

Minutes of the Church Members Meeting held at

8.00 pm on 29th April 2020

Number attending: 78 connections. 107 persons present.

Apologies for absence: No apologies for absence.

Derek Page had internet issues, so the meeting is being led by Barry Dore. This is a new situation for us. Our first on-line Church Zoom Meeting. It is being recorded but only for a temporary time, until the church minutes are recorded and then it will be deleted. Regarding voting, there may be more than one member per household but due to limitation of technology, you can only vote per household or device. There will be some limitations. If there is a close vote, we may revisit it at a later date. Just to clarify, the meeting is for members only.

1. Prayer and worship

Led by Barry Dore – reading: 1 Corinthians ch.2 V 14-16. As we meet this evening, a reminder that we are meeting corporately in Jesus' name and our goal is to be led by the Spirit and to be seeking to discern the mind of Christ for his will for our church; we want to seek the mind of Christ. Barry sang Light of the World and prayed.

2. Approval of minutes of last meeting (26 January 2020)

Our last church meeting on 26th January 2020, following the church service. Minutes have been posted on the church website. If you were there and are able to vote, please vote now.

The minutes were approved 100%.

3. COVID-19 report

Shortly after lockdown measures were taken and the leadership formed a core group of people to respond to the situation and help the church to plan and move forward. Barry passed over to Helen to summarize those items.

Helen gave a presentation. Her report is attached to the minutes

4. Membership matters

Alison Dennis – 4 people seeking membership. All the interviews were done via social media.

Luca and Evelyn Corrado. Jill and David Durn interviewed them and Jill brought the report.

A vote was taken. Luca was Accepted into Membership.

A vote was taken. Evelyn was Accepted into Membership.

Josh Collis. Interviewed by Gary Steward and Matt Desai.

A vote was taken. Josh was Accepted into Membership.

Shannon Buck Interviewed by Neesha Soba and Sara Jones.

A vote was taken. Shannon was Accepted into Membership.

Joe and Denny Fleming have resigned membership to become members at Stechford Baptist church in Birmingham. Membership stands at 302.

5. Appointment of new Church Secretary

Duncan Tuft stepped down from the role of Church Secretary earlier in the year, having faithfully served us for 8 years. In the role of Church Secretary, a huge amount of work goes on behind the scenes. Barry extended a warm and genuine appreciation to Duncan, on behalf of the church, for all of his hard work and to Faith who is a such a support as well. The church leadership team prayerfully considered who could be the person to take over the role and approached Roy Bawden. Roy has put his name forward to be Church Secretary at RBC.

Proposal: Do you approve the proposal that Roy Bawden becomes the new Church Secretary.

Seconded by Roy Treadaway.

Agreed that Roy Bawden be Church Secretary.

Pause for prayer.

6. Safeguarding Policy Statements Renewal

Helen Yarrow took this section.

A number of slides were shown. Our policies are reviewed annually. Children and Young Adults. Particularly the Safeguarding policy for children, young people and the church. We normally would ready this out. This has to be agreed. It is business as usual and more so than ever, as we are on-line, that we ensure we maintain our policies relating to safeguarding. These are constantly being updated. They are available on our website. As members of this church, we commit ourselves to the nurturing, protection and safeguarding of all, especially children and young people and we are committed to following the Home Office code of practice. We ask every worker to read the good practice guidelines, social media procedures and social media guidance code. They are available on line.

Safe to Belong policy for Adults at Risk. Again, as members of this church, we commit ourselves to the safeguarding of adults at risk and ensuring their wellbeing in the life of the church. We adopt the guidelines of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, as outlined in Safe to Belong. We ask all those working with adults at risk to read the Protection of Adults at Risk practice guidelines and undertake to observe them. If you have any concerns in relation to child protection matters or adults at risk, there are people to contact and those are always available on line.

The policies are constantly being looked at and adapted in relation to the changing environments, such as social media. It is important that those working with young people and adults at risk keep up to date with them. Unless there are any questions, these policies will be formally agreed.

7. New Pastoral Care policy

Presented by Jill Durn.

Pastoral Care Policy is a new policy that was put together pre-corona virus. The detail is not new. A lot of pastoral care goes on within the church and has done for ages. It has been communicated verbally and through church meetings but we have not actually had a policy. It was felt important that we have a policy that could go on the website, so that people can see what we are doing and how we are doing it. It begins with a bible reading that underpins everything we do. John 13 Vs 34-35. The policy will be read at the church meeting annually, to ensure it is fit for purpose.

