

Minutes Church Members Meeting 24th November 2021

Roy Bawden opened the meeting. There were 73 people in attendance: 29 in the Main Hall and 44 on 39 Zoom connections. Apologies were received from Dave Connelly, Chrissie Dore, Sheila Frederick, Don Pople, Hilary Ross Smith and Marion Williams.

1. Prayer and worship

A song of praise was shared and Roy prayed.

2. Approval of minutes of last meeting (29th September 2021)

The Minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Deacons' elections

Roy read out a portion of an article in the September newsletter: "Under our Constitution, those 'persons having the general control and management of the administration of a charity' are defined as charity trustees. These are our appointed ministers, Derek and Barry and the deacons, whose maximum number is agreed by the members in meeting and is currently 15. Two of these positions are vacant at the moment. Deacons are appointed by members for a term of 3 years and may offer themselves for re-appointment on expiry. Those Deacons bringing themselves for re-appointment this month are Roy Bawden, Angela Davies, Chris Gardner, Craig Rowland and Helen Yarrow.

After many years of service, Mick Ledden is stepping down as a deacon, which will increase the vacant positions to 3. As a fellowship, we are very grateful to Mick for his hours of service to the Lord and we extend our deep thanks to him and his family, who have supported him. At God's leading, Evelyn Corrado, Emma Jones and Gus Jones have agreed to put themselves forward in the forthcoming election and have secured the necessary level of support under our Constitution to do so. A photograph of the candidates was shared. All candidates, whether new or seeking re-appointment, must secure 50% of the votes of those voting. Votes collected by secret ballot can be cast for all candidates. Postal votes have already been received, using the voting form supplied.

Ken and Linda Garwood have been appointed by Roy on behalf of the Trustees as scrutineers and will count the votes of those meeting physically, as well as postal votes. Zoom will count the electronic votes which will be viewed by the scrutineers. If more than one person is on a Zoom connection and wishes their additional vote to be counted, please use the 'chat box' function ensuring it is sent to Roy only and not to all. That way it will remain anonymous, apart from Roy, which is unavoidable. Electronic votes will be added to those counted by the scrutineers and Roy will announce the outcome. Roy invited questions.

Q Should the scrutineers be approved by the membership?

A No, under the constitution, it is the Trustees.

Whilst votes were counted, attendees were placed into chat rooms or break out groups for 10 – 15 minutes, to consider the following: RBC aspires to be a church that embraces all generations and includes opportunities for these to engage separately and together. Produce a list of up to 8 activities, including existing, that would best serve to achieve the latter and their suggested frequency. One person in each group to jot down ideas and send them to Roy by email. The results are attached as Appendix 1.

Roy reported that all those put forward for election have been voted in and welcomed them all.

Derek prayed, giving thanks for Mick's service, those who have been elected and the wider leadership team that we are blessed with.

4. Report from Church Treasurer (including 2022 Budget approval)

Craig Rowland brought the report.

Slides were shown and Craig explained their content. Offerings to the end of October (10 months) are 10.2% (£27,000) below the same period last year and 10.8% (£29,000) below budget. There is, however, an anomaly with this month's figures due to the fact that the October month end fell over the weekend and offerings of

£2,500 that should have been received in October were actually received on the 1st November. This has artificially lowered the reported offerings figure and therefore our underlying income position is slightly better than reflected in this report. We are forecasting that we will end the year at around £25,000 per month.

Although the church is now fully open we are still experiencing a drop in cash offerings, which is mainly due to the fact that we are not yet able to reinstate the “blue bag” collections for Sunday services and, as a result, we continue to lose revenue from Sunday collections. Due to church closure, furlough payments, less events and staff vacancies, expenditure was also down. In spite of the decline in offerings, the total revenue for the first ten months of the year is £367,000, which is £35,000 above budget and £25,000 above the same period last year. As previously reported, this favourable position has mainly been driven by the two legacies we have received from the estates of Eileen Thompson and Jean Lewis, which together total £50,000. In addition, we have received better than expected “one off” donations (£6,000 higher) and tax refunds (£8,000 higher). We have yet to receive the £25,000 legacy from June Liddiard’s estate which, when received, will mean that we will have received £75,000 of legacies during a very difficult year.

As regards expenditure, total expenditure to date is £296,000, which is £27,000 favourable to budget. This expenditure under spend is driven by the furlough payments (for the cleaning team), a general under spend through the church not being fully operational for parts of the year and a saving in staff costs because of vacancies.

