

Minutes Church Members' Meeting
30th March 2022 at 8PM

Roy welcomed participants to the second hybrid meeting and advised that John Bawden was assisting as technical co-host on Zoom and Ros Monteath was taking the minutes. Roy thanked them both. There were 74 attendees: 28 in the room and 46 on Zoom connections.

Apologies: Carina Browne, Chrissie Dore, Mick Ledden and Sheila Wills

1. Prayer and worship

A time of worship followed by prayer began the meeting.

2. Approval of minutes of last meeting (26th January, 2022)

There were no questions or corrections. **Minutes were unanimously approved.**

3. Membership Applications – Group 1

Alison Dennis brought the item.

Jon and Laura Elliott interviewed by Roy and Liz Treadaway. Roy brought the reports.

Vote on Application for membership Laura Elliott – Approved.

Vote on Application for membership Jon Elliott – Approved.

Philip Sims interviewed by Geoff Easton and Chris Gardner. Chris brought the report.

Vote on Application for membership Philip Sims – Approved.

Denise Allen interviewed by Chrissie Dore and Jill Durn. Jill brought the report.

Vote on Application for membership Denise Allen – Approved with 1 Abstention.

4. Update on Big Church Gifting Project

Helen Yarrow brought the report. The mini-series on gifting has ended. We had our Serving Sunday. Thanks to those that have completed the survey. If you have not filled out the survey, you would have received an email about it and are encouraged to complete it. God calls us to serve, none more so than members of this church. Therefore, if you haven't completed it, you are encouraged to fill it in.

Approximately 110 forms have been completed. Helen asked for patience and understanding as the team go through the forms. It's not just a case of having a form. We are using ChurchSuite to enhance the opportunities we will have to make use of the skills survey. A huge thanks to Gillian Rose and Matt Easton for enabling the technical side of this using flows and tags, so that we are up to speed with what everyone is able to and offering to do. There is a meeting tomorrow to go through the forms and work out the best way to manage them and make sure that people are not put in a position doing things that is not appropriate or potentially for them to do things because they are doing too much already. We would love to know what you are doing and so that everyone can see and also so that we can affirm and thank you for everything you are doing. We will be making use of it. We will be using this information to ensure everyone has an opportunity to use the gifts God has given them.

There are a huge number of new faces coming into church and a number of folk coming into membership. It is wonderful to see a number of new families and so many children and youth coming in. Members are asked to prayerfully consider getting involved in Sunday groups and also in terms of reaching out in our technical side. We have assemblies and people coming into our church for weddings and funerals. It would be really helpful to have people available mid-week to support the technical side. Please pray about this. Please complete the form. A link can be found in the email sent from the Leadership Team last Thursday. On the church website, under Ministries tab, we have a new Spiritual Gifts tab where you can read more about God's gifts; bible references about what those gifts are, how and why you could/should be using those gifts. Thanks to David (Rose) for setting that up. Please have a look and consider why God is asking us to use this opportunity to use our gifts to serve Him. Helen invited for questions.

5. Membership Applications – Group 2

Alison Dennis brought the report.

Abel and Ruth Zea interviewed by Andy and Karen Ingram. Alison Dennis read the report provided by Karen and Andy.

Vote on Application for membership Abel Zea - Approved.

Vote on Application for membership Ruth Zea - Approved.

Anne Yehambaram interviewed by Ros Monteath and Tope Oshoswole. Tope brought the report.

Vote on Application for membership Anne Yehambaram – Approved.

Alison announced the death of Jim Green – a member since 1976 and Joyce Pople – a member since 1969.

Vote on deletion of Femi Oshewa from the membership list – contact lost. 97% Approved with 2 abstentions.

6. Children, Youth, Families and Young Adults

For those of you with good memories, you'll be aware that one of our strategic priorities that as a Leadership team we began addressing last year was Young Adults. As a church, we make significant investment in our children and youth but there is concern that their development into mainstream church as they gain adulthood is less than it could be and this investment can therefore be undermined. As our youth move on to university or stay in the area, a lot of thought and effort is needed to maintain connection, provide service opportunities in our fellowship and community and sustain and grow their spirituality and integration.

