

Minutes Special Church Members' Meeting: 20th July 2022 at 8PM

Roy Bawden opened the meeting and welcomed participants to the hybrid meeting. There were 54 attendees: 24 in the room and 30 on 26 Zoom connections.

Apologies: John Bawden, Dave Connelley, Chrissie Dore, Jon and Laura Elliott, Ruth Espidosa, Nikki Latham; Mick Ledden, Janice Lowsby, Tom and Ros Monteath, David and Gillian Rose, Duncan and Faith Tuft and Tina Woodard.

1. Prayer and worship

A YouTube instrumental worship item was played during which members contemplated the varying ways in which we worship especially in the context of our shared life together as church members. Roy then prayed.

2. Approval of minutes of last meeting (25th May 2022)

Roy invited questions. None were received. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Membership Applications

Hilary Ross-Smith introduced prospective new member reporting.

Claudiu and Claudia Stan - interviewed by Angela Davies and Carina Browne. Carina brought the report.

Vote on application for membership Claudiu Stan – unanimously approved.

Vote on application for membership Claudia Stan – unanimously approved.

Kathryn Rowland - interviewed by Jill Durn and Karen Ingram. Jill brought the report.

Vote on application for membership Kathryn Rowland – approved with one abstention.

Lily Alexander – interviewed for membership by Lucy Mace and Alison Dennis. Alison brought the report.

Vote on application for membership Lily Alexander – approved with one abstention.

Hilary reported that Derek and Sweelin Cunliffe had resigned their membership; Neesha Soba has transferred her membership to Pinner Baptist Church and the death of John McCormick. Filipe Macedo has also resigned his membership following his move to the USA.

4. Sidewalk development

Roy advised this item was the reason for the meeting being classified as 'Special' under the Constitution. He explained the trustees' responsibilities for property management and staff working conditions. He advised the age of the Sidewalk, that it was nearing the conclusion of its economic life and its constraints for those who work in the building. 3 priorities had been identified:

- (i) Optimise footprint and provide custom-built youth facility to develop ministry best;
- (ii) Provide modern off-based accommodation for staff removing cramped antiquated rooms and narrow staircase;
- (iii) Introduce lift mechanism to enable those for mobility issues – staff and fellowship - 1st floor access.

A gifted membership team of Mark Dendy, Gus Jones, Gary Steward and Roy Treadaway had produced various options – thanks were extended to them. Roy advised that members' agreement to planning consent only would be sought. Any proposal to undertake the scheme or a variant of it would require separate members' approval. All options carry a significant cost and there is inadequate current funding resources nor is a loan appropriate given the present underlying income shortfall. Planning should be sought now though to protect our capability to complete such a scheme when this position changes. Various drawings of a preferred scheme that maximises space available were shared and Mark advised:

Brief

(a) to maximise the realistic development of the Sidewalk and office building. Whilst the full scheme may not be built and it most likely will be scaled back to suit need (and budget), a planning consent will help the church's future plans; (b) to show the church what can be provided, in particular for both Youth activities and church office functions; (c) to make the space flexible and adaptable for future generations; (d) to create fully accessible space, including level access into all office floors; (e) to make the Sidewalk buildings energy efficient and easier to maintain for the future and (f) to prepare a cost efficient design.

Scope of work

Rear extension

(a) to be demolished; (b) proposed single storey extension has been designed to fill the complete site, including the outside space. The hall will be approx. 60% larger footprint; (c) the height of the hall is significantly taller with high level windows for ventilation and light; (d) existing connections with Main Hall and Kitchen are

retained; (e) external access is provided to the rear road and also the side passage out to the parking area; (f) the central portion (adjoining the office where the current WC's are) will be replaced, again full width of the site; (g) the space will be used for WC accommodation and storage; (h) the roof will be at a lower height to facilitate windows in both the office and the Sidewalk Hall; (i) the existing access into the main vestibule will be kept; (j) new insulated floor slab; (k) new insulated walls and roof and (l) new energy efficient services throughout.