In summary, if one takes into account the “missing” offerings of £2,500 received in November (mentioned above) then the shortfall in offerings of £26,500 (£29,000 - £2,500) has been totally offset by the expenditure under spend (£27,000), and the unexpected increase in “other” income (legacies, donations and tax refunds) has given us a cash surplus to date of £64,000 (including the “missing” income).

Looking forward to the end of the year, we expect to receive the £25,000 from June Liddiard’s Estate in December and we are now forecasting to finish with a surplus of circa £82,000. This does not include the maintenance work we will need to do to 8 Oxford Drive to prepare the property for rental, although our strong cash reserves will enable this work to be done.

As I mentioned at our last church meeting, we have been truly blessed by the receipt of significant legacies (and “other” income), that have put us in a strong cash position. We should, however, not lose sight of the fact that our underlying income and expenditure position is a cause for concern. If offering levels stay at their current level (i.e. flat year on year), we take into account the rise in inflation and the church is able to successfully fill its vacancies before the start of next year, then we will run at a significant deficit in 2022. At the last church meeting we discussed the Finance Committee’s plans to close this budget deficit and we discussed a first draft budget for 2022. We have now done further work on this budget and the Finance Committee and the Deacons have agreed a final budget proposal that was put before the members for their approval.

Budget for 2022

Alongside the report given, members are able to access a detailed copy of the final budget proposal for 2022 on the church website. The budget proposal is very much in line with the draft budget presented at the last members’ meeting, with the total income and total expenditure proposals being exactly the same and with only some tweaks being made between the various expenditure lines. All comparisons are against the 2021 forecast. As reported at the last members’ meeting, the key highlights of the 2022 budget proposal are: -

- Offerings are proposed to increase year on year by 13.6% (£40,000) to £330,000. The church closures in 2020 and 2021 have made it very difficult to assess a normal level of offerings. In the last “normal” church year to 31st December 2019, the church offerings totalled £351,000 (6.4% more than the proposed 2022 budget). It is also worth remembering that the budget that we agreed for 2021 was £322,000 and that we are proposing an increase of 2.5% on this.
- Whilst the Deacons recognise that the proposed increase in offerings is very challenging (against today’s position), they also recognise that the strength of our current reserves enables us to meet any shortfalls that arise as we try and bridge the gap on our journey back to “normal” levels of giving. We do not think

it would be appropriate to make significant expenditure cuts on our mission work in the UK and overseas to close the budget deficit, although this would have to be reviewed for 2023 if giving does not recover to “normal” levels in 2022.

- We are budgeting £13,000 for rental income from 8 Oxford Drive
- Total Income is budgeted to reduce by £36,000 (8.2%) year on year. This seems strange when the increase in offerings is considered, but this is mainly driven by the fact that we do not budget for legacies, which this year amounted to £75,000, and there will also be a reduction of £9,000 in the Gift Aid tax refund, because of the significant drop in offerings in 2021. This is because the refund is based on the previous year’s income.
- Total expenditure is budgeted to increase by £46,000 in 2022. The most significant increase is a £33,000 increase in staff costs and the impact of being fully staffed as from 1st January 2022. Our thanks must go to all the existing staff members and volunteers who have been covering the vacancies throughout 2021. Of the £33,000 increase in staff costs, approximately £9,000 is due to inflation and the employer NI increases, £10,000 is due to the restructuring of staff roles and the additional 11 hours per week in staff roles (November 2020 members’ meeting) and £14,000 is due to filling the staff vacancies. It is worth noting that when the restructuring of the staff roles was agreed last November, the point was made that the additional cost of £10,000 would be more than covered by the rental income from the manse (8 Oxford Drive) which, of course, was formerly part of the Youth Worker’s remuneration package.
- External mission costs are increasing by £3,000, which is driven by Sharon’s return to Moldova (which we hope may be in January) and an offsetting reduction in payments to our selected charities.
- The remaining cost increases are due to the loss of furlough payments, a significant increase in energy costs, the church getting back to normal and our mission work getting back on track.

Questions were invited.

Q Trevor Bradshaw asked if there were any plans to re-introduce the ‘Blue Bag.’

A The re-introduction of the Blue bag is high on our agenda but cannot be used at the present time. There are other ways to contribute digitally. We are having a moment in the service, that is a fellowship moment when we are offering back to the Lord. It is recognised that cash offerings are greater with the Blue Bags. Additionally, we have lost some members and have very few new people coming into church.

The 2022 Budget presented was approved unanimously. The fellowship was invited to pray.

5. Youth and Children update

Nikki Latham brought the report and gave an update on our children and youth.

Sunday Groups

Creche – 7 average attendance, Stars –10 average attendance, Sparks – 12 average attendance, Extreme –20 average attendance. Phase – 15 average attendance. More volunteers are required.