We are therefore aiming to put together a group of volunteers, who will be focused on this age-group, to support achievement of those aims but have recognised that we need someone who, like a Youth Leader, would have overall responsibility and be accountable for those objectives. With the church having been unable to recruit someone for the part-time Youth Leader post, possibly on economic grounds as an external recruit would likely need greater hours, your appointed leaders have agreed to create a full-time 35-hour post that spans both cohorts, i.e. youth and young adults and which obviously brings benefits by sustaining the existing relationships formed in their youth and possibly earlier. Work is already underway to build out the job description and begin recruiting as soon as possible.

It's proposed that it will be a 3-year contract with the cost of the additional hours, approximately £13k per year funded from the significant cash reserves that the church holds, in part of course generated by the reduced expenditure due to the current absence of a Youth Leader since John Reynolds left although our volunteers are doing a brilliant job in the interim which, as a fellowship, we should recognise.

Our children's work is going brilliantly with strong numbers on Sunday, over-subscription in Action Tots - we could easily run 2 groups if we had the volunteers. We've recently run several Open the Book sessions at our local schools. School assemblies have begun again and there are great plans for the Easter season. A big shout out to Farrah and her team of volunteers too. We will begin to recruit for when Farrah prospectively leaves us at the end of July. Roy invited questions.

Barry Dore said that he felt it was exciting that youth and young adults will be combined together and encouraged the church to pray for the recruitment process. Gordon Webb commented how much he enjoyed being part of the youth work at his church in North Harrow.

7. Membership Applications – Group 3

Hilary Ross-Smith, who is our new membership secretary designate, brought the next group of applications.

Adrian & Casiana Cornei - interviewed by Geoff Easton and Sheila Wills. Geoff brought the report.

Vote on Application for membership Adrian Ciornei – Approved with one abstention.

Vote on Application for membership Casiana Ciornei – Approved with one abstention.

Stefania Comanescu – interviewed by Alison Dennis and Zoe Wilkinson. Zoe brought the report.

Vote on Application for membership Stefania Comanescu – Approved with one abstention.

Christian Comanescu - interviewed by Evelyn and Luca Corrado. Luca brought the report.

Vote on Application for membership Christian Comanescu – Approved with one abstention.

All were encouraged to welcome the new members.

8. Report from Church Treasurer

Craig Rowland brought the report: a short presentation as it is only 2 months since the last report. Offerings are £7,000 below budget. This is distorted by £1,000 of offerings will be reported in March income because the standing orders were dated after the 28th February. The underlying shortfall in offerings was therefore £6,000, which was driven by the fact that we budgeted for an increase in offerings to our pre-covid level of circa £27,000 per month and yet have continued at the 2021 level of circa £24,000 per month. The 12-month rolling average for total offerings is also now flattening out at £24,000 per month and is now only 3.9% down year on year.

Whilst regular giving continues to struggle, we were once again blessed by another large one-off donation of £3,000 during the period and we also received the budgeted £25,000 from June Liddiard's Estate. This has meant that total income (£77,000) is £3,000 under budget, if one includes the £1,000 that will be reported in March.

Total expenditure to date is £79,000, which is £10,000 over budget. This high overspend was driven by the "catch up" of Health & Safety expenditure spent last year but paid for in January (circa £11.0k) and also expenditure on 8 Oxford Drive (circa £4.0k) in preparation for it being let out. Due to the fact that the Health & Safety expenditure related to prior years and that the expenditure on 8 Oxford Drive is capital in nature (e.g. new bathroom), the Finance committee has agreed that both these items of expenditure should be expensed from our reserves. This adjustment will be made in March.

