rich and joyful group of people.

My prayer is that we go where Christ is leading us with courage, humility and sensitivity. Thank you everyone.