Mid-week groups

Action tots: 30 max 40, Roots: 15 -19 average attendance, not all church children. More help required.

Refine: 5-10 average attendance

Farrah has been to School Assemblies at Bishop Winnington Ingram and Whiteheath. Light Fest – Thank you to everyone who helped volunteer to make this evening happen. It was wonderful to see God at work not just within our church community, but bringing many families from the wider community. In every part of the church there were families laughing together and a real sense of joy. I have had so many comments from families saying how much they enjoyed the Light Fest and how they are looking forward to coming back next year. We are so thankful that so many families who don’t usually come to church were able to experience the joy of being in God’s house and knowing the message of His truth and light, which was shared with them at the end. God is at work in our community and I’m excited to see how He continues to work through us all. Please do continue to pray for those families, that God would guide their steps and maybe give them courage to come on a Sunday morning. With that in mind, we would really love to have more volunteers come forward to help at the Crafty Carols event. This event is another opportunity to share God’s love with our community. You don’t need to be any good at crafts to volunteer – we need people to help set-up, people to run stalls, people to make others feel welcome and loved! We hope that this event will not just involve nice crafts for the children to take home, but opportunities for us to get to know other families in our community whilst they have refreshments and of course to share the Christmas message with them at the carol service. Please do pray for this event, volunteer if you can and invite your friends and family along!

And finally, we need egg boxes! And lots of them before the 18th December!

We are also looking forward to welcoming Warrender & Lady Banks schools in to the sanctuary for Carol services.

Recruitment of Youth Worker

We have had 2 applicants for the youth workers position, both came and delivered to our mid-week groups, Roots and Refine. However, neither of them was consider right for the position. We are going to be chatting to our young people over the next couple of weeks and getting their view on what they would like in a youth leader now!

We are so thankful for the commitment, support, love and time from our Youth Volunteer teams at Roots Refine and Phase. Which have enabled us to keep connected with our people as we go through the recruitment process. Comments were invited.

Marianne Jeanes commented that the people we saw weren't right and once we have feedback from the children we will re-evaluate and then consider option as to where we go next. Nikki thanked all the volunteers for their commitment and support, as without a Youth Leader there has been more emphasis on the volunteers to provide a programme.

6. Membership matters

Alison Denis brought the report.

The death of Linda Harris was reported; a member since 1978 who will be sadly missed.

New members – Matt Easton became a member at RBC in 2008, went to university, then to Woking and after a time in SE Asia, is now back and wishes to be reinstated into membership at RBC.

The meeting voted to accept Matt Easton into membership - Approved.

Lyn Prior and Alison interviewed Farrah Easton. Farrah and her sister were brought up in a Christian home. Her parents were from Buddhist and Muslim backgrounds and became Christians in Uganda and Asia before coming to the UK. Farrah came to RBC at the age of 4. She always believed she was a Christian. She became a Christian at Spring Harvest. Farrah heard a message about God's mission to the world that spoke to her heart. Blaze group leaders organised a mission trip to SE Asia and both Matt and Farrah were on this trip. This opened Farrah's eyes as to what God was doing in the world and when they returned home, Farrah and Matt felt a seed had been planted and knew that they would return to this area and kept SE Asia in their hearts. After Matt and Farrah got married they lived in Woking and attended church there, where they served in various ways. In 2015 they left for SE Asia and studied the culture for 2 years. In 2017 Matt took a job with a university in China and Farrah worked with women from brothels, teaching them to make jewellery. They returned to the UK in 2019 to see family members who were unwell and planned to stay for 2 weeks. However, due to Covid, they remained in the UK. Farrah has recently been appointed as Temporary Children and Families worker at RBC and both she and Matt are planning to return to SE Asia when they can and the time is right. In the meantime, they are investing their time and energy. Farrah was baptised at RBC when she was 17 and is a member of the Miners small group. She understands the responsibilities of membership.

The meeting voted to accept Farrah Easton into membership.

Membership now stands at 288.

7. Report from Church Secretary

The report was brought by Roy Bawden.

Julie Ledden has been appointed as Pastoral Care Manager and started on 15th November. Pray for Julie as she finds her feet and serves us in this key ministry.

Following Nikki's appointment, Helen Yarrow is now Outreach Co-ordinator. Helen is a tireless servant of our fellowship.

Operations Manager Nikki is doing great work in organising First Aid and Fire Training that will provide a safe environment for anyone coming onto our premises.

Data Protection training. A detailed review has been undertaken and new policies put in place – details can be found on the web-site. All staff, trustees and volunteers that handle personal details, such as names and addresses, need to be trained in how to do so. Nikki, who is our Data Protection Officer, will be distributing by email some training materials that she will ask all relevant persons to confirm that they have actioned.

