

## **Minutes Church Members' Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 8PM**

Roy Bawden opened the meeting and welcomed participants to the third hybrid meeting, advising that John Bawden was assisting as technical co-host on Zoom and Ros Monteath was taking the minutes. Roy thanked them both.

There were 65 attendees: 26 in the room and 39 on 33 Zoom connections.

**Apologies:** Chrissie Dore, Jill Durn, Ruth Espidosa, Jane Golden, Claire and Paul Jones, Faith Tuft, Alice Mwerenga and Tina Woodard

### **1. Prayer and worship**

John Bawden shared a YouTube worship item. Derek Prayed.

### **2. Approval of minutes of last meeting (30<sup>th</sup> March 2022)**

Roy invited questions. None were received.

**Minutes were unanimously Approved.**

### **3. Membership Applications**

Hilary Ross-Smith introduced prospective new member reporting.

Claudiu and Carmen Comanescu - interviewed by Michelle Harding and Sharon Rose. Michelle brought the report.

Vote on Application for membership Carmen Comanescu – Approved.

Vote on Application for membership Claudiu Comanescu – Approved.

Laila and Nick Crosby interviewed by Marie and Mark Dendy. Mark brought the report.

Vote on Application for membership Laila Crosby – Approved.

Vote on Application for membership Nick Crosby – Approved.

Roy expressed for all our great appreciation to Alison Dennis for the many years she has acted, and acted so well, as our Membership Secretary. It's another example of somebody in our fellowship who is serving us and our Lord in a way that is not generally in the spotlight but requires thought, effort and energy and is done so conscientiously and with great sensitivity. Members were encouraged to send her a message of appreciation

### **4. Pastoral Care Policy Renewal**

The 2022 Policy Statement on Pastoral Care is virtually the same as the 2021 Policy Statement, apart from a few minor adjustments. The 2022 statement is not yet available on the website but will be shortly. A paper copy can be obtained from the church office. As required, Roy read the Policy Statement on Pastoral Care and then passed over to Julie Ledden – Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, who summarised the practice. Pastoral care has always run through everything we do in church, as we seek to come alongside people in their journey through life/faith and to support them in their time of need. The pastoral care policy statement read by Roy outlines how we structure pastoral care at RBC:

- Our Ministers, Derek and Barry provide pastoral support to those in need and are available to meet with individuals as appropriate.
- Julie gives pastoral support to some individuals who are going through challenging times in their lives and meets with individuals regularly to listen and offer practical and prayerful support and sign-posting to professional support services.
- Julie's role is also to co-ordinate and support our pastoral volunteers: we have a group of wonderful Pastoral Assistants who provide regular and long-term pastoral care to individuals with ongoing pastoral needs.
- We also have a great team of pastoral volunteers who are available to visit and offer practical help and support to individuals as needs arise on an ad hoc basis.
- Our small groups are also a hub of pastoral care as small group members support and care for one another.
- Our whole church provides pastoral care as individuals look out for and care for one another. This is often spontaneous and through natural friendships that develop within church and through our regular weekday activities like Café Connect and Tuesday Fellowship which also provide pastoral support to our church family and local community.

Our pastoral care policy and good practice guidelines allow us to give pastoral care effectively, with integrity and in a safe way at RBC. Some small amendments have been proposed and approved by the Diaconate and our updated policy and guidelines will be available in the Members' area of our RBC website.

All Pastoral assistants and volunteers are asked to read our pastoral care policy and good practice guidelines and they must undertake and adhere to them when giving pastoral care and are asked to sign an acceptance of these Good Practice Guidelines. With emphasis on important sections such as confidentiality, safeguarding, Biblical and ethical values for pastoral care.

Julie thanked ALL pastoral volunteers and expressed gratitude to others involved with pastoral care. This includes our pastoral assistants and volunteers, those who lead and help run Café Connect and Tuesday Fellowship, small group members and everyone in the church family who pastorally supports those in need.

**I agree the statement on the Pastoral Care Policy of RBC - 100% Approved.**

Roy thanked all individuals involved in providing a safe environment in our church.

## **5. Safeguarding Policy Renewal in new form**

Roy read the policy statement. The safeguarding policy combines the former two policies in a new form. It is a very detailed policy and can be found in the members' area of the website. The policy will be ready annually at the members meeting. Roy read the Policy Statement on Safeguarding and then passed over to Nikki Latham who shared key messages from Jane Golden who is the Dedicated Safeguarding Person and Nikki Latham is her deputy.