Taking income and expenditure together gives us an overall deficit after two months of £2,000 which is £14,000 worse than budget. That said, once the two "reserve" adjustments are made we will be reporting a surplus of £12,000 for the first two months of the year and will be on budget. The Fellowship Fund is still available if we find that people have difficulties.

Finally, let me end on some encouraging news. We have recently received notification that we will be receiving a legacy of £10,000 from the estate of Jim Green. What a blessing it is that, even in death, Jim had made plans to support the church in its efforts to extend the Lord's kingdom. It is a reminder that, if finances allow, leaving a legacy to the church in our will is something that perhaps we should all consider.

9. Report from Church Secretary

The first item is to inform that Claire Bornman has stepped down as a deacon. She was due for re-election in November but other commitments meant that she felt that she could not sustain being a deacon until then. Claire has made an important contribution to our leadership team and we hope that at some stage in the future she will serve again. So, thank-you Claire.

The second item is to inform that our emergency evacuation procedures have changed slightly. Those of us with particular responsibilities will be picked up by Nikki Latham and trained accordingly and for any others, just memorise the slide that comes up each Sunday!

The third item is for those with particular interest in our denomination - the Baptist Assembly is taking place in Bournemouth between 14th and 15th May. You can join on-line – just hunt it out and register.

The fourth item is our Annual Report for 2021. It's completed and will be forwarded to you soon. Great read – do read it. A big thank-you to Stephanie van Zyl who helped to put it together and all the contributors.

The fifth item is a thank-you for the feedback on Small Groups given at the last members' meeting. Together with the survey data and other consultation undertaken by Barry, the review is well underway and doubtless, we will be feeding back to you,

And finally, COVID! We are entering a new phase: the Government's guidance on places of worship has now been withdrawn in its entirety and as you know it's all about 'Living with COVID'. Our strategy continues to provide an environment where so far as possible, we allow all of our family who have a wide range of attitudes towards risk to participate in our services and activities. Therefore, expect to see the zone in the sanctuary for those where mask wearing is obligatory to continue, although its size will adapt to the number of those who wish to continue to use it and we will not require you to wear a mask elsewhere, although feel free to do so. We will continue to monitor ventilation and use the air sanitisation machines.

We will be looking at introducing more fellowship opportunities around our Sunday services and the re-introduction of practices where multi-contact occurs such as bringing back communion into our Sunday services, where it is passed from person to person and the collection bags where as you have heard their absence has led to a significant income decline. However, as with the previous changes that we've made, we want to move in line with the broad consensus. I am therefore going to poll a question that invites you to respond to your readiness to such a move around multi-contact. There were no questions. Roy launched the poll: **I am ready to revert to passing communion and collection bags as before.**

Approved - 89%, Against - 7%, Abstained - 4%

10. AOB

There was no AOB.

Derek was invited to speak and share any comments. Derek advised that we ought to be encouraged as, in his 30+ years, he had never known so many people coming into membership at one meeting and still more waiting to come. That is phenomenally encouraging, that people are coming and wanting to be part of the life of this church. We don't pat ourselves on the back but we rejoice that God is leading folks to come and join us and be part of the body of Christ. The challenges we have had recently, ought to be the challenge we have throughout our Christian walk, the challenge to reflect on our ministries. Derek felt his ministry had drastically changed and he had not realised how drastically his ministry would change in the not too distant future. Now we are praying 'what next for us?' Derek felt the exercise we have taken recently, is a helpful exercise, to look again at our gifts, talents and skills. Fill in the form; not because we want to overload you – quite the contrary! Folk are concerned about filling in the form as they cannot take more on. Derek wants folk to fill in the form to identify where they are doing too much and could be encouraged to give something up. It is exciting that God wants to bless the body of Christ.

Derek shared some sad news that he and Carrie had heard this morning from Sharon, a previous member of RBC, former colleague and close friend of Carrie's, whose son Matthew had been missing for more than 24 hours. Derek asked for everyone to pray for a few moments that Matthew would soon be found well.

Derek prayed for Matthew, Sharon and family.

Roy thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.