The fifth item is a quick COVID update. The COVID sub-group continues to meet but no longer weekly. More like fortnightly at the moment. Recent changes have included the cessation of leaving the sanctuary block by block, reintroduction of the offertory worship and prayer and we will now be removing the restriction on single occupancy of the toilet rooms.

Roy reminded members that good ventilation was one of the best ways to fight COVID 19 inside a building and gave details of a 2 step approach that is being employed. The first step is assessment of the ventilation with 8 CO2 monitors in use and how to interpret any move to Amber or Red. The second step related to action taken when the sensors indicated ventilation needed improving including re-opening of some doors or windows that may now be shut as the weather turns colder and the use of sanitisers with data given on how these work and the volume of air processed. A detailed article will be in the forthcoming Newsletter.

Other focus of the group has been around welcoming new people who have started coming to RBC and there are a lot of them. Members were implored to welcome or say something to somebody you don't know. It makes SUCH a difference especially to visitors who may not be by nature outgoing themselves. We therefore held a new persons' tea last Sunday when 26 came. An Explore course re: baptism and membership will be held on 9th January.

Another focus has been around fellowship which is harder given the fact we move away from the premises so quickly these days by comparison to the past. What a great day we had at the Big Church Breakout for example. On 28th November, we will be finishing our service at 11:30 sharp with tea and coffee stations placed around the church with a command for those of you who do not need to rush off to 'Go Fellowship', make some new friends and welcome those newcomers. Other matters which are work in progress, are those who have not returned to RBC yet and how we best respond.

Finally, **Christmas services**. A slide was displayed showing what is planned. There are 2 carol services, one where the programme will be directed towards our younger people with all welcome on the Saturday immediately after Christmas crafts, that we are calling Crafty Carols and then there will be a traditional carol service on the Sunday at 6PM. In the knowledge that the adult service, in particular, can get very crowded, we have decided to limit its capacity, so you will need to pre-book and include in the number of your booking any guests that you intend to bring along and are reasonably confident would come. That pre-booking will open soon so watch out for an announcement and my encouragement to you is to book early and thus not be disappointed. The service will be live-streamed. If it is fully subscribed quickly, we may provide a replica service at 8PM that may also need pre-booking.

The Senior Citizen's late Christmas Party will take place on 8th January.

Questions were invited.

Q Roy Treadaway 'there is only one Carols by Candlelight Service and whether family friendly service could be an alternative.'

A if the 6pm service is over-subscribed, we will look to having a replica service at 8pm on the Sunday.

Q Denis Golden – will there be service on Boxing Day?

A There will not be a service on Boxing Day.

Q Sally Pople – given the demographic of attendees, is it wise to have a Senior Citizens party?

A Numbers will be more limited this year and in line with those who are regularly attending Café Connect. It is voluntary to attend.

For the final time this year, Roy shared the key strategic objectives that our Leadership Team has been looking at over this past year alongside everything else they look at with all those emboldened having been reviewed in part or full by them. One has already been looked at tonight - inter-generational church. 2 others were touched on.

Firstly, Gifts and their Use. To reiterate a comment made at our last meeting, an early notice was given that a major exercise is programmed to occur in the first quarter of next year regarding the gifts God has distributed among us and how they are being used. It's a work in progress and Helen Yarrow is the project manager. Expect to hear more after Christmas.

The second is Senior Minister's Transition. With Derek retiring in Autumn 2023, the Leadership Team has set aside a team of seven to drive this process: 4 deacons and 3 members - Craig Rowland, Tope Oshowole, Duncan Tuft, Roy Bawden, Liz Treadaway, Helen Brown, and Nell Osborne. Recent work has included production for the recruitment pack that will likely be issued in the Spring of next year: firstly, a description of the church; secondly our medium-term goals and thirdly what attributes we would seek in a new Lead Minister. This has incorporated feedback from Derek himself.

In helping to prioritise these goals and attributes, Roy launched 2 polls. The 1st lists 10 medium term goals and members were asked to pick up to 3 but no more than 3 of what we considered the key ones to be. A sheet was handed out to those in the room. Roy apologised for not giving members a lot of thinking time but another way of looking at this is establishing what God is saying to and through you instinctively. The results are shown in Appendix 2.

The second poll question lists the top 10 characteristics sought in a Lead Minister. Again, members were invited to pick up to 3. A sheet was handed out to those in the room as before. The results are also shown in Appendix 2.

The results of those voting via Zoom were in line with those in the room; a concern having been expressed that not all options were visible unless the poll was scrolled.