This is how we structure pastoral care within the church and it has been working well. This is a way of setting it out now, to make it clear, perhaps for new people coming in, so that they can see what's going on.

The last bit of the policy references the guidelines. The good practice guidelines for carrying out pastoral care at RBC are available and pastoral assistants are asked to read these and must undertake to observe them. A paper copy will be available from the church office or on-line via the website for reference. A paragraph at the end, if you have a pastoral care matter that you would like to discuss with Derek, Barry or Jill Durn and then if we are happy to approve this tonight, we will read it out annually at the church meeting, to check that it is still fit for purpose and we can monitor it year by year.

Guidelines are on the website in the members' area. Again, they are not new, but updated and give reference to the other things we are working with, such as safeguarding, GDPR and Data Protection. They are based on guidelines from an organisation called Pastoral Care UK which helps to provide churches with support in pastoral care and they come under the umbrella of the Association of Christian Counsellors. We have used their guidelines and adapted them for our use. The intention is for these to be available on the website for people to see. It sets out the expectations both for those giving care and for those receiving care, so that we can ensure everyone knows how we work in pastoral care and we can do so with integrity and with accountability. They include things such as the scope of pastoral care, structure, why we do pastoral care, details of ethical values and the importance of confidentiality, dual relationships, conflict and care for pastoral carers. Safeguarding, DBS procedures and tips for pastoral carers. It is a working document that people can refer to for best practice. If they are approved tonight, they will go on the website.

A vote was taken. Do you approve the Pastoral Care Policy, subject to any amendments the meeting proposed.

The Pastoral Care Policy document was **Agreed**.

Barry thanked Jill for her report.

8. Report from Church Treasurer

Treasurer's report and slides are available on the church website. 3 slides. A 12 month rolling average slide that shows a trend and the general direction of offerings. We have reached our budget and are 6.5% up on this time last year.

April will be the first month when the church was fully closed on Sundays. We are expecting a £2000-3000 drop in offerings from the blue bag, for every month the church is closed. We will begin to see the curve come down, as the average drops.

Just looking at March income, we are almost bang on budget. Looking at the expenditure, it looks as though we have overspent against budget, as indeed we have but the explanation for that is budget phasing. We knew we were going to spend a lot of money on the chairs for the hall, we just didn't know which month we would spend it in, so we spread it across the year. The £6000 overspend will be caught back over the year.

With the church now closed, our offerings in the blue bag are under threat. The challenge for us in planning forward is how long will the church be closed and when gatherings of over 300 will be allowed. This could be 6 months away. This is an issue that Finance Committee has looked at. We could be £3000 down each month. We would take action on expenditure as the church is closed and expenditure is low. It is expected that in terms of cash, we will be losing about £1500 per month. This is not good news but a real blessing is that we are in a good position as a church and we have some reserves. It's all about cash now. If we continue to lose £1500 for 9 months, what would that look like to our cash. We have built up some reserves. We have a legacy of £35,000 and a designated reserve of £13,000. Ideally, we want to use those for items of capital expenditure on extending the Lord's kingdom in the UK or overseas but at times like this, it is cash we can use, so we are in a good position in terms of cash.

We run at about £5000-£6000 loss in cash every month of the year, except in May when we get our Gift Aid refund and we are expecting £70,000 back in May. This will have to last us a year but we are in a much better position than many churches, who are struggling.

We have been blessed, even though our offerings are dropping.

Every gift to the church is a blessing. Paying by Standing Order does help us, in terms of planning and low administration. In 2017, 75% of our offerings were by Standing Order and this has moved to almost 83% in 2020.

CR will report in the newsletter every month sent out by email.

We are in a good position, difficult times but we are blessed.

Barry thanked Craig and the Finance team for everything they do for us as a church.

9. AOB

No AOB items.

Barry thanked everyone for joining the meeting and closed the meeting in prayer.

COVID-19 REPORT

Covid – 19 Working group: who'd ever think we'd have a working group with that title!

The Diaconate met just after our last meeting together on 15th March and agreed that it would be a good idea to set up a group to focus on our response to Covid 19, hence our title. The group comprises of myself, Derek, Barry, Roy, David, Gillian and Alistair Moore. Between us we've been determining how we as a Church cope with and manage this unprecedented situation.

But even before we formed, in the week leading up to the lock down, the church office was a hive of activity, with lists being made, boxes of paper and work being packed, arrangements made between us all as to who was going to do what.

