



Church Meeting
Sunday 21st March 2021 at 3.00 pm

AGENDA

Chair: Neil Johnson. Minutes: Malcolm Veitch.

- 1: Welcome and protocol**
- 2: Apologies:** T Makanjuola
- 3: Minutes** of the meeting held on 21.02.2021
- 4: Pastoral:**
 - 4.1: News and concerns about members and friends
- 5: Business:**
 - 5.1 Verbal report from Joint Council 17.03.2021
 - 5.2 Report from Elders' Meeting, 25.02.2021 (CTJ) CTJ
- 6: Worship and Related Matters:**
 - 6.1: Worship Consultation report
- 7: Premises Update:**
 - 7.1: Report from Property Oversight Group AV
 - 7.2: Report from Property Mission Group PW
- 8: Mission and Development:**
 - 8.1: Update from Mission Group JS
- 9: Treasurer's Business:**
 - 9.1: Financial update PW
- 10: Ministers' Business:**
 - 9.1: CC
 - 9.2: NJ
 - 9.3: RY
 - 9.4: EH

11: Secretariat & Business:

11.1 Vacant roles

NJ

12: Any Other Business not previously covered on the agenda

13: Next Church Meeting: 18.04.2021, 3pm

MINUTES OF CHURCH MEETING 21 FEBRUARY 2021 AT 3:00

Action

Present: R Yorke, M Richer, C Homer, P & H Woodall, A & P Parkin, T Batty, J & C Grove, C Tudor-Jones, J McMahon, E Hutchinson, M & A Veitch, M Stokes, S & C Rowntree, C Cipriani, L Lou, J Scott, C Coleman, J Bullen, C Ambler, G Jones, L&C Cummings, J & D Duffield, A & J Veitch, J Davies, P Davies, A & T Makanjuola

- 1.0 Welcome and protocol** – The meeting was conducted remotely via Zoom -
- 2.0 Apologies:** N Johnson, A Stokes, H Woodall.
- 3.0 Minutes 17 January 2021:** Were amended and signed.
- 4.0 Pastoral:**
- 4.1 News and concerns about members and friends
- 4.2 M Cross
- 4.3 Key workers and people we know
- 4.4 Cristina led the prayers
- 5.0 Worship and Related Matters:**
- 5.1 Reflections on worship feedback: sounds coming through better, piano better for singing hymns than organ; some had difficulty with words on the screen so faint cannot read them: better to announce hymn numbers for those using music, much appreciation using John Campbell's Racial Justice Songs during February; much appreciated current Lenten series
- 5.2 #pray/24brum, thanks to SN who organised the event in the name of Carrs Lane with Churches Together, a card of thanks to be sent CC
- 5.3 Plans for Lent/Easter, Theme, Open to God, Open to Justice, CH spoke about Compline and Friday evenings.
- 5.4 LC wanted us to thank young folk for the Lenten packs that had been distributed
- 5.5 Feedback from Prayer and Discernment sessions, RY introduced this main item of the Agenda for the Church meeting.
- 5.5.1 People had been asked to read the 'prayerful process of decision making' paper, and then prayerfully read the feedback. Then in breakdown groups to discuss the two questions RY set:
- 5.5.2 a) Reading feedback, what top 4 things were mentioned most?
b) What do you think God saying to us now?
- 5.5.3 The feedback notes to this discussion for the 6 groups (see attached)
- 5.5.4 Some points raised by the groups:
- We should stay in the City Centre where our mission is
 - But we can't simply say what we would like to do – too much we don't know about immediate future, too much financial uncertainty and not enough people to take on huge projects as happened in the past.
 - Wise not to rush into making decisions
 - It is not really clear to us yet what God is calling us to do/be in any specific way - there are still so many options and issues - it is difficult to decide
 - Tension between members who have been worshipping for a long time and are connected with the building and those who have started worshipping more recently and have a different view about the building
 - Some kind of income needs to be found for these things to continue. Some kind of cash operation. More effort means more funding.
- 5.5.5 RY wrapped up the discussions – no decisions today. This item would be taken to the next Trustees' Meeting and then Joint Council in March
- 5.5.6 PW mentioned Birmingham City Council are starting a consultancy of its view of the City Centre to 2040 'Our Future City Plan'. Link in next notices.
- 5.5.7 MR asked if some of the details from the Prayer and Discernment can be discussed at a later Church Meeting. RY said the priority had been to hear the word of God.

6.0 Premises Update:

- 6.1 AV gave his report from Premises Oversight Group: (copy attached),
 - 6.1.1 The church is closed until further notice.
 - 6.1.2 Richard Cappell left on 12 February and has another managerial job within the health care sector. Members of the Property Oversight have taken over all the responsibilities formerly held by the Centre Manager (RC) and Facilities manager (NR), both of whom are happy to give advice and help wherever they can.
 - 6.1.3 CY and AV were having Zoom meetings with remaining staff.
 - 6.1.5 All operational staff are on furlough, apart from the clerk to the trustees (LP) and the finance officer (GW)
 - 6.1.6 We await the Government Roadmap on leaving the lock down, to be announced on Monday 22 Feb, which may give us an idea of when we might re-open, but it is envisaged that uptake on room hire could be very slow, depending on the restrictions that might still be in place at the time.
AV and CY were thanked for their work.