Main office building

(a) the majority of the building will be demolished. Whilst a refurbishment option was considered, the scope of improvement works was significant and it may be more cost effective and less disruptive/quicker to replace the building; (b) a new building will be constructed between the main church building and the retained party walls with the neighbours; (c) the front elevation will be of a similar shape and style to the existing building, but windows will be more appropriate for the office and ancillary church activities; (d) there will be a first floor extension between the main church and the main terrace (above the current entrance) and slightly set back; (e) the rear elevation will be about 1m back from the main rear wall of the terrace. This slight increase in floor space will improve the first floor layout; (f) the ground floor will have a large entrance lobby. This opens out onto a stair and landing to a platform lift providing access to the lower ground (vestibule) floor and up to the first floor; (g) the ground floor design currently shows a single large office space, suitable for open plan accommodation; (h) on the half landing between ground and first floor is a staff WC; (i) the first floor will have 3 good sized offices and a small kitchen; (j) the current proposals show a link into the church auditorium and (k) internal layouts can change to suit final requirements.

Why submit a planning application now if we are not ready to progress with the work?

(a) at some point RBC will need to replace the rear extension and it would be sensible to secure a planning consent now for the optimum extension that would suit our future needs; (b) there have been a number of nearby and recent planning applications for development and construction works are currently progressing to the rear of the motorbike shop. If we leave it until we are ready to carry the work out (i) planning restrictions may change limiting what we can do, or cost more or (ii) adjoining new developments may restrict what RBC can do.

Cost

(a) budget cost for planning application. The intent is to use existing resources and minimise the use of external consultants. For the application and potential consultant reports we have budgeted a cost of £10,000, but subject to Hillingdon's specific requirements, we would intend to carry this out for a much smaller amount; (b) current day cost for previous development £2.6m and (c) initial estimate £1.4m - £1.5m for scheme being put forward.

Programme

(a) planning submission – 6 months and (b) design, contractor procurement and construction – 2 years.

Questions asked: what happens in 3 years? Can carry out some of the work; would only need new application form. Why no increase to number of offices? Did look at greater 1st floor extension but contentious re planning and little space to go into roof. Ground floor has 5 desks in open plan office and meeting space; internal configuration can be changed easily. WCs are unisex and include a disabled toilet. Neighbour relations are OK but will be dialogue. Planning and design and access statement are only current notified requirements but planning authority could ask for other things including surveys to increase initial cost up to £10k.

Members voted to seek planning consent for the proposed redevelopment of the Sidewalk as presented with 3 abstentions and none against.

5. Children, Families, Youth and Young Adults.

Farrah reported on Children and Families Ministry; she ceases in her role on 31st July. God has been at work and brought much joy. We have seen so many children coming and growing and we have also seen Him stirring children's hearts in our community through assemblies and Open The Book. It's a great privilege. Farrah also expressed thanks for the support the fellowship has provided regarding LightFest, Christmas Party Carols, Easter Family Fun and Holiday Club to come. These events are so well attended and God has helped bring this about enabled by so many volunteers signing up. Her message was to continue this support and to report that many others are stepping into roles and teams for Open the Book and Action Tots. Keep volunteering and support those who do so on Sunday. Gillian and David Rose will be stepping down from Xtreme leadership after 21 years – Farrah acknowledged their dedication and the hours spent in caring for the children with love and passion. Kathryn and Rob Rowland will be taking over after a term of handover during the Autumn.

Helen Yarrow reported on Youth on behalf of Nikki Latham and commenting on the extent of planning preparation done by Farrah for the period after her departure. 1 application has been received for the Children & Families Worker vacancy but it was unacceptable due to lack of experience. The vacancy remains advertised for a further 30 days of NL. 1 application for the Youth & Young Adults Worker was received and of good quality but it has been withdrawn after the applicant accepted a position at another church believed to be more local. It is understood that there are many churches seeking children, Youth & Families Workers and prayer was sought.

The fellowship benefits from great leaders and volunteers. Phase continues to run through the summer with a couple of events also lined up in August – Liquid Leisure and Top Gold. Although thin on the ground, teaching continues on Sunday and at Refine and Roots. Any support would be welcomed – at Roots this might mean just turning up to provide an acceptable adult ratio. There is no need to lead – a team approach is used. This could be serving once every two weeks or even once a month. At Refine, a couple of leaders have stepped down but have been replaced. There are 85 youth on the books with over 50 in direct contact with some attending church on Sunday rather than a youth group.

