

Church Members Meeting
held at Bentley Baptist Church
on Tuesday 19th March 2024 following the AGM

MINUTES

Minister and Chair: Joel Ward
Minute Taker: Andrew Thompsett (Secretary)

Present: Stephen and Sue Parker, Denise and Colin Russell, Danni and Ian Simpson, Graham and Mary Simpson, John Smith, Len Smith, Janet Stacey, Phil and Serens Stevenson, Alison Whiteley, Pauline Fuller, Anne Gosling, Lee and Lorraine Jackson, Lizzi Jaques, Burcin LeFevre, Dave and Moira Miller, Annette Morris, Catherine Wilson, Alysha and Martin Wright, Gill Beams, David Bellerby, Hannah and Michael Cassell, Linda and Martin Chadwick, Farrell Clifford, Dianne and Jim Clifton, John Costin, Karen and Steve Costin, Sue Costin and Christine Daniels

Elected as the first matter of business: Toby Davies and Karen Jones

Total Members Present 44

Non-Members present: Miriam Davies and Phill Needham

Apologies:

Lena Parker, Peter and Sally Plant, Jenny Stephenson, Susan Whitmore, Linda Williamson, Trim Wilson, Ruth Bellerby, Chris Butler, Melanie Crewe-Butler, Lynne Foltyn and Melixa LeFevre.

Membership:

Toby Davies (Childrens and Youth Worker)

Joel asked Toby and Karen to leave the room.

Toby had been interviewed a lot previously and Joel proposed that he be accepted as a member. This was seconded by Denise Russell.

There was unanimous agreement

Karen Jones

Serena Stevenson had interviewed Karen with Ruth Bellerby and following a short report proposed that she be accepted as a church member. This was seconded by David Bellerby.

There was unanimous agreement.

Joel collected Toby and Karen and welcomed them as new members.

Andrew announced that following his move away from the area Allen Langham had tendered his resignation as a church member.

Joel then asked for a period of silence in memory of Ronnie Bussey who had been called home. Joel followed the silence with prayer.

Testimonies

Joel asked for people to share their testimonies of what God had been doing.

There were testimonies of healing in three different instances and the impact of the Holy Spirit.

Joel then prayed, giving thanks to God for His goodness

Minutes: Minutes from the previous Church Members Meeting on 13th November 2023.

Proposed by Colin Russell and Seconded by Sue Costin

Matters Arising: None

Minutes: Minutes of the Special Church Members Meeting on 10th December 2023 when we agreed to call Toby Davies as our Childrens and Youth Worker.

Proposed by Colin Russell and Seconded by Lorraine Jackson

Matters Arising: None

Finance Report: David Bellerby

David explained that he had handed out two sheets

David said that December and January saw a lot of money being paid out and that as of today the church funds totalled £52628.77. At the same time last year the total stood at £71623.31 so they have gone down by over £19000. The biggest contribution was the repairs to the roof over the Rigby Lounge which cost £16500.

Regular giving in Jan '23 was around £5300 pm. As of Jan '24 this has risen to £6300pm. We have around 40 households giving regularly, averaging £150pm.

We now have a Youth Worker for which we have budgeted £15000 per year to include expenses. We would hope for increased and new giving in 2024.

Without any change I would expect us to see a deficit of around £10000 this year

The Foodbank account still remains healthy at £16244.19

All the accounts have been audited.

We have regular givers to Foodbank and grants. This year we have spent over £4000 on food.

When we look at the budget you can see where we are at this time. There is nothing out of the ordinary there,

Joel said that we are not a church that directs how much anyone should give, but it may be helpful to know, that with a shortfall of £10000, if every household currently giving increased that by £21.00 then there would be no shortfall.

Graham said that that cost of food over the last year has risen by 55%. Although it might look healthy, with grants having come in, we are spending just over £2000 a month on food. Compared with last year, funds are down by £5000. Grants are also getting harder to get.

David then prayed, giving thanks to God for the increase in giving.

Fabric:

Adrian was not available and although he had attended the last CLT has got to get up to speed with everything.

Ministers Update

There was no update as this was presented at the AGM.

