

# Church Members Meeting Minutes

10<sup>th</sup> January 2021



The meeting was held via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Minutes & Attendance** The minutes of the November Meeting are available on the website. No comments or changes were advised by those present.

**WESTBOURNE PARK**  
BAPTIST CHURCH

43 Church Members were present. A record of names will be put into the Attendance book.

**Opening:** At the start of the meeting it was acknowledged that this is the first meeting since the sudden death of our pastor, Jem Sewell on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020. It has been a difficult time and was inevitably difficult to meet together today. Ken Asiedu opened the meeting with prayer

**How are we?** In acknowledgement of how hard it has been since Jem died, those present were encouraged to go into breakout rooms to give time and space for people to share how they personally are following Jem's death and how they feel the church is doing.

Feedback from three of the groups received:

- Most people are ok
- Church - impressed by the way the church has stayed together.
- Miss the sound of worship around and a suggestion of a song we can all sing together, even with bad internet lag.
- The church is growing
- Zoom has created an opportunity to join in things like prayer groups which would not have happened in real life.
- Appreciation for leaders and the way they have kept us together and planning us through this all.
- We need to look to re-establishing a routine.
- We are grieving for the nation.
- The Church is still managing to stay together. A good number of people are watching services live and after the services. We think we are growing.
- God has blessed us and being good to us through it all.
- Personal updates were shared within the rooms.
- Jem's death is taking time to sink in. People are both OK and not OK. It has felt like a series of relentless hits, but we are responding well.
- finding space to grieve is hard and there are good and bad days.

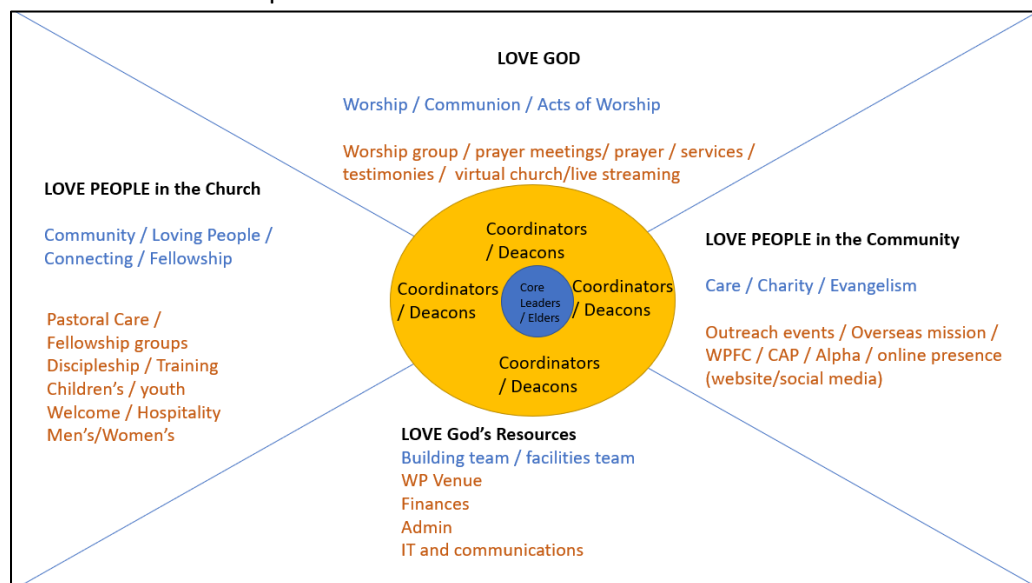
**Pastoral support for Hil Sewell:** There has been an outpouring of support for Hil and the family, which has been really appreciated by Hil. Those who have provided meals and help were thanked. Hil has gone to stay with friends for a few weeks, with Lydia having returned to University and Bryony to her flat and back to work. Hil has begun to do some working hours for her job, whilst being supported and practically cared for by her friends.

