

CLARE BAPTIST CHURCH
MINUTES OF CHURCH MEETING 14th JULY 2020

Chair: Vivian Sargeant

36 members attending

Venue: Meeting held via Zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions. ID: 862 9620 9403 Password: 01787

Apologies: were advised and recorded

The meeting opened with the song 'As we are gathered Jesus is here'. This reminds us that he is present in all situations as we worship - one body, united by the Holy Spirit.

BUSINESS MATTERS

This was the first official meeting since lockdown restrictions were introduced in March 2020 and began at 20.30hrs due to technical difficulties. Minutes of the last Church Meeting of 28th January 2020 and the Annual Report had been distributed, and were accepted as a true record. To be signed when restrictions are lifted.

PRACTICAL

Secretary: Thanks were recorded to David Sykes for his time and all his contributions as joint Church Secretary. After consideration he felt that he could not continue at this time. Vivian Sargeant was willing to continue in the role.

VS thanked everyone who had responded to the questions sent out with the agenda to reflect on the time spent during lockdown and the implications this had had on us as individuals and CBC as a whole. VS had collated the replies which were presented and which are appended with these minutes.

Finance: CB reported that there had been a decrease in the General Fund balance of approx £5000 for the period January-June 2020. To the end of June the balance stood at £19,000 with offerings down by £2700; Gift Aid by £1100; and Mission giving by £700. Property costs were up by £500.

The Insurance premium for the whole year has been paid in June 2020.

Thanks were recorded to CB for his oversight of the Church affairs at this difficult time.

Maintenance: Necessary electrical updating work to be carried out by the supplier is still outstanding. Some of the power points also require updating.

The Fire Inspection Report has been received and is very comprehensive, comprising 35 pages. CB and Les Day are to meet to review the recommendations but on preliminary perusal there appear to be no urgent issues requiring immediate action.

Heating: The ceiling panels fitted during the refurbishment have been found to be unsafe and will be replaced, free of charge by the supplier. The date given for the work was June/July 2020 however if this is delayed due to the current situation they have undertaken to provide alternative heating and will cover any excess costs.

Thanks were recorded to David Hastings for all the painting work he has undertaken.

Display Screen: Following ongoing discussions, the original proposal circulated via email had been withdrawn. Despite our best attempts to obtain three quotes due to the amount of work required and the cost, this was proving difficult. One company was only willing to quote without a visit to see the particular requirements of CBC and had suggested a suspended projector as a solution which was unsuitable for our needs. It was not possible to obtain a third quote.

To date the church had received one donation of £3000 specifically for updating of the AV facilities; a further donation of £1000 from the Dyson family; and another donation of £500 had also been received. The latter donation received from the family of Elaine Allin is to be used to improve CBC facilities. The deacons' recommendation following discussion was to continue to explore the best options to upgrade/improve the AV system using the specific donation. Anyone with expertise in this area was welcome to assist the diaconate as appropriate. **This was proposed by Colin Barrable, seconded by Janet Strellis, and agreed by the meeting.**

Discussions have taken place with Janet Sibley as to how she and the family feel Marion Dyson's donation should be used. Various other suggestions have been put forward including a dishwasher, a memorial bench (to Marion Dyson), a new organ and a mobile lectern to enable easier participation for less able members of the congregation. Any other suggestions should be addressed to the diaconate who would continue to take this forward. **This was proposed by Colin Barrable, seconded by Wilf Stanbury and agreed by the meeting.**

Thanks were recorded to CB for all his hard work in this area.

In addition CB reminded all those present that the diaconate, which could have up to seven members was currently comprised two ex-officio members (Secretary and Treasurer), Jane Baillie (who was to step down at the AGM) but had agreed to stay on at present; Gillian Johnson, Dan Kidd and Cheryl Trundle only. This meant that CBC was short of four deacons at this difficult time. Members were urged to prayerfully consider whether God was calling them to join the diaconate.

Judith and Paul Rushen have stepped down as church gardeners. Volunteers are required on a regular basis and were encouraged to contact PG or one of the deacons if they felt they could take this on.

CHURCH LIFE

Membership: CT and PG had visited Penny Birkett-Sharp and GJ and Julie Smith had visited Ellie and Steve Radford. All were recommended for church membership. **Agreed by the meeting.**

Visit to Peter Meyer TBA.

Thanks were recorded to PG for publication, sending via email and physical distribution of the notice sheets, service content and mid-week musings during lockdown.

PG presented a powerpoint summary of the main aspects of BU/national guidance on church opening. Appended to these minutes.

Following this Simon Mattholie shared some additional aspects for consideration discussed by the BU for smaller more rural communities. These invited us to consider the questions 'What is the cry of the community of Clare? How does it look at present? How may it look in the future?'. He suggested that we should not rush to make any decisions; not to panic; to recover and reflect; to rebuild and look to the future.