The safeguarding of children and adults continues to be at the heart of all our church activities. Over the last year we have had a few staff changes: a new children's worker, Julie Ledden our Pastoral Care Manager, Helen Yarrow Safeguarding Trustee and Nikki Latham, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person. All of these roles have safeguarding responsibilities and will continue to be supported as we work together to safeguard the children and adults we engage with throughout the week and on a Sunday. Nikki thanked Helen Yarrow on Jane's behalf for the years of service she has given as the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person and for the dedication that she has shown and the support given to Jane to carry out her role as Designated Person.

Up until recently we have had separate children and adult policies, but these have now been combined in line with the Baptist Union procedures. Level 2 and 3 safeguarding training has been delivered by the Baptist Union with thanks given to all those who gave up their time to attend.

**I agree the statement on the Safeguarding Policy of RBC. 100% Approved.**

## **6. Report from Church Treasurer**

Craig Rowland brought the report. Since the last Members' meeting in March, offerings have remained flat and the budgeted increase has not materialised. This has led to offerings being £15,000 under budget after 4 months. As mentioned at the last meeting, an increase in offerings to the pre-covid level of circa £27,000 per month had been budgeted but, unfortunately, they have continued at the 2021 level of circa £24,000 per month. The 12-month rolling average for total offerings (the slide presented at the Members' meeting) continues to flatten out at £24,000 per month and is now 4.5% down year on year.

As regards total income, the shortfall in offerings of £15,000 has been partially offset by one-off donations being £5,000 better than budget and rental income being £1,000 above budget (due to the rental of 8 Oxford Drive starting a month earlier than planned), leaving an overall income shortfall of £9,000 so far.

As regards expenditure, total expenditure to date is £15,000 under budget, which more than offsets the shortfall in income and leaves a surplus of £10,000 after 4 months, which is £6,000 better than budget. The main area of expenditure underspend is staff costs (£8,000 under spent) due to the current vacancy for the youth and young adults worker role. Once recruited, the underspend will cease. The remainder of the underspend is due to timing differences and the expenditure is expected to be incurred later in the year.

When fully staffed, the underlying run-rate will be a deficit of circa £40,000 pa and, in the short term, can be managed from reserves. This is not, however, a sustainable position and we will need to review how we can close this gap in the near future.

At the last members' meeting it was mentioned that we would be adjusting the expenditure for the "catch up" of Health & Safety expenditure spent last year but paid for in January and also expenditure on 8 Oxford Drive in preparation for it being let out. This expenditure will now be included in the audited accounts for last year (year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021) and is not shown in the current finances.

Taking income and expenditure together gives us an overall surplus after four months of £10,000 against a budgeted surplus of £4,000. We also, currently, remain in a strong cash position and ready to fully engage in our work to extend His kingdom.

Finally, reference was made to the generosity of the church towards its Ukraine appeal. So far, £19,000 has been raised including gift aid. This amount is not included in the reported finance numbers.

## **7) Report from Church Secretary**

### **a) Children and Families including recruitment**

Numbers in all children's groups are thriving – up to 70 under 12's one week. Action Tots have 40 children with ever-growing waiting list. Open the Book Team has visited more schools this year, sharing the story of the Centurion's servant with great questions asked. Prayer was sought for wisdom and guidance in searching for new leaders and of thanks for those already serving our children.

Farrah is due to finish at the end of July although the position is fluid. The church is ready to proceed to external recruitment as soon as the position is clear.

### **b) Youth including recruitment (+ Young Adults)**

15-19 young people are attending Roots but have only 3 regular volunteers. Refine attendance is now up to 9 and has a new volunteer in Geoff Mace. Pray was sought for children doing GCSEs and shortly A levels.

A group of volunteers has been established to support our Young Adults work and release of the recruitment advertisement for the new Youth and Young Adults Worker role is imminent.

### **c) Annual business meeting**

To be held in September this year due to timing of the audited accounts.

### **d) COVID sub-group**

An area for those who wish to wear masks obligatory is being maintained whilst there is demand. Ventilation and air sanitisation continues to be monitored. The Covid sub-group has been disbanded and thanks were expressed to them.

### **e) Sunday Fellowship**

A regular fellowship time immediately after Sunday services is to be launched following resolution of practical issues. Rationale includes providing fellowship opportunity for all; recognising its absence through COVID; supporting inter-generational aspirations; aid welcome and integration of newcomers; facilitate connections being made; provide platform for Ministers to mix; aid building of volunteer engagement; create buzz with special events; allow leaders and relevant staff to network and give opportunity to discuss sermon.