Action

- 6.2 CH gave a brief update re. the Counselling Centre - the counsellors were working from home carrying out interviews by phone
The manager is hoping to come back to the building to start conducting one-to-one as not everyone copes with remote consultations.
They are planning to do online counselling from April.

7.0 Mission and Development:

- 7.1 PW reported from Property Mission Group
 - 7.1.1 Planning how to deal with finances
 - 7.1.2 Looking at plans of the buildings with MR
 - 7.1.3 Discussing Prayer and Discernment and future options, from Directors, too early to plan, to be carried forward
 - 7.1.4 EH's proposal to support 'Job Club' from CIGB (Churches Industrial Group of Birmingham) affected people economic downturn, the PMG agreed an appropriate project to support and it should use the church building.
 - 7.1.5 PW and NJ dealing with a possible new tenant for Dale House.
 - 7.1.6 RY raised the question of short-term use of the old bookshop area being used for a Job Club and other activities on a temporary basis. A small amount of remedial work is required for this to be possible and is in hand.
- 7.2 JS reported from Mission Group
 - 7.2.1 Working on Feedback from Prayer and Discernment feeding back to RY in preparation of February's Church Meeting
 - 7.2.2 Accepted Fair Trade should come under ECO Church remit. Also, a reminder that Fair Trade Fortnight starts Monday 22 February.
 - 7.2.3 JM is doing a 'Digital Evangelism Project, as part of his training at Queen's, sharing his faith story with link church. He invites everyone from Carrs Lane Church to take part. Two dates will be in the next Notices, and will be a short video and there's a Q&A session for those who are willing to take part in feedback. This is an opportunity to help Jason and to know how God calls us in many ways. Important for us all with our faith journeys.

8.0 Treasurer's Business:

- 8.1 PW gave a financial update. They had an extra finance meeting the previous week – 3 financial years
 - 8.1.1 2019 – 2020 accounts still outstanding, PW and GW (finance officer), with the independent examiners to finalise accounts. Have been given extra time until May 21 to submit to Charity Commission.
A separate discussion had been going to appoint new independent examiners and although it had been hoped to appoint one in 2021, it was prudent to delay that until end of current year and then appoint one of the three new firms that had been approached to start work on 2020 – 2021 accounts.

- 8.1.2 2020 – 2021 expecting to report a significant deficit £180K to £200K for current year. Gill has spent much of her time since starting work in December 2020 working on a) payroll which was started in September and was still bedding in and b) Gift Aid hadn't been properly claimed for from HMRC for a while.
- 8.1.3 2021 - 2022 trying to prepare a sensible budget at this stage, without knowing whether there will be any income, and some of the spending on, for example, heat and light is dependent on use of the building so this adds up to another large deficit. A provisional set of figures will be presented to next Elders'/Trustees' meeting week commencing 22 February.
- 8.2 Counselling Centre grant, it was agreed to support their work, the only question was when to make it. CH asked when would that decision be made important for their own budgeting process. PW to talk to CH about that later.

PW

9.0 Ministers' Business:

9.1 CC said she greatly appreciated this month's theme of Racial Justice

9.2 NJ none

9.3 RY a) *Restore* have asked us if we are happy to sign a petition 'Freedom from Torture' asking Home Secretary to stop using retired army barracks for asylum seekers in, an inhumane way to house vulnerable people. b) Book Club discussing book, 'Why I am no longer talking to White People about Race', one more Wednesday 24 at 3pm. RY asked if there was anyone who wanted an evening slot, 3 people agreed to 2 March at 7:30. For those who have already attended they have found the book and the sessions challenging and useful. c) RY finally raised an idea how to help St Chad's Sanctuary food bank, with actual donations of food, however the general consensus was that donations of money were better for those running them.

9.4 EH a) Met with the *be.friend* chaplaincy team just an update to see how the team were doing and discussed issues around visiting, how they've been unable to visit and queries about vaccinations. b) EH has been nominated to become a member of the URC West Midlands Synod Trust Board. c) EH has also been leading worship with CIGB chaplains (Churches and Group Industry Birmingham) d) 'Cascades of Grace' - A safe space for Black Asian Minority Ethnic women within the URC - met and have been encouraged to write prayers for the new URC handbook which is a jubilee year so there will be more diverse voices and prayer. EH will be submitting four. e) CIGB have a new initiative called *Hope for Jobz* supporting people with issues around employment and unemployment also offering listening support.

10.0 Secretariat & Business:

10.1 Update from Elders' Meeting 26-01-21

10.2 MV will be minute taker until July (Please could someone volunteer to take minutes from September – December. (No meeting in August)

11.0 Any Other Business: None

12.0 Date Of Next Church Meeting: 21-03-2021 3pm

Signed Dated.....