Joel did say that our vision as a church is the great commission of Jesus which is to make disciples who make disciples and the way we do that is by taking people on a discipleship journey, one step by step, by step, from having no knowledge of Jesus into a living relationship serving Him for the rest of their lives and for eternity. No one can jump the whole way in one go, but with those stepping stones in place we can get people to Jesus. There is no ministry, or area of service that is more important than any other. We all have a role in helping people to become disciples of Jesus. We are going to be a healthy hub, a gathering of people following Jesus to make disciples.

We are already filling this room on a Sunday. When you look around there are only a few chairs left. If a family of four turn up, there is a chance that they might not be able to sit together, so we are planting church outposts, fresh expressions of church in the community as part of those steps to lead people to Jesus and we will continue to figure out in the coming days how to create more capacity within the hub church, as well as outposts, so there is never a limitation on how people can come to Jesus.

That's our vision, that's our strategy, that's our shape and direction of travel. I will keep saying it, because God said it, and we need to keep remembering it, and not stray from it until He tells us something else. Amen

Childrens and Youth Work: Toby Davies

Toby's presentation is included in full as Appendix 1 of these minutes.

Once Toby had concluded his presentation, Joel said, if that sounds like a lot, it is. It should be. The emerging generations in our lives and in our communities, they are worth a lot. If we need to endure some mess and some chaos, some pain and some extra expenditure that wasn't in the budget, then I'm up for it. We have to be. We have no choice, because Jesus said 'Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations' So we have got to do it. There is a great saying from youth work quotes 'You can have growth or you can have control, but you cant have both'. You cannot control growth, and that applies to all of church. You can try to control everything, but if you try and do that you will be holding on so tightly that there is no space for anything to emerge, to grow and flower and flourish.

We can be fearful or we can be faithful. God has told us to do something, so lets go and do it. Sometimes its going to be scary and messy, but I love what Toby set out there. Even if some of it doesn't come off the way that he has outlined, that's fine. At least there is something happening, something emerging and something starting. God can use something, but He can't use nothing. If we don't bring anything, then we've got no room to complain.

There was then an invitation to get involved and for people to ask questions. There will be details and people were invited to speak with Toby about those.

Burcin asked if there was a timeframe, particularly with the children's work, not the youth work?

Toby replied that first up was youth midweek and then next would be children's midweek but there was no timescale for that at this time

Joel said that he was looking at securing additional funding so that we can potentially have some more hours for that kind of expansion in ministry.

Ian then prayed for the children's and youth ministry

Reports

Andrew reminded everyone that the reports from all areas of church ministry were on line and asked if there were any questions resulting from them.

He then gave a brief update on Open the Book from Jenny Stephenson.

Open the Book as of February is no longer going into Arksey or Intake schools, This is to do in part with the Bible Society introducing changes and in part to do with team members who having served for over ten years needing a rest and possibly moving on to other area that they are being called to. The only school that we now go into, is Bentley New Village school.

Joel thanked those that have been involved in this important ministry over the years and as someone at the prayer meeting had brought a word, that all of the seeds sown over the years would flourish into life. We echo that prayer.

Joel prayed, giving thanks for the Open the Book teams.

Mary said that there had been really good feedback from Arksey and e mails from the head teacher at Arksey. Over the years it had not been easy at Arksey, but the head was now on board and appreciative of everything. It would be good if there was some connection with church even though it is not in our catchment.

Joel said that there were possibilities, especially with the American outreach and that it needed further discussion.

Future Events

Maunday Thursday Easter Reflection. Church will be open from 2pm till 8pm
Connect with Jesus in a reflective way

Good Friday Morning Service

Easter Sunday Morning Service

Next CMM is on Tuesday 25th June

May Outreach from K180. We are looking for hosts for those coming up to join us.

Andrew then closed the meeting in prayer at 21:26

Signed

..... on Tuesday 25th June 2024
Joel Ward (Minister)

Children and Youth Work Report by Toby Davies

The last few months

For me, the last term my focus has been on getting to know the team and the children and working with them to see what works and what needs improvement in our current setup

Catherine has already shared about children's work.

Youth have been doing a course geared to take them through all of the major events in the bible. This seems to have been a useful course as we have had a large number of youth come up from CBBC at the beginning of the school year so was good to go over the foundations with them.