### **f) Sunday evening services**

The format is to be reviewed to ensure these remain relevant, attractive and well attended. We want to ensure they remain relevant and well attended. A poll was launched: the single-most feature that would draw me to a Sunday evening event is (ranked 1-5 where 1 is highest):

The results were:

- a) God's Word preached – average rank 2.3. 29% ranked 1<sup>st</sup>
- b) Worship opportunity – average rank 1.7. 58% ranked 1<sup>st</sup>.
- c) Fellowship experience – average rank 3.1. 6% ranked 1<sup>st</sup>.
- d) Corporate prayer – average rank 3.7. 2% ranked 1<sup>st</sup>.
- e) Participative discussion e.g. bible study or topical issues – average rank 3.6. 13% ranked 1<sup>st</sup>.

NB – some ranked more than one category as 1<sup>st</sup> hence total does not equate to 100.

### **g) Senior Minister recruitment (Derek Page left the meeting)**

Roy reported that the role is being renamed Lead Minister. The sub-group has been meeting monthly – it is comprised of Roy Bawden, Helen Brown, Nell Osborne, Tope Oshowole, Craig Rowland, Liz Treadaway and Duncan Tuft. With tremendous help from Marie Dendy, a church profile has been virtually completed and the final copy will be placed on the website. A detailed flow chart for the process has also been developed.

The process should be launched in June using the BU Settlement Process and through selected external agencies. All applicants will need to be BU accredited or agree to seek accreditation due to financial implications around the Baptist Ministers' Pension Scheme.

Responses will be sought in early September with guidance to respond to applicants within 14 days. The application form is so designed so that personal detail can be initially withheld to avoid unconscious bias with the church unable to discriminate on grounds of age, disability or race. The profile clearly states that the church maintains a traditional stance on the sanctity of marriage and human sexuality as disclosed in God's word and

that applicants' status must conform thereto. Within the process, a specific safeguarding team is created that will comprise Roy Bawden, Jane Golden and Helen Brown who is level 3.

Applicants will be aware that the start date is October 2023 when Derek retires or earlier by agreement. We will have to see who God brings forward through the process but the expectation is that the Leadership Team may initially proceed beyond first interview with more than one candidate with a view to discerning the person God intends for us. The established process is that someone will then come to 'preach with a view.'

The decision to appoint rests with members alone with a majority of 75% required in Special Meeting. approval is required from the members.

Derek has been with us since 1985, initially as Assistant Minister and the change will be significant for him and the church. The appointment is therefore of enormous importance. Specific folk have been praying and we now wish to open this up to the membership and will be having a dedicated prayer meeting on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> June and this will be followed up with another in September to coincide with the closing date.

During October probably, Derek will be preaching on Christian leadership which also ties in to the deacons' elections. Members were reminded to nominate any individuals God placed on their heart to invite applying. We should be sensitive to Derek and Carrie at this time as it will be a big wrench for them to leave. Thought is already being given to Derek's valedictory service. Roy invited questions.

Hilary Ross-Smith raised a question about the church profile and did this include the qualities that we seek in our new Minister. Roy replied that it did and that their priority was based on members' feedback that they had provided at a previous meeting. The copy profile when posted to the website would not include details such as salary.

## **8) AOB**

Helen Yarrow gave an update on the Gifting project and thanked everyone who had completed it – 134 people to date. These are being worked through and everyone will be written to in due course. Six people have expressed an interest in being trained on the CAP course. Thanks to Ruth Martin for her efficiency in organising training for these folks. We would love everyone else to complete the form. As we have heard, there is a need to help in children's groups. We would never ask anyone to lead a group or take on a role that they don't feel comfortable with.

Louise Surridge asked that the Information Sheet carried the bible reference(s) for the sermon.

Duncan Tuft commented that the Grace is often said at the end of the service but some folk may not be familiar with the words. Could they be put up on a slide, so that everyone can follow it.

Phil Ross-Smith responded that this would be possible, as long as it is in the service plan. Everything is available but they need to know in advance that it is required or it would not appear.

Kim Hatton commented on floristry donations – the team now ask for £40 due to inflation which is a lot of money. She thought there used to be a facility for folk to make a donation that could be built up as a reserve.

Ken Garwood added that there are only 3 people on flower rota at the moment and made a request for additional volunteers to arrange flowers. A flower arranging demonstration is being organised to teach more people.

Craig Rowland advised that if there was a shortfall or an issue over finances, this can be picked up by the finance team.

Barry Dore closed the meeting in prayer.