

**Caversham Baptist Church
Ordinary Church Members' Meeting
Sunday 2nd October 2022, after morning worship
MINUTES**

Present:

21 members

3 non-members

4 apologies

Chair: Rev'd Colin Baker

Opening prayer

1. **July minutes** were approved.

2. **CB report on sabbatical.**

Colin shared reflections on his recent 3-month sabbatical. See attached appendix for the full transcript.

Colin stressed one important point – about small groups - at the close of his reflections (again see attached for full transcript):

How much better is it, the Lord is saying to me, when brothers and sisters in dwell together (Psalm 133:1). The Lord is challenging me on an area of my life where I struggle, (anything medical), to help those who are struggling spiritually. Brothers and sisters, we shouldn't be trying to do this on our own - DISCIPLESHIP (the Heart to Others part of the vision)

Therefore, the vision before us is to dare to believe we can connect everyone with a small group. We shall need to establish new groups and train new leaders. Colin is currently working on what our groups will look like in the future but initially he would like to hear from everyone who doesn't yet attend a group to let him know:

- What kind of small group would you like to be part of?
- What day/time would be your preference?
- Would you like to host a group in your home?
- Would you like to lead a group (if supported with training?)

Colin will share his experiences and feelings about the Holy Land on **Monday 7th November at 7:30pm.**

3. **Reading Festival outreach feedback**

Rebecca Reading thanked all who prayed and worked on the Reading Festival outreach. It was a success pastorally and spiritually; many festival goers were very open to talk and share and there was lots of appreciation for the hospitality at CBC. The frontage of the church was still boarded up for that weekend, and the Festival outreach will be much easier to do next year with the church frontage open.

4. **Feedback on fun day / relaunch**

Many people from the community came. Our eldest member Peter Ousley was very pleased to be able to cut the re-opening ribbon alongside one of our youngest members, Kady Chang. Many people visited the church building because they were interested to see the refurbishments, and this is ongoing. Many thanks are recorded to those who organised the fun day.

5. **Feedback on Worship Weekend with Noel Robinson**

God rewarded our faith in him – we brought what we had in terms of musicians to support Noel Robinson and were rewarded. God is good! There are audio recordings available on the new website; the current site

doesn't have sufficient capacity. Coming to church is about worshipping together, we have already applied some of what we learned about developing our worship, and the challenge is ongoing.

6. Finance including gift day

Richard Wilson (Treasurer) advised that the September budget report shows that we have broken even for the year to date. There had been an expected deficit of around £10,000 but this is now a few hundreds. Income has been better than expected to date. The end of year forecast is a deficit of about £3,500. We have had a number of unbudgeted costs this year. These include valuation of the building, professional evaluation of the 2021 accounts and a new printer so we can get rid of the leased one. There are significant challenges for next year – for example the energy bill which is the biggest individual item after salaries, and will now be larger. The gas (renewed in May) price has gone from 4p to 10p per unit. The electricity tariff runs out in December and will renew at a higher cost. The recommended stipend (salary) increase for Baptist ministers is 7 per cent. Therefore we are facing a challenging position for next year.

Even with the saving outlined in **Item 7** below, the draft budget for next year shows a deficit in the thousands. We plan to have a gift appeal to help with the ongoing cost base, and to help with items to finish off some of the building activities – including furnishing the lounge to make it a more inviting space. The lounge will cost approximately £5,000 to £6,000 – funds which we do not currently have. Other items include a TV screen for the youth room and a bike shelter in the car park. One-off gifts or increases to standing orders would be welcome.

The next major piece of work on the church building is the windows. We have had some repaired, but need to put together funds, including some grant funding. It will probably cost in the region of £100,000 to do all the windows – spread over a long period of time (a decade or so). If anyone feels a calling to give towards this work, there is now a fund established for the windows. The most urgent repairs are on the front windows.

Building project – the final set of invoices is in. The final cost of £485,000 was exactly as expected. Some of this was raised from sale of our former North Caversham building, £180,000 was raised, and we borrowed £120,000 interest-free from church members, which is being paid back in line with agreements made with the members concerned.

Gift appeal – Richard Wilson will write to members and regular attenders to explain what is needed.

7. Administrator role

The trustees have taken action to make the Church Administrator role redundant to help the budget for next year. We had hoped to inform the members in September but the meeting was not quorate so it did not proceed. We have looked at the tasks covered by the Administrator and will be able to manage without, as the role has changed considerably since it started. This represents a saving of around £8,000 in the budget for next year. A standard consultation period took place with Helen Strong during September. After this due process, Helen has been given notice of redundancy with effect from the end of the year. We have a legal obligation to give redundancy pay. One member asked who will manage the room hire; Richard Wilson will take this on. We have a new website which will take on some of the tasks, such as contact management.

8. Vision/small groups/gifts

God spoke to Colin during his sabbatical about how we will move forward with this. The plan is to get every church attender involved in a small group. An exercise done in small groups will help us to understand ourselves and others, so that we can all engage in the best way with the life of CBC.

9. AOB (to be notified to the Secretary in writing before the meeting)

None.

10. Closing prayers

Future events

Harvest **Sunday 9th October**

Family games night **Saturday 29th October**
Hymn Café **Sunday 30th October 3pm**
Dedication of Alice Sproule **Sunday 6th November**
Holy Land reflections with Colin **Monday 7th November, 7:30pm**
Remembrance Sunday **13th November**
Church Meeting **Sunday 20th November**
Hymn Café **Sunday 27th November 3pm**
Nativity Time Musical **Saturday 17th December**
Nativity Live **24th December 4pm**

Apologies:

Lucille Hawke
Rhoda Shoniwa,
David Lemin
Rosemarie Bansair-Lemin

Members present:

Suea Allum
Grace Lunnon
Rose Blackmore
John Blackmore
Robin Benwell
Yeye Benwell
Sheila Goldsmith
Gina Lowings
Andrew Blackband
Steve Cantwell
June Jewitt
Joan Stephen-Evans
Ben Sproule
Rob Sproule
Alison Trim
Jackie Sproule
Richard Wilson
Tamsyn Wilson
Sue Cantwell
Colin Baker
Rebecca Reading

3 non-members