Moving forward on Sundays

Splitting the groups

At the moment have 3 groups on Sunday. Creche, CBBC and Youth. Each of these groups spans a wide range of ages. Creche babies up to 3. CBBC has 4 – 9 year olds. Youth is 10 -18. Having such a wide range makes it difficult to provide appropriate and engaging teaching for anyone as it is hard to pitch. Moving forward, we are going to be splitting these groups into more appropriate age ranges. We will have KS1 with the 3 year olds so 3-6, then KS2 7-11 as another group. For youth we will split school years 7-9, then 10-13. This will allow us to deliver sessions that are more appropriate and more engaging.

Adapting our current setup

While we are working to make those groups a reality, we will be looking at how we can better use the space we have and make our current setup even better. One way we are doing this is by looking into redecorating the ridgeway room to make it feel more welcoming to children and to allow us to get a bit messier! We are also looking at our online resources to see if we can better utilise them for our groups and exploring alternative solutions and sites that can aid planning our sessions.

With youth, at the moment it is a life group setup – sitting and talking about a passage. It is very conversational based, so thinking of ways we could introduce more creative responses to the things we discuss. People respond to God in different ways so we need to make sure we cater to this.

Find more ways to engage

We don't want it to ever feel like the children and youth aren't part of the wider church. With them going off to be in different rooms, it can feel like we are ships in the night. We want to make sure that we provide opportunities to see our children and young people share their skills with us and we bless them with our time and attention. This means as we are building relationships with our youth, helping them to identify their giftings and providing opportunities for them to connect with ministries where we can see those gifts grow to their full potential. In addition to this, we will be using the multigenerational service to help build ties between all of the different ministries we do here and hopefully start seeing input from our young people into what they want from them.

Midweek youth

Thursdays – community focus

As we explore the potential of midweek youth group, we are mindful of our duty and moreover, our passion for Bentley and to serve the people of Bentley. This is why one of first youth groups we are going to be starting will be a midweek youth group on a Thursday full of board games, active games, tuck shop, music, and of course at its core a way to share the gospel with the youth in the local area. This is liable to be a bit of chaotic one but we are not called to go out and do the easy stuff! This will of course take time to build but we wait patiently knowing that God has got it!

Sundays – delving deeper & asking questions

Over the last few Sundays I have done a little survey of our current youth to find out what they would like from an evening youth group. The general consensus is for something on a Sunday where they can play some games and build a bit of a community amongst themselves. This is why we are going to be starting Sunday evening youth group that will have a more relaxed vibe, and a safe environment to ask deeper questions and explore the bible together in new ways.

Blending the two

The ultimate goal of these two youth groups is to see them feeding into one another. As we start Thursday youth group our current young people will come along and bring their friends and get to know the community, and then hopefully through those relationships being build, we can invite the local youth to come along to a Sunday group and we will start to see the two groups blending together and creating a self sustaining ecosystem of coming to a Thursday, building relationships, bringing friends etc.

How you can help

Prayer points

- Pray for all the things we have just said.
- Any words of wisdom or visions please share with me
- For the youth and children to experience God in new ways
- For the local community to feel drawn in.

Giving

As we start these new evening youth groups, what will be really helpful is if you have any spare board games that you don't play – could you donate? As we look to decorate the kidswork room, if you could give any time to help organise cupboards or paint, that would be very helpful too.

Roles

Children

Befrienders – if you feel you could come along and sit with a child on a 1:1 basis – eg reading a book with them or supporting them if they need a bit of a time out from a session. We have already seen the massive benefit that this has been (so thank you) and just want to see it continue.

Support – anyone who is happy to come along with ideas for crafts, or simply just come along and chat with the kids about the sessions and stories.

Leaders – if you feel you have a passion for the projects we have got coming up and you feel that you could be sharing wisdom and knowledge with the children, then please do come and speak to me!

Youth

Once again we will need leaders and support (this is similar). As we start the new midweek youth groups it would be great to see some new faces coming along even if it just to come along to make drinks. If you feel you could come in and just play board game that would be great too! Or if you are more sporty, people to help with actives games would be a huge blessing.

We have got a wonderful welcoming community that I have seen first hand and God is using us to do such amazing and exciting things and I am thankful that we all get to be a part of it!