6. Small Groups

Barry Dore advised that last Autumn as the church moved out of COVID, alongside other areas, the Leadership Team had reviewed Small Groups to determine what further improvements could be made. It had done this with the benefit of a church survey in January and feedback from the members' meeting as well as external consultancy with other similar-sized churches and a meeting with Small Group leaders in May. The survey included many positive comments especially support through COVID.

5 key focus areas had emerged. 1st = vision, their purpose and definition. No change in vision = supporting our mission statement but adjusting the purpose better to align to Acts 2:42-47 with service and mission, an outward focus, added to bible discussion, fellowship and prayer. 2nd = co-ordination with responsibilities of role-holder, currently Barry, to be described with suggestion of a volunteer assistant to bounce ideas off. 3rd = publicity and promotion both internally and externally. Real improvement seen as possible. This might include from front of church, visual display, foyer advertisement, website and social media. 4th = development of leaders. Aim is to move away from a sole leader to co-leaders – helps if circumstances change and one leader needs to step down with some groups recently closing in consequence of no one else to pick up. Includes how to develop new leaders. 5th = how to use Church Suite better to understand how many attending, the percentage of the fellowship engaging and evaluating how needs are being met.

Barry was questioned on next steps, responding that he is working with Marie Dendy on promotion and will be with David Rose on the web-site; a draft co-ordinator's responsibilities has been drafted for Leadership Team approval and he has met with Matt regarding Church Suite. Some groups have also been categorised as ministry groups rather than small groups.

7) Report from Church Treasurer

Slides were displayed which are on the website together with the report. Nothing much has changed. Income continues at £24k per month but this is £3.5k below budget. Pre-COVID, the level was £29k per month. Budget 2023 will soon be prepared and prayer is sought as it will be challenging given these levels.

At the 6-month stage offerings are £21k below budget but one-off donations and an unexpected legacy (Jim Green) means that total income is £2k above budget. Expenditure is £27k below budget which is primarily due to vacancies and a National Insurance refund and another refund from Limitless. The cash surplus is therefore £29k better than budget.

The books are with the auditors for the 2021 accounts. The auditors are now part of another group and whilst the individuals dealing with the audit are the same, the old firm has resigned and the members need to appoint the new firm which is called Xeinadin Audit Limited. The members approved with one abstention the appointment of Xeinadin Audit Limited as the new auditor.

8) Report from Church Secretary

a) Sunday fellowship

To be introduced in September fortnightly after the morning service. Remember too, the Big Church break-out at Willow Tree on 4th September.

b) Assistant Minister sabbatical

A 3-month sabbatical to run between April and June 2023 has been agreed for Barry. This is provided for in his Terms of Appointment – he has been with the church 7 years next year. The timing has been brought forward slightly so that it concludes before Derek's retirement. Barry will share his specific plans with members nearer the time.

c) Lead Minister recruitment

3 applications have been received thus far. The closing date is 10th September and an all church prayer meeting has been arranged for 11th September.

d) Sunday evening services

Thanks were expressed for the feedback from the last members' meeting. The format will change after the summer break whereby the worship service and Encounter that take place in the main hall on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month will be retained with 2 services introduced alongside including preaching, worship, and particularly for one of the services, prayer. These services will take place expectantly in the sanctuary.

e) Membership

The Leadership Team is starting to look at membership in conjunction with the requirement under our Constitution to keep the membership list up to date at least every 3 years. Time prevented breakout groups occurring enabling members to discuss the issue but all were asked to consider what the principal benefits and responsibilities of membership are for possible discussion at the next meeting.

9) AOB

Roy advised that following AOB comments at the last meeting, the scripture reference is now usually appearing on the Sunday information sheet and that the projection team held slides for the grace and Lord's prayer. He also announced the death of Liz Davie who used to attend. Gordon Webb proposed that as the shop units become available in Manor Way, they should be bought, relet, then when all acquired demolished and an underground car-park built with the church expanding its premises above. Roy expressed thanks to Steve Rogers for introducing a hearing loop in the main hall.

Derek Page closed the meeting in prayer.