Roy thanked members for their contributions. The leadership team want to involve the church membership as much as possible in this process and will keep the church informed. There is a separate group of prayers in the church praying specifically for the team and this process but all of our prayers are encouraged. Finally, if any member has specialist expertise in recruitment or knows of a member who does, please let Roy know.

In response to a question from Sara Jones, Roy advised that it was the intention to provide teaching to the church around finding God's person for us and that this formed one of several actions on a plan that the team had produced.

8. AOB

Roy Treadaway – questioned the wisdom of retaining the antiquated image used on Sunday to remind people to switch off mobile phones.

Barry Dore closed the meeting in Prayer.

APPENDIX ONE

1. Create an inter-generational choir involving many generations of people to enable of exchange idea and learning with something in common.
2. Create opportunity for younger generations to teach older people social media skills and other APPs such as WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.
3. Overseas missionaries communicating with other RBC members. For example Farrah Easton's session on China and may be Siobhain Cole on Papua New Guinea to inspire the younger generations.
4. The recent Altogether Day was a great success, more of these events especially outside of Church premises would be great.
5. Encourage youth members to do more bible reading in Church.
6. Older people reading stores and in creche on Sundays.
7. Older people sharing their personal experiences especially how they came to Christ and may be through presentations to Youth organizations. However, this could also involve other hobbies and not necessary religion.
8. Youth group involve on the annual Holiday Club event; could be the preparation leading up to the event or during the few days of Holiday Club itself.

1. Big Church Breakout
2. Family worship time morning service/family services
3. Meal or other activity where age groups are mixed.
4. Have small groups with teenagers and adults.
5. Have older people join teenage groups to give their testimonies or children and youth give their testimonies in church.
6. Games night/barn dance for all generations/multi-generational quiz night.
7. Encourage different generations to vist groups aimed at a different generation.
8. Invite older folks to craft evenings etc/younger people teaching older generation computer skills.

1. Pot Luck Sunday lunch at church - quarterly
2. Youth involvement in Sunday services - prayers, readings, presentations, stewarding - regularly
3. Church community show (not as outreach) - annually
4. An end of summer away-day - annually
5. Rambling/Cycling group(s) - quarterly
6. Dads and Kids camp - annually
7. Mums' night off - quarterly

1. Big Church Break-Out - annually
2. All age services - monthly
3. House Party - Bi-Annual
4. Thy Kingdom Come as all-age church event - annually
5. Serving events e.g. Holiday at Home, Holiday Club, Light Party
6. Mentoring
7. Prayer triplets intentionally cross-generational

1. Big Church Break-Out - annually
2. Holiday Club - annual
3. All-age service and then activity break-out - annual
4. Mentoring
5. Prayer-group
6. Community Outreach project
7. Overseas mission project
8. Younger generation serving older generation with practical jobs
9. Virtual activity e.g. blog

APPENDIX TWO

Top Goals Pursue over next 5 years						
	Hall	%	Zoom	%	Total	%
Continue biblical-based teaching	27	100	30	86	57	92
Strengthen children, youth and family work	16	59	19	54	35	56
Energise volunteer base	8	30	8	23	16	26
Improve member connection	3	11	11	31	14	23
Engage further with local community	12	44	15	43	27	44
Develop our technological capability within and externally	1	4	3	9	4	6
Explore Christian responses to contentious issues	9	33	9	26	18	29
Improve church engagement in world issues	2	7	5	14	7	11
Support persecuted Christians	2	7	2	6	4	6
Maintain buildings and explore other sites	1	4	1	3	2	3
Total responses	27		35		62	

Note: there were 73 persons in meeting - not all could participate if joint on Zoom

Top Qualities next Lead Minister must have						
	Hall	%	Zoom	%	Total	%
A shepherd teacher concerned for their sheep	11	39	11	39	22	39
Passion for worship, evangelism and prayer	11	39	11	39	22	39
Enthusiastic and motivational leader and team leader with good communication skills	16	57	16	57	32	57
Passion for families and children and understanding of their role in kingdom building	5	18	2	7	7	13
Strong theologically, good bible teacher with relevant application	21	75	23	82	44	79
Engaging and empathetic personality that people warm to	2	7	9	32	11	20
Strategic and inspirational thinker with vision for kingdom development	10	36	5	18	15	27
Ability to challenge and inspire the Leadership Team	4	14	5	18	9	16
Good understanding of power of technology and ability to facilitate outreach	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robust person able to receive feedback positively	4	14	1	4	5	9
Total responses	28		28		56	

Note: there were 73 persons in meeting - not all could participate if joint on Zoom