Churches should not be afraid to try out new ways of being church, even if the future planning was not fully finalised and not to be afraid of changing and adapting to meet new situations. We all needed open minds, a willingness to listen to what God was saying, and to seek his will through individual and corporate prayer.

Re-Opening for Prayer: Currently the church is open for individual prayer and Mondays and Thursdays This is meeting a need and will continue at present, although some modifications may be required. Risk assessments, action plans and operating procedures are in place in line with BU and national guidance. However it is noted that with changing guidelines these will be kept under regular review. The Youth Group had met in the church hall and had appropriate guidance in place to minimise risk.

PG, DK and CT had met to consider arrangements for re-opening the premises for group worship, small group meetings and/or prayer services. In the church there is currently space for 13 pairs of chairs downstairs and approx 9 pairs of seats upstairs keeping to 2m social distancing guidelines.

Discussion followed as to how to best manage the process once it was felt ready to recommence. We should consider a booking system to manage potential numbers, and priority should be given to those who were unable to access the Zoom facility. It was noted that the latter group was comprised mainly of older folk and those with health issues within the congregation and needs to be carefully managed to minimise risk. However the best solution may be to have a joint service where people can physically attend CBC and at the same time be linked to those participating via Zoom.

There would be a need to limit the numbers of contacts with different groups, no social contact before or after the service and no provision of food/coffee facilities. Cleaning before/after use and transport arrangements (car sharing should only be with those of your household or bubble) also need to be worked out prior to any actions being taken.

PG had done some analysis using the Church Directory. Of the 165 people/couples listed, approx. 35 were not regular attendees; 76 people had accessed Zoom; and 27 were not on Zoom. In addition, approx. 10 paper copies of church notices, services etc were distributed weekly.

It may be possible to provide a short service mid-week to replace the private prayer time. **The meeting agreed that the diaconate would continue to discuss the options with a priority given to arranging a prayer meeting to seek God's will for the way forward.**

SUPPORT

Refugees: Collections have continued during lockdown with some items unsuitable for the refugees being used to make masks. Emmaus has also benefitted from donations of used clothes. They also sell blankets for £2 each which may be useful for future visits towards the winter. Tents continue to be destroyed on a regular basis but the aid agencies are now being allowed back in as Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

A visit was planned for 26th July 2020 but ticket costs have soared and are currently £365 return and it is thought that the next visit will probably be in September 2020. We were asked to pray for the refugees, those seeking to assist them and for the compassion of the authorities responsible for their management.

Local Community: During this time PG (and others within the church family) have felt very privileged to be involved in different ways of supporting the community. This has provided a different way of witnessing and outreach in the local setting and we should seek ways in which to continue this in an active and positive way moving forward in the future.

The meeting closed with prayer at 21.50 hours.

Diary dates as advised.

Next Church Meeting: 22nd September 2020 8pm

Signed:

Date:

What have you missed about church during lockdown ?

- Personal interaction – children, young people, elderly and everyone in between.
- Live group music and singing together
- Prayer Walking, House groups
- Live Sermons

What have you liked about church during lockdown?

- Zoom, thank you Paul for all the work you have put into this and the Handouts.
- Accessing different styles, types or worship/teachings via TV and internet.
- Being able to still partake communion together.
- Some have not liked the lockdown experience at all, while others have appreciated not having to **GO** to church
- Everyone gets a lovely welcome on Zoom, not so cliquey.

**Has your view of church changed during lockdown?
If so, how?**

- Shown that church is more than a building
- Getting to know people via telephone calls/acts of kindness etc who I normally don't really talk to
- Taken my energy and focus of doing "church" into doing fellowship

What should be the churches main priorities in the future?

- To return to some form of corporate worship as soon as it is safe and practical to do so.
- Worshipping/Communion together, even if mid week or small groups
- Evaluate how we take the gospel into the community. Eg the use of the internet.
- More focus on prayer eg Church prayer meeting
- Strengthen work with young people/children
- Seek God's will, be prepared for new direction's and a willingness to let go of how "church" used to be.

Guidance on Attending Services

- 2 metre social distancing
- Use hand sanitizer on entry
- Record contact details (NHS Track and Trace)
- Recommended to wear a face covering
- Minimize social contact before, during and after the service
- Only sit with those in the same household/bubble
- Seek medical advice if over 70/clinically vulnerable
- Bring own Bible, drinks, etc if necessary

Guidance on Service Content

- Short service (suggested maximum 40 minute duration)
- No singing
- Communion – how to celebrate safely?
- Children under 5 to be supervised by parents/carers
- Sunday Club/Lighthouse Gang to be up to a maximum of 15 (including leaders) – separate guidance available for these groups

