

# Church Members Meeting Minutes

11<sup>th</sup> July 2021



WESTBOURNE PARK  
BAPTIST CHURCH

20 church members were present on zoom. Details will be recorded in the Attendance Book. There were no apologies for absence given on behalf of others in the meeting.

The minutes of the May Member's Meeting were available on the website. No comments or changes were advised by those present.

## LOVE GOD

**Sunday Worship Update and Transition after 19<sup>th</sup> July:** Ken Asiedu shared the following update:

- Legal restrictions on churches and worship services are expected to be removed after 19<sup>th</sup> July
- Government guidance will replace this, which is expected out on 12<sup>th</sup> July
- Recommendations from the Baptist Union will be available during the week
- We will have to update our risk assessments as a church as the COVID situation changes
- However, we hope to have a more normative worship experience, even if some adaptations remain in place
- We do plan to continue with an online presence through live-streaming the services

There is awareness that it is not easy for everyone to return to services, or to reduce protection measures. We will need to put what is right for our church family in place, and be sensitive to others needs. At the moment those running Sunday School and parents are not able to attend in person. The children's groups will finish for the summer at the end of the school term. It was highlighted that it can feel as if not attending in person is due to laziness, but there are other genuine reasons why people cannot come, so sensitivity is needed.

## LOVE CHURCH

**Black Lives Matter: WPBC way forward:** As a church we have been discussing this since the unlawful killing of George Floyd in 2020. We had a really honest and helpful discussion at the September Member's Meeting, but things have not moved forward since then. The Core Leaders would like to suggest we have a plan in place for the autumn term. Principles of why we need a church response include:

- The importance of continuing conversation and understanding of culture, inclusion and resolution of hurt within WPBC
- Acknowledgement that our cultural diversity is one of the important strengths of the church
- The importance of ensuring all people in the church experience inclusion
- The importance of children and young people growing up in the church feeling equally valued
- Modelling true inclusion for the church for future generations

The Core Leaders suggest the following steps to open up conversation and increase understanding:

- Sermon series and Fellowship Group discussions in the autumn on 'Loving Justice'
- A one day workshop for all church leaders (Core Leaders, Coordinators, Fellowship Group Leaders, Activity Leaders and people in position of influence in the church) on Cultural Intelligence and Inclusion, working towards "making equality, equity, and inclusion a lived-in reality in all organisations".
- Establish a Task Team to create a rolling programme of sessions, such as:
  - Use of Baptist Union "Just Aware" resources/other resources for discussion
  - Establish 'in house' discussion group programmes, exploring issues of life within diverse groups and learning from each other

The meeting split into discussion groups to consider the principles and the suggested steps. Initial feedback was received and the following suggestions made:

- We need to include outward facing / community in our principles and practice. Suggestion that we add to the last principle “Modelling true inclusion for the church and community for future generations”
- We need to be God centred / Biblically based in our response and not driven by political agendas
- We may need to change direction on this journey as things change
- We can incorporate ideas from our work places as well
- We need to learn how to pick up on subtleties of prejudice / discrimination and need training for this
- We need to be aware of the exhaustion of victims having to speak for themselves, and build up allies to speak up for others
- We need to have ways to have open dialogue / forums for people who have been hurt to speak out, and to be listened to, and actions taken
- The suggested steps are all OK.
- The idea of small groups communicating, learning and understanding from each other is positive
- Having a few people identified, trained, and advertised, who people can go to if they need to talk through an issue was suggested
- Similar to the subject of safeguarding a few years ago, we need to have wider conversations and become comfortable with talking about culture, inclusion and prejudice as the norm in our church

**Safeguarding Annual Update:** Elizabeth shared the annual reminder of the principles of the safeguarding children, adults and young people guidance for the church, and highlighted the importance of us all being alert and responding / reporting any concerns. There is a reported significant increase in domestic and child abuse reports as we are emerging from COVID lockdown as a country, and we need to be alert to this for people we will come across in the church and the community. We watched the ‘Kids Are Safe Here’ short video as a reminder of our practice around children’s groups and safeguarding being everyone’s responsibility.

## STEWARDSHIP OF GOD’S RESOURCES

**Financial Update:** A report for the first quarter of 2021/2022 accounts was presented as below:

	3 month budget	3 month actual	Balance
<b>Church Income</b>	£ 27,612.50	£ 25,161.02	-£ 2,451.48
<b>The Venue Income</b>	£ 42,751.73	£ 25,714.75	-£17,036.98
<b>Church and Venue Salaries/Pension</b>	£ 31,740.72	£ 27,368.11	£ 4,372.61
<b>Church Expenditure</b>	£ 19,799.99	£ 15,672.42	£ 4,127.57
<b>The Venue Expenditure</b>	£ 18,144.73	£ 17,929.55	£ 215.18
<b>Balance</b>	£ 678.79	-£ 10,094.31	

The Gift Aid return has been submitted, which is £13,663.61 for last year. This is less than usual, due to offerings having been less due to the church being closed for so many months of the year. However members were thanked for their faithful tithing, as offerings via bank transfer and the website donations, have remained strong. Prayer was asked for the bookings of the church building to increase as this will bring much needed income to support the running of the building.

**Marriage Registration Update:** Elizabeth Welch updated the meeting that we now have the registration to conduct marriages between a man and a woman. It is a new process since the old building closed, so we are taking time to ensure we know how to do it before advertising this fact!

**Closing:** As the meeting had completed all agenda items Abena closed the meeting with prayer

**Next Members Meeting** 12<sup>th</sup> September 2021