The priority then and still is to ensure that all those who are vulnerable, alone or struggling have the help and support they need, and over the last few weeks people within the fellowship have been helping folks with shopping, giving practical help when needed and for many most importantly phoning and offering companionship and comfort. Lucy and John are working hard to ensure that all the families, their children and our youth are kept in contact with and through various social media platforms are in regular contact with them, supporting, teaching, sharing God's word with them and encouraging them in their faith. They have been really inventive in the way they are reaching out, and I know lots of you have enjoyed seeing some of the great video's and presentations. Small groups are meeting via zoom or other online platforms and I know they are a great source of encouragement and comfort as well a time of being able to share God's word and pray for one another.

As well as supporting the fellowship we've also got folks ringing every one of our Café Connect guests. We've also sent them all a pack with crosswords, word searches and quizzes and a Easter it included an Easter message from Derek. It has been so encouraging to have such positive feedback from many of our guests who so appreciate the contact they are having with us.

Our next main priority was to ensure that we were able to continue worshipping together on Sunday's. I know many of you have found great comfort in hearing God's work spoken from the sanctuary and being able to join in with the worship, For those who don't have the internet copies of the service are being posted to them, if you know of anyone who would like to receive a copy then please let the church office know. We are also thrilled that we are able to reach out to Hand in Hand, and we know that others in the deaf community are watching our services as they are being signed.

Other areas we covered are: giving out a message to our local community via our website sharing what our response to the Coronavirus alongside that are some organisations that we can support, then there's the mundane but necessary checks, such as ensuring we have the necessary copyright licensing for recording services, keeping our insurance validated as the building is not in regular use. We've established a regular communication strategy, Mon and Fri a message from either Barry or Derek, Tue, Wedn, Thur and Sat we receive a devotional (and huge thanks to Gillian and Marie) whilst they just turn up in our in boxes a lot of work went into organising this and again they have been such a blessing to so many. And on

Sundays we are all able to join together in worship. We are regularly reviewing our 2020 Vision events, some have had to be cancelled, others postponed other are on hold.

We have asked you to write to your local shops, Dr's surgery's thanking them, we still need people to write to specific care homes and to our local Cllr's, please sign up via the website or email me or the church office if you would be happy to do this. We have been supporting local charities such as H4All with some printing, Scrubs for Hillingdon by sewing scrubs and Hillingdon Foodbank. We've had two incredible prayer meetings, the last with over 90 people involved. And we plan to hold another on Sunday May 10th. And there's more but I've been told to be brief!!!

So what next, well there are a few things I'd like to share with you, first is Thy Kingdom Come, this is essentially an 11 day prayer initiative, whereby you have 5 friends in mind that you are praying for to come to know God. Hannah has plans for this which the whole church will be invited to join in with: she hopes to hold a TKC prayer evening on Sunday 24th May and another time of prayer specifically for our youth and children, she has designed a prayer journal, which you will all be receiving, this has a passage, a thought, a prayer and also a practical point to encourage you to act on what you have just read. Our youth will be also receiving daily devotional videos and the children will be receiving their own personalised prayer box. The hope of this event is that we all come together in prayer and be reminded that as Christians, we are all filled with Gods holy spirit and the power to speak his name. Please do visit the Thy Kingdom Come website to find out more about this global time of prayer and look out for more details from Hannah shortly.

We are looking at more initiatives, including hosting an art gallery of people's pictures, drawings, sketches taken or drawn during lockdown, to inspire and encourage you to get creative. Again further details will follow.

And finally, and here is where if you've gone to sleep I'd really like to you to tune in! We are hoping to run our first ever online Alpha course. As a church we are reaching out to more people than ever, please spend some time in prayer thinking about someone you are in contact who you could invite to join the course. They would need internet access and be able to use zoom. We hope to be able to share more details with you very shortly.

Although we're not there yet, we have got as of our ongoing actions our Exit Strategy. We are conscious that Churches may be one of the last places to open, but however and whenever we can all get together we'll be ready! But when we do we will be mindful that for some that might not be possible and we will ensure that we continue to share God's word with them, we will continue to support, encourage and prayer for them, and we will all look back and realise that this terrible pandemic has given us the chance to reach people in way's we've never done before, and that we must not forget or let those opportunities slide away.

The Church is not a place, it's not a building, it's not a preaching place, it's a people, the new covenant, the blood bought people of God. That's why Paul said, in Ephesians 5:25 Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. He didn't give himself up for a place but for a people, you and me. Thank you all for the incredible way you are blessing people.