

SUTTON COLDFIELD BAPTIST CHURCH

Church Members Meeting Minutes

5th May 2022

Attendance: 84 Quorum: 81

1. Welcome and Prayer.

Donald gave an introduction looking at scriptures about Elders including Acts 14:23, Act 15:6, Act 16:4, 1 Timothy 5:17 and Titus 1:5-6.

Donald prayed.

2. Minutes of the last meeting.

Mark presented the minutes of the last meeting of 3rd February 2022, which were agreed and accepted.

3. Membership

Cath Bogle was brought into membership.

Steve and Lindsay Drury transferred their membership to Chester Road Baptist Church.

4. Finance Update.

2022 up to the end of April 2022

Income £ 210,254.33

Expenditure £ 166,375.97

Fund Transfers £ 56,207.76

In year balance -£12,329.40

2022 Opening Balance £10,079.75

General Fund Balance -£2,249.65

Mark also confirmed the following:

- Income is below budget by £16,299.40.
- Things are challenging and we're also enormously grateful for the care and love reflected in the figures.
- Please pray for new givers, especially for ones by Standing Order.

Donald shared how the figures have improved following the recent email, there were several one off gifts.

Donald prayed.

5. Outreach worker.

Donald shared that in light of the current unstable financial situation the leadership believe it is right to, at this moment, pause on appointing an Outreach Worker. At the next Church Members' Meeting in July information on this role will be presented.

6. Church Governance

CIO – Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Thanks were expressed to those who have looked over the CIO documentation made available following the last Church Members' Meeting in February.

Mark gave a brief summary of the process to date using some of the slides from the last meeting in order to set the context.

Donald shared how the constitution does not define how everything should be done but to provide a safeguard.

Following the consultation period the feedback is grouped into three sections; amendments, clarifications and questions.

Amendments

One significant amendment was noted. Clause 13.8.10 has an incorrect percentage, the clause should read 66% rather than 75%.

One clause requires clarification. Clause 9.2.4 indicates the interest rate on money loaned to the church by a connected person or Charity Trustee. Anthony Collins Solicitors will be contacted to confirm what happens if interest rates are negative in the context of this clause. Donald noted that the Church Members' Meeting have the right to not proceed with the vote without hearing back from Anthony Collins Solicitors on this matter.

A comment was made that indicates the wording is likely sufficient as it states who the interest is charged to.

There were two proposed amends to the Additional Practices and Procedures document which will be presented to a future Church Members' Meeting.

- 1) The constitution does not state that Elders are Charity Trustees.
- 2) The minimum voting age for a member.

Clarifications

The following matters were points of clarification:

- The constitution uses different terms (Church Secretary, Church Treasurer, Church Administrator). Donald noted how these are roles undertaken by Mark as Administration Team Leader and are part of the job description.
- The constitution does not refer to other legislation as other legislation bring the church under their jurisdiction.
- The process for appointing Charity Trustees was clarified; any member can suggest someone other than themselves which the Leadership Team prayerfully consider, if the team is unanimous then interviews take place, following that if the Leadership Team are unanimous the name is brought to the Members' Meeting where 75% of the vote must be obtained.

Questions

The following questions were raised during the consultation:

- 12.1.4 – A member shall be a natural person. This is a legal term to indicate an individual person rather than a company or other legal entity.
- A question regarding insurance clarified both the acceptable cover for the church with the proposed legal structure and the need for Trustee Indemnity Insurance.
- The constitution requires meeting minutes be retained in paper form. It was confirmed that they can (and are) also stored digitally.
- A clause regarding ministerial vacancies has been removed from the proposed constitution due a change in Baptist Union practice. The church is not precluded from following any of the options in the existing constitution.
- The process for raising matters for the Church Members' Meeting were outlined. Donald noted the importance of speaking with him in the first instance if anyone has issues or concerns. Following raising a matter with Donald the issue may be resolved, referred to the Members' Meeting or referred to the Leadership Team. There is provision in the constitution for 10% of the members to request a meeting. The Leadership Team welcome emails with comments, reflections or questions.
- The process for reviewing the Church Members' List was outlined.
- A question was raised to define the term 'exceptional circumstances'. An answer from the Baptist Union legal team will be made available. In principle it is a last resort clause as required in Charity Law.
- A question regarding close family members serving as Charity Trustees was raised. The constitutional safeguard is the individual must receive 75% of the vote.

Resolution

The Church Members' Meeting were invited to vote on the constitution using the resolution prepared by Anthony Collins Solicitors subject to two points:

- 1) The percentage in clause 13.8.10 being set at 66% rather than 75%.

2) Anthony Collins Solicitors providing clarification around clause 9.2.4 regarding negative interest rates.

Mark walked the meeting through the four clauses which make up the resolution.

As the meeting is a Special Church Members' Meeting the vote would need to be at least 75% to be approved.

Voting slips were provided to all members and counted by two scrutineers.

7. Fun Run Fun Day

Cath shared with the meeting the plans for the Fun Run Fun Day on 29th May.

8. Church Governance – Voting results

Donald shared the result of the vote.

98.5% voted in favour of becoming a CIO according to the resolution.

Donald ended the meeting with a time of prayer.