**Minutes of Church Members Meeting**

**Wednesday, 27th November 2019**

**Welcome**

**Numbers attending: 66**

**Apologies for Absence**: David and Jill Durn, Angela Davies, Tina Woodward, Jim Green, Geoff Eastern, Don and Joyce Pople, Barry and Chrissie Dore, Marion Williams, Graham and Pippa Durn, Louise Surridge, and Sarah Jones.

**Prayer**

Duncan Tuft opened the meeting with prayer.

1. **Deacons Election**

Following a vote at the beginning of the meeting, the following Deacons were re-elected onto   
 the Diaconate for a further three year term:

John Bawden

Andy Ingram

Neeraj Soba

Claire Bornman and Tope Oshowole, were elected for the first time.

**2.** **Worship**

Ignus Bornman led a time of worship.

**3.** **Young Adults Ministry**

Filipe gave thanks to Derek and Helen for their advice and counsel, also to Gillian Rose   
 and the leadership of the church for their encouragement in the work he has been doing with the young adults who attend the church. God has been gracious. The group has been praying about how they can be a blessing to the church, serving the church, the families in church and the community.   
 The group has prayed about the vision for their group. Gratitude was expressed for the   
 welcome given to the group. Ephesians 4 vs 15,16. “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.  
 Felipe thanked the members for their prayers to date and asked the members to continue in prayer for the group.

Derek added that the church has been looking for a female leader and Sook Mun Chow has expressed a desire to get involved in young adult ministry. The church will continue to work with them.   
 Matt Osborne praised Filipe for the amount of time spends praying for the Young Adults group and can see that this has borne fruit with the number and enthusiasm of the young adults that are now involved.

**4. Treasurers Report**

Craig reported on the financial situation. A copy of his report is annexed. The figure in brackets in relation to the amount spent on premises is due to the expenditure on the partition in the main hall and air conditioning in the first floor rooms.  
 Some adjustment has been made to pay for staff, due to an inflation award and the cost of our   
 intern. Also, staff sacrificed pay during lean periods but are now being paid in full.   
 The grey chairs in the main and small halls are being replaced after more than 40 years of service. The following questions were asked:

Q. How much of the building loan is still outstanding?

A. The loan will be paid off by Sept 2020. 5 years ahead of schedule.   
 The Will Booth restricted mission fund has been spent although £35,000 in the Legacy Fund is for mission work.

Q. Has work for the roof at College Drive been scheduled?   
 A. No but this is likely to happen next year and will be paid for from the legacy fund.

**5. Membership Matters**

Nkechi and Udo Udo and Paul Cluett have been moved onto the Friends of RBC list.   
 Rosemary Spencer has been contacted several times but no reply has been received.   
 A vote was taken to remove Rosemary from the membership list and move her onto the Friends of RBC list.

Hilary Ross-Smith and Mick Ledden have interviewed a person for membership who is a freemason and have, together with the Theological Sub Group spent a lot of time researching about what membership of the freemasons involves. This information was not shared previously, due to its sensitive nature.

Hilary shared a paper she had prepared a copy of which is annexed to these minutes.

In her paper Hilary outlined the causes for concern and slides were shown pointing out where the constitution of the church conflicts with the principles of Freemasonry.

When these concerns were expressed to the person applying for membership he still requested that his membership application should be brought before the church members.

Hilary reported that the Leaderships’ view is that the best way forward is not to take the membership application but for the members to form a view on their attitude as to whether or not membership of the Freemasons is compatible with church membership.

The members were therefore asked to vote on the resolution recommended by the church leadership.

Before a vote was taken on the proposed resolution various questions from members were answered.

The following resolution was put to the meeting and seconded by John Bawden.

"We believe that membership of the Freemasons and allegiance to its rules is incompatible   
 with the beliefs of the Church as set out in its constitution and accordingly, applications for   
 membership by Freemasons, should be declined."

The resolution was carried with all members present voting in favour apart from 2 Abstentions.

There were no votes against.

Hilary confirmed that existing members who are Freemasons will be offered the opportunity to discuss their membership with the leadership team but they won't be asked to resign. With prayer and love, coming alongside people and having discussion with them, it is hoped that they can be turned away from Freemasonry.

Mick Ledden close this item with prayer.

**6. Time of Prayer**

Duncan Tuft led the members in prayer.

**7. Vision for 2020**

Derek shared his vision with the members. The Strap line will be 2020 Vision.   
 20/20 vision is how we refer to normal vision. What is normal Christian vision?

2020 Vision will consist of 7 component parts: Discipleship, Prayer, Global Partner Support   
 mission, Community outreach, Children and Youth, Fellowship and vision events.

**8. Community Outreach report**

Helen Yarrow gave updates on community outreach events taking place in the church and how   
 well it is received by the community. Her report is annexed.

Prayer requested for New Year’s family evening, for all ages. It will be led by the Young Adults   
 team. 4th January will be the senior citizens New Year's party. To replace SC Christmas party.

Gifts will be given. Please wrap in non-Christmas paper. Tags to be added. Available on the info   
 desk. A young lady called Claire is going to do her tests to be in uniform. She is not a church   
 member so won't be leading but will be assisting Lesley at Rainbows.

The church office is hugely busy. Please pray for all the work that goes on behind the scenes.

**9. Secretary's report**

Duncan and Faith Tuft went with Marion Williams to the London Baptist Association AGM on 9 November 2019.   
 Duncan was given information about by The Baptist Insurance Company of an offer they are making until June 2020 that if an individual takes out house insurance through them the company will give £100 to your church.

**10. Approval/correction of minutes of last meeting**

Minutes of the September meeting were approved.

**11. AOB**

No AOB's.

Duncan closed the meeting with prayer.

Annexure no 1. Treasurers report.

