

Church Members Meeting Minutes

15th January 2023



WESTBOURNE PARK
BAPTIST CHURCH

38 Church Members were present. A number of friends joined the meeting. Apologies given were recorded in the attendance book.

LOVE GOD

Abena opened the meeting with prayer. The minutes of the September 2022 Meeting have been available on the church website. No comments or changes were advised by those present.

Annual General Meeting Core Leaders Report: On behalf of the Core Leaders, Elizabeth presented a report of 2022. The full report is at the end of these minutes.

Worship Update – Felicia Asiedu updated Members that it is planned to have some changes within services, as we have fallen into a predictable pattern each Sunday. There will also be opportunity for people who may be interested in joining the worship team to meet monthly on a Saturday morning to practice and sing together. Attending this does not mean a commitment to Sunday worship, but is an opportunity to get to know the songs or try out instruments.

LOVE CHURCH

Church Membership: Abena Boateng and Sisiy Asiedu reported back on a Church Membership visit with Celena Malcolm who they recommended for Membership. Celena will be welcomed next Sunday at Communion.

Leadership Election Result: Following the voting process for Leaders Elections at the beginning of the meeting, the results were provided. Geoff Biggs has been re-elected to the Core Leadership. Iretiola Badamosi and Lorna Glasgow have both been elected to role of Deacon.

Celena, Geoff, Iretiola and Lorna were all prayed for.

LOVE PEOPLE

Discussion on Small Groups: With a decrease in the number of people attending Fellowship Groups there was the opportunity to discuss ideas for how we move forward. Five areas that have been identified as being essential areas of a health church life were presented and groups were asked to consider the following questions and how these could fit into WPBC.

Feedback from group discussions:

How can we strengthen our connection with each other through small groups?

Stronger (worship): *need to learn about each other; meet before church service to build fellowship; Worship Group lunches; Platforms of communication; Larger gatherings*

Deeper (discipleship): *Need to form a buddy system where people can connect especially to those we don't know; 'Make disciples of each other'; invite neighbours; celebrate days or special occasions; help invite people from the community*

Warmer (fellowship): Netball (as previously); one to one connections; Children's Group leaders; meet more socially to get to know each other better; film night; dinner; better relationships with each other fosters better spiritual bond and builds trust; friendship; create safe space; confidentiality; rely on scripture as focal point; non-judgemental; prefer fellowship groups in homes; Women's Fellowship Group led by Nicole with games and food; Men's Fellowship; A timetable with different timings; themed events; Social events ie bowling; Sunday sessions after church

Broader (ministry/service): Children's ministry; Family Centre projects; Inter-connections; Recognise ministry outside church - whole self at work and being released for this; New / revived initiatives like plays and February (Valentines) dinner; explore new things for example Bible studies on specific subjects; free choice of discussion or subject

Larger (evangelism): Evangelism team; host larger events that are open to non-Christians

Other comments: challenges are time, availability; frequency; local/transport challenges; hybrid approach; functional - phone call connections; be careful of loading things into Saturdays and Sundays; once per month might be better for small groups; zoom and in person; consider location and winter/weather; flexible working has had an impact on where people are coming from;

This discussion will be followed up at our next Member's Meeting in March.

Westbourne Park Family Centre: Geoff highlighted that this year is the 20th anniversary of the Family Centre. There will be a Thanksgiving Service on Sunday 26th March and a special celebration evening on Thursday 30th March.

Dates for 2023 to help us connect:

- a. Sunday 26th February - Church Lunch
- b. Sunday 9th April - Easter Breakfast
- c. Street Party - date to be confirmed

LOVE God's Resources

Finance Update April to December 2022:

Income	Budget	Actual
Offering and Gift Aid Return	£ 66,937.00	£ 92,601.00
Food Pantry Income	£ 43,838.00	£ 48,781.00
Rental Income	£ 161,129.00	£ 148,767.00
Other Income	£ 10,284.00	£ 10,012.00
Total	£ 282,188.00	£ 300,161.00

Expenditure	Budget	Actual
Salaries and Pensions	£ 130,610.00	£ 135,014.00
Administration	£ 17,364.00	£ 24,387.00
Ministries	£ 28,080.00	£ 27,876.00
Food Pantry	£ 38,338.00	£ 42,892.00

Tithes and Donations	£ 9,862.00	£ 8,550.00
Manse and Flat	£ 6,825.00	£ 6,840.00
Venue costs	£ 29,440.00	£ 38,136.00
Total	£ 260,519.00	£ 283,695.00

Income vs Expenditure Totals	Budget	Actual
Income	£ 282,188.00	£ 300,161.00
Expenditure	£ 260,519.00	£ 283,695.00
Balance		£ 16,466.00

Update on Church Manse and Flat: Ken updated the meeting that Hil and Lydia Sewell moved out of the Manse on 30th November. The church flat requires some significant repairs and so Anna, Nico and Sergei have moved into the Manse for a short time to enable the flat to be refurbished. The Manse will then be prepared for the future Pastor when we know the timing.

Closing Prayer: Ken closed the meeting with prayer.

Date of next meeting: Sunday 12th March 2023.

WPBC Annual Report 2022 (Member's Meeting 15th January 2023)

We started January 2022 focusing on the verse for the year Isaiah 43:19 "See I am doing a new thing; Now it springs up. Do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

God has certainly been at work throughout 2022, and we have seen His faithfulness in so many ways, which we will reflect on as I present this report on behalf of the Core Leadership team.

Love God

Worship Services – We can't talk about our services without expressing our huge thanks to Felicia and David who have led us throughout the year. And also to the worship group who have each been so faithful in their commitment to singing or playing instruments.