Concern has been expressed about the church's support for Hil, and Elizabeth reassured that the Terms of Appointments for Pastors, enables Hil to stay in the Manse for 6 months in these circumstances. She is aware of this, and that this is a minimum time in our view. We also wanted to ensure that she does not need to be anxious about money, and following taking advice, the church gave her a gift in December, equivalent to Jem's take home pay. The plan was to continue this over the next few months. However, Hil has asked for financial gifts to be stopped, as she feels the provision of the house, with the costs continuing to be paid (bills/council tax) is significant support. Elizabeth has discussed this with her, and Hil has promised to come to us if she needs additional financial support. There was general concern amongst Members and expression that the church should continue to support Hil financially. Elizabeth will discuss this with her again, but did reiterate that the house provision is helping Hil financially.

Ken updated the meeting on repairs currently taking place in the manse. There has been a leak in the roof, which has been fixed. This has highlighted issues with the chimney and guttering, and Ken is arranging a surveyor to review these.

While Hil is away we are also taking the opportunity to redecorate where the flood was and the top floor bedrooms, as these should have been done during 2020, but were put on hold due to lockdowns.

**Church Structure and getting involved:** Elizabeth shared an updated diagram from the one that Jem presented at the Members' Meeting in November, with his suggestion for how we structure the leadership and activities of the church. Time was spent in breakout rooms to enable discussion on how we can move this from a diagram to something that makes a difference in practice.



Feedback from 3 of the discussion groups received:

- What can we do to continue God's mission for the church?
- Ideas suggested include Alpha course / Calling people / Evangelism / 16 to 20's group / Mission work / helping parents.
- The church has very good kitchen facilities ---can the church offer hot meals to local community (for those in need). This is an opportunity for church members who can volunteer to cook, others to deliver to those in need or the food can be collected, also to establish a link from local businesses who can donate food to be cooked and have some one to make list of those in need of these hot meals.
- For the church to provide a support for those who do not or cannot connect with the church through technology ---- maybe provide smartphones, kindle, internet connections and support and education to use these devices.
- Have someone call or write to these individuals and find out how we as the church can help them connect.
- Suggestions for headings for each area:
  - Love Community OR Charity & Mission - instead of Love people in the Community
  - Love Church – instead of Love people in the Church
  - Love God's Resources or Stewardship
  - Acts of Worship - instead of Love God
- How do we encourage people to do these things?
- Look at what they do, who are in charge and what are they to do? What is vision? What is the plan of the area?
- The structure might help people to do something? - Getting a programme for doing things, including a rota and a back up.
- Try out over a few months - so people can see what things are like but not have to do them forever.
- There may be a fear of commitment - It encourages people if it's not a forever and just a trial
- Having a role description would help to clarify things
- What is happening with the Black Lives Matter discussion?

Thanks were expressed for the many thoughts and ideas. These will be collated and actions discussed.

**Financial Update:** Geoff presented an overview of the accounts in the first 9 months of this financial year. Geoff explained that we have had a loss of income due the building being closed, but giving from the church family has remained consistent, and we are blessed by this. We have furloughed the cleaning staff and some of Antonio Prata and Patricia Chering's time related to the building. The legacy payment from Dolphin Living has been an amazing provision at this time. Member's were asked to pray for the financial situation.

**Finance: Budget vs Actual April 2020 to December 2020**

	9 month budget (revised)	9 month actual
Church Income	66,214.50	177,095.35 (includes £100,000 from Dolphin)
Church Expenditure	77,862.00	109,986.69
Staff costs	47,958	65,443
Admin costs	9225	25,286 (includes solicitors fees of 22,225)
Ministries costs	17,170	20,679
The Venue Income	55,343	49,163.75
The Venue Expenditure	92,787	61,722
Staff costs	54,432	37,478.55
Manse/flat costs	3,287	3,870
Building costs	35,068	20,373.11
<b>9 month balance</b>	<b>Income: 226,259</b>	<b>Expenditure: 174,088</b>
		<b>Balance: 52,171</b>

Response: Q: Why was the budget for the venue expenditure so much higher than the budgeted income? A: *As the building was so new when the budget was set it was a pure estimate. We will have a more accurate figure for the budget for the next financial year.*

**Closing:** Ken closed the meeting with prayer

**Next Members Meeting** 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021