“Income has continued to remain strong and cumulatively to the end of October offerings are now 8% (£20,000) up on budget and 13.5% (£32,000) up on last year. The 12 month rolling average for total offerings (the slide I present at the Members' meeting) has further increased to  £26,717, an increase of 12.0% on last year's rolling average.

The total revenue for the first ten months of the year is £352,000, which is £38,000 better than budget.

As regards expenditure, total expenditure to date is shown as £329,000 which is £22,000 adverse to budget. This is due to the fact that £27,000 of expenditure, that was incurred on the  main hall partition wall (£19,000)  and the air conditioning units (£8,000), has been paid out of this year's offerings rather than the legacy fund. You will recall that we agreed to do this at the September Deacons meeting. The legacy fund now stands at £35,000.

The Will Booth restricted fund has now been completely expensed, although we still hold £13,000 in a designated mission fund and the legacy fund is also available for mission work. As regards the building fund reserve, we intend to not carry a reserve forward after the year end, but start to show building loan income and loan repayments in our monthly management accounts.

Regarding the final proposed budget, the main points/changes to note from the proposed budget that we discussed previously at the Diaconate are as follows:-

* Income is unchanged (not counting £50 !!)
* Ministry costs have been adjusted for 1.7% inflation as opposed to the previous 2.0%. The costs of our Pastoral worker have now been added and the Intern costs adjusted.
* External Mission is unchanged.
* Internal mission changed for inclusion of Cafe Connect income and Hestia Safe house already expensed under Evangelism.
* Church Premises: Repairs and improvements have been reduced by £10,000. Furnishings and equipment has been increased by £8,000 for the replacement chairs in the hall (£9,500).
* Other areas of expenditure have been tweaked to reflect current run rates and for inflation increases where appropriate.”

Annexure no 2. Hilary’s report re Freemasonry.

Earlier this year we received an application for membership from someone within the fellowship, who is a member of the Freemasons. Mick and I were asked to carry out the interview. We met with the individual concerned and exchanged several emails to try to gain a better understanding of freemasonry and to discuss the difficulties we felt it posed for us in considering his application.

It may be helpful for us to summarise the key issues:

* Freemasonry requires a belief in the Supreme Being, which is called the Great Architect of the Universe. The God of the Bible is counted as one of several supreme beings which sit under the title of the “Great Architect Of The Universe”.
* The Bible is one of several sacred texts, all of which are considered equal and valid, as the revealed will of God.
* There is particular focus on good works as a means of self- improvement.
* Scripted prayers are said at lodge meetings and each member of the lodge addresses his prayers to the supreme being of his own religion.
* Freemasons are prohibited from discussing their own theological views in the lodge, so Christians may not share their faith freely.

We believe that there is only one Supreme Being and He is the God of the Bible.

It is the Bible alone which reveals God’s will for humankind and His will is not revealed through other so-called sacred texts. Indeed our Constitution states that Jesus is God in the flesh and is “the sole authority in all matters pertaining to faith and practice as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.”

The focus on good works seems to conflict with our understanding of sin, the need for redemption through Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming our lives.

The shared act of worship at lodge meetings whereby individuals of many faiths pray together to their own god is incompatible with a belief in one true God.

We believe Christians should be free at all times to speak about Jesus. Again our Constitution states “that it is the duty of every disciple to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ….”

These things give us great cause for concern and we consider that freemasonry is incompatible with church membership. We have discussed these matters with the ministers and deacons and as a leadership we have been considering our position.

The leadership are of the firm view that being a member of the freemasons is incompatible with church membership.

Tonight we are not bringing you a report on this application for membership but will ask you to vote on the following:

**Freemasonry is incompatible with our constitution and accordingly, applications for membership by freemasons, should be declined.**

We should also say that If you are concerned about the views we have expressed, please come and talk to us.

Annexure no 3: Outreach and resources co-ordinator’s report.

Hannah internship:  
Going well, I email a timetable of her weekly timetable and the following week she emails what she’s done in the week to present to the team meeting and to be able to keep a record. Very varied timetable, stepping out of her comfort zone to Care homes, supporting Lucy and John, meeting with Jill Durn re Pastoral support, me planning an event, went to Safeguarding training, going to Small group forum. Met with her DNA link, Guy Behir last week (as did Chrissie), very pleased with how things are going. Next year her project is going to be ‘Thy Kingdom Come’, planning the whole church’s activities.  
As well as this practical involvement her study is going very well, quite intense and thought provoking.

Outreach  
Hannah and I met with a representative from the Parks Department to talk about use of the Pembroke Community Garden. Now waiting to hear a bit more from them about the history of the space and whether they can put up a display board and or pagoda.

Met with Les Drussel, of Ruislip Manor Chamber of Commerce about our involvement in the community.

Accord Concert, more involvement than in past years as Chris and Christine Follett are no longer running it and it was taken on by Marion Williams, who did a fabulous job. Great numbers, around 165 people, plus the choir, good programme, excellent solos, wonderful singing.   
Have asked Mary if any of Accord would come and sing at Café Connect.

Re. carol singing in the Manor, Helen has asked Mary if we could get some of Accord to sing outside Ruislip Manor Station on Thursday 19th December with perhaps other folks from RBC, have banners, give out our Christmas leaflets etc.

Café Connect – great couple of weeks, had a wonderful Remembrance day service and reflection time on the 11th November, including live streaming the two minutes’ silence, and Roy read out ‘In Flanders Field’. Patricia, one of our guests shared how three of her cousins who were brothers all died in the war. And then we had a Vera Lynn sing-along. Yesterday we had a group of 15 reception and year 1 children come along from Warrender school and chatted with the guests. Great forging even more links with local schools.

Still a few tickets left for the Christmas Craft event. Encourage folks to come along.”