There has been a focus on the PA /AV team, as we have continue to stream our services via YouTube, to enable others to join us. Thank you to those (Tung, Sophia, Ruth and Nerat) who have continued or joined this ministry in the year, and to David and Ken who have coordinated both the equipment, training and people.

We haven't kept our usual monthly count of attendance in the service, but average numbers have risen over the year from 70 to 80, to 90 to 100. I did count at the Nativity service in December and we had 109 people, including adults and children. Numbers joining us via YouTube have remained strong, suggesting that this is a ministry we should continue. I had complaints that we didn't stream Christmas Day this year! Some views may be repeat ones, but here is an idea of how many are listening in.

A regular team of our own members have shared God's Word in services and we have been joined by at least one external preacher each month this past year. We have continued to follow series for our sermons, to help us have continuity during this time of interregnum, and some of the series have seemed to have a positive impact, most notably the Transformed series that we started 2022 with.

The children's work has been a significant part of church life this year, with a growth in numbers of children and also an increase in the needs within the group. This is a real privilege to be a church where parents feel comfortable bringing their children who had additional needs. One family particularly expressed their need for their children to experience socialisation again after the lock downs, and church has been one place they have chosen to do this. It has to be said that this has required specific thinking and planning to create weekly sessions that are accessible to all the children, not to mention a nativity play that included everyone. Special recognition needs to be given to Rebecca who, unasked, picked up the mantle of coordinating the children's team when Hil had to stand down, and has continued to do this throughout 2022, working alongside each of the team who have capably served in this ministry. In April, in recognition of the growing numbers and needs of children we held a lunch and vision afternoon for the children's team, parents and those involved in education. This led to an increase in volunteers, and also the re-opening of creche, which Grace and Celena have stepped into oversee. Huge thanks to everyone who is serving God through the children's ministry.

The young people's group has changed to being for 11 to 14 year olds, as the older group continue to serve God and the church through practical involvement in worship, PA and children's work. Some of the youth leaders now also run Sunday School sessions, whilst the team support the spiritual lives of the young people when they are able to be in church.

And we can't move on from Sunday worship without acknowledging Annie and Kant who oversee our refreshments, which enables us to fellowship together. We have some people who regularly contribute

freshly made home made cakes, which I know are appreciated and enjoyed. Emily has recently joined Annie serving refreshments with Kant working abroad.

Prayer: our small group of intercessors have been so faithful again throughout 2022, meeting every week day and before services on Sundays to pray for the church, leadership, and individual prayer needs. There have been many answers to prayers and I am convinced that many of the blessings and positives we are sharing today are due to the underpinning of prayer at WPBC.

Love Church

Church Leadership: The Core Leaders started 2022 with an away morning together, as we knew that we needed to continue to seek God's will for WPBC through an interregnum, not put things on hold until we have our next Pastor. We have grown as a team over this year, and are grateful to God for the unity between us.

One of the key things we needed to work through was the new church leadership structure, as we were mindful of the need to hold leaders elections and continue to grow as a church; as well as ensuring the right governance of the church as Trustees. The structure we subsequently proposed to the Membership grew out of our time together in January, and we felt God's leading towards this.

We are grateful to the leaders of all the areas of ministries who have faithfully served God and the church over this past year.

In 2022 we have celebrated Tara and Michael's wedding; we have had 1 baptism of Patricia Aquilar, and a dedication of Esther - Omolabake's daughter.

We have also shared sadness with the death of Pastor Steve Latham, who was pastor here from 2000 to 2011, and with others in our family who have been bereaved this year. We have also said goodbye to Josephine Bolland who returned to Philippines and others who have moved away.

One act of remembrance we were able to complete this year was the unveiling of the Green Plaque in honour of John Clifford the founder pastor of WPBC. We held a Service or Remembrance in November; an opportunity to remember all those we have lost over the last few years.

Our small groups have been more challenging this past year, with us ending 2022 with only 3 fellowship groups meeting regularly. Feedback suggests that its time to review and refresh these, and we will be discussing this in our meeting today. The important principle we need to keep is the opportunity to connect with each other regularly and be involved in each others lives so we can support each other practically, emotionally and spiritually. We look forward to what comes of these discussions in 2023.

Love People

The biggest new initiative of 2022 was the launch of the Celebrate Recovery programme at WPBC, which seems to be the first church in London running this programme. We have been joined by people who are not connected to WPBC or All Nations who we are partnering with for this initiative. We have around 15 to 18 people, including the team, each week, and it is growing into a safe place for people to share and for God to speak into our lives. Please continue to pray for this as it is a weekly rolling programme, that we anticipate will grow under God's blessing.

Westbourne Park Food Pantry has grown over the year, with 3 sessions running each week. We work closely with North Paddington Food Bank supporting people in the local community. From a report I had to

prepare this past week, we have had 3909 individual shops in 2022, averaging 621 per month. With the average household size being 2.77 people, the pantry has supported food provision around 12,500 beneficiaries over the year. Most members shop on average 3.7 times each month. We have been grateful for all the donations – both financial and food – that we receive that is enabling us to continue this ministry. And we are so grateful for those who are able to volunteer running the pantry. We have some volunteers from NPFB, but we need to ensure we always have a church presence at each session. A couple of examples of why this is needed.....1 man came and asked for prayer as he had just been diagnosed with cancer. Another lady who has recently experienced a family trauma, came in to a session in distress. I chatted with her, and she spontaneously asked me to pray for her family. These are great opportunities.

We had an amazing opportunity to connect with our community at the Platinum Jubilee Street Party in June. What a great event. Both the Pentecost service with our Partner churches, and then serving together in practice. We hope to plan something similar this year, may be the weekend of the Coronation, but dates are to be confirmed.

The Light Party made a return to WPBC this year as well, and it was great to work with WPFC in hosting about 80 children for the evening, and providing opportunity for them to hear about Jