

# Church Members Meeting Minutes

14<sup>th</sup> March 2021



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

**Minutes & Attendance** The minutes of the January 2021 Meeting are available on the website. No comments or changes were advised by those present.

**WESTBOURNE PARK**  
BAPTIST CHURCH

27 Church Members were present. There were 4 apologies. A record of names has been recorded in the Attendance book.

**Opening:** Abena Boateng opened the meeting with James 1:5 and prayer.

Members were informed that WPBC building has won a Highly Commended in the Civic Trust Awards 2021.

## LOVE GOD

**Sunday Worship Discussion:** Following the government roadmap out of lockdown, discussion was held in small groups, particularly focused on when WPBC should begin the transition back into the building for worship services, bearing in mind that any decisions will need to adjust if government advice changes. The feedback from groups and overall consensus was that we should begin streaming from the Sanctuary as soon as possible, and work towards a ticket system for the largest number capacity from Easter Sunday, possibly 40 depending on the number of family groups. The following comments were made: For streaming from the sanctuary with zoom linked, there are technical aspects that need to be resolved; zoom is not inclusive as it is difficult for people with English not as first language; there will be a feeling of disconnect on zoom once more of the service is focused in the church; people need to be given choice, perhaps via a survey or a personal phone call to encourage people to return when they are ready; we could use additional spaces in the church with separate arrival/exit times to increase capacity; possibly have more than 1 service on Easter Sunday so everyone who wants to can be there; for ticketing we need to prioritise those who find it hard to connect via zoom.

## LOVE CHURCH

**Black Lives Matter** next steps: Following discussions in Member's meetings in 2020 there have been conversations with individuals and Jem and Elizabeth were looking at adapting a questionnaire from a local community organisation. This has not been progressed since Jem's death. Elizabeth has had an exploratory conversation with an organisation **Above Difference** who work with the Bible Society in providing support and training for churches around Cultural Inclusion. They would provide a one day workshop for leaders and those in positions of influence, as well as focus groups. They also offer preaching. There is a cost to this. Suggestions from the members included: Asking Above Difference to preach and then discussing it further in Fellowship Groups; partner with other churches to share the cost of the training/focus groups; ask individuals if they want to contribute towards the days training; contact the BU Diversity Lead; Apply for grants to cover the costs; include / filter learning to children and young people. These helpful suggestions will be discussed further, aiming to ensure we lay good foundations for the church for future generations. A chat comment suggested we need to find out what people want before planning anything. This will be followed up in light of conversation in the Member's Meeting in September 2020.

**Church Leadership Elections:** The elections due in November 2020 were postponed for 6 months as we were looking at our leadership structure. The members were asked if we could further postpone them to November 2021 due to covid impact and Jem's death. It was asked that we avoid November as it will be just before the anniversary of Jem's death. Agreed to hold a discussion at next members meeting on the roles of leadership and whether we could have an in-person meeting in the summer in case autumn brings another period of lockdown.

## LOVE COMMUNITY

**Alpha Course:** Nicole Charles updated the meeting on the forthcoming Alpha course which is planned to start in the first week of May for 10 weeks. She has a large team of people involved and they are meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> April to plan. Prayer was requested for this.

**Westbourne Park Pantry:** Patricia Chering shared information and photos of the new Food Pantry, which has been open 2 weeks and has 29 Members, 18 of whom have shopped so far. It is a good opportunity to link with local people in need, support them with food provision and also link them with other services the church and family centre run. The question was asked whether we could see if people need other items such as toys/children's clothes, etc. This can be explored as we want to support people but need to be careful that the church does not become the place people just drop off unwanted/needed items. We do need more food providers and anyone with any contacts was asked to get in touch.

**Easter Window Display:** Geoff Biggs updated on the way the church windows are being used to present the gospel to the community. For Easter there will be banners in 3 windows and an Easter scene set up with a cross, crown of thorns and red cloth building up to Easter Sunday, then flowers on Easter Day. It is an opportunity to present the gospel in images. The suggestion was made that the TV is also used with a rolling video for people to see.

## STEWARDSHIP OF GOD'S RESOURCES

**Budget 2021/2022:** The proposed budget for 2021/2022 has been circulated to the group of people who scrutinise it. Questions raised have been responded to. The budget was agreed by 80% of those present.

**Church Member's Meetings:** in order for us to continue to do Member's meetings virtually, we have been advised by the Baptist Union that a change is needed to our church constitution. Template wording was shared, and a decision needs to be made between whether we amend it to being able to hold any member's meeting virtually or just in exceptional circumstances. The decision needs to be taken at an Extra Special Member's Meeting, so this will be scheduled for after a service during April. It was highlighted that it is good practice for organisations to have at least one meeting a year in person, possible the Annual General Meeting.

**Green Plaque Update:** Ken Asiedu updated the meeting that the Green Plaque application that Jem put in for John Clifford has continued to be progressed. The suggested wording is REV. DR. JOHN CLIFFORD RENOWNED NON-CONFORMIST LEADER AND SOCIAL ACTIVIST WAS PASTOR OF WESTBOURNE PARK BAPTIST CHURCH FROM 1877 TO 1923. We will continue to follow this up.

**Marriage Registration Update:** Elizabeth Welch updated the meeting that the registration of the building for marriages has been returned as it was signed by Jem. Elizabeth now needs to countersign it, and we have been asked to submit the actual wording of the legal clauses that will be used. The Core Leaders have sought advice from another pastor and decided to use the traditional wording that was formerly used at WPBC. The question was asked what form of marriage we have applied for, and it was clarified that this will be for marriage between a man and a woman. Abena confirmed that the Members had signed a form for this in previous member's meetings. We are getting enquiries regarding people booking the church for their weddings, and Felicia asked that we offer singers / pianist services as part of the package on offer.

**Any Other Business:** Pastoral: Lydia Sewell provided an update on her Mum's health. People wanting to send cards to Hil were asked to send them to the Manse or Church, and Elizabeth will post them on.

Thanks were expressed for the Mother's Day cards that had been sent out to all the Mum's in the church. And on behalf of the Core Leaders, Elizabeth expressed thanks for all the prayers, support and offers of help they are receiving.

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

**Next Members Meeting** 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021