01-The Church at Carrs Lane – Church Meeting Minutes 21-02-21

Summary of Feedback from Prayer and Discernment from 6 Breakout Groups 21.02.2021

People had been asked to read the 'prayerful process of decision making' paper, then prayerfully read the feedback. Then in breakout groups discussed and shared two questions:

Q1 Reading feedback, what top 4 things were mentioned most?

Room 1 Summary of discussion

GJ, JM, MV, MS, PW

- a) Homelessness,
- b) Retail Chaplaincy
- c) Asylum seekers
- d) Those living in the City Centre

Room 2 Summary of discussion

- a) Retail chaplaincy
- b) Homelessness
- c) Free church worship
- d) Student ministry
- e) Where a presence in city centre is felt important because it's responding to people in crisis (because city centre is where people tend to come

Room 3 Summary of discussion

- a) Homeless & vulnerable people
- b) Retail Chaplaincy – EH & Church basis
- c) Viability of building
- d) Abilities to take on new things

Room 4 Summary of discussion

- a) Retail Chaplaincy
- b) Homeless & vulnerable people
- c) Students
- d) People living in the city centre

Room 5 Summary of discussion

- a) Retail chaplaincy and homeless were mentioned several times,
- b) It was noticed that the counselling centre and the community were not mentioned a lot.
- c) Comments were made about the building and its eco status. Abilities to take on new things
- d) We have done a lot, we can do a little bit more but because of its structure, this building (as it is the case with many other churches) is not very eco-friendly.

Room 6 Summary of discussion

- a) Retail chaplaincy
- b) It was noticed that the counselling centre and the community were not mentioned a lot.
- c) Ways to help the homeless – lot of people seeking homes, may be glad for a cup of tea and someone to talk to
- d) Refugees came up a couple of times. Looking at charity.

Summary of Feedback from Prayer and Discernment from 6 Breakout Groups 21.02.2021

Q2 What do you think God saying to us now?

Room 1

- a) We should stay in the City Centre this is where our mission is.
- b) We should not rebuild the church but adapt it to more suite our future needs
- c) Nothing came up with any specific ideas for that future
- d) Most groups mentioned not knowing what that future will look like when we get back to 'normal'
- e) We should not be looking for any new missions streams
- f) We felt that Elaine's role in guiding us in her capacity with her chaplaincy work across the City, will be very helpful
- g) We felt we will have to rely on all our ministers for guidance and in helping us rebuild our fellowship
- h) It is likely 'The HS2 Effect', will directly and indirectly greatly affect us.
- i) There was a feeling that there were many concerns and no solutions, too early yet to deal with.
- j) We need to be in the City Centre to be a free church presence

Room 2

- a) A feeling that many want to keep a worshipping congregation together, not to give up.
- b) But we can't simply say what we would like to do – too much we don't know about immediate future, too much financial uncertainty and not enough people to take on huge projects as happened in the past.
- c) Individual people are conflicted, torn.
- d) It may be difficult for people who in their heart feel they could as easily worship locally to speak out now.
- e) Not everyone feels as strongly committed to the building, especially more recently joined members. But others do feel a stronger commitment

Room 3

- a) Wise not to rush into making decisions
- b) Do not know what City Centre has in store for us when City Centre returns to 'normal'
- c) We do not know what is happening around us
- d) How can we make decisions until we return to church in fellowship in our church premises

Room 4

- a) We must stay in the city centre - for city centre projects, accessibility to anyone from around the city for e.g. counselling centre and Christian presence
- b) It is not really clear to us yet what God is calling us to do/be in any specific way - there are still so many options and issues - it is difficult to decide
- c) Perhaps we do need to listen out for what is needed once we re-open and be agile in responding quickly to those needs
- d) We need to feel excited and enthusiastic about what we are being called to do - some are feeling somewhat jaded at present
- e) We need to look concurrently at the main options before we make any decisions -
- f) Is the present building right for the future?
- g) Is a re-development feasible - perhaps we could rent somewhere while it is being carried out?
- h) What might our role be in terms of working with homeless/vulnerable people, as there are already organisations working in these areas?
- i) Do we need such a large worship space all the time?

Room 5

- a) The legacies of the church should not be ignored
- b) Tension between members who have been worshipping for a long time and are connected with the building and those who have started worshipping more recently and have a different view about the building
- c) It is not easy to name our mission, strong legacy on justice and help the poor
- d) We feel that God is telling us not to give up, to be brave and listen to the prophetic voices among us.
- e) Bearing the discomfort.

Summary of Feedback from Prayer and Discernment from 6 Breakout Groups 21.02.2021

Room 6

What do you think God is saying to us now?

- a) Some kind of income needs to be found for these things to continue. Some kind of cash operation. More effort means more funding.
- b) Worship didn't come out as much as people thought it might.
- c) What do you think God is saying to us and how is he leading us?
- d) CY- God is making us more open to change, recently focusing on how we can do things outside the building with it being closed. God is saying time is for change, how that portrays itself I don't know.
- e) TB- agreed with above
- f) JD- agreed also. He is asking for change, needs to get on and think of the best way forward with God's help undergone by prayer.
- g) PD - learn how to use our resources prayerfully.
- h) When we get back to the building things won't be the same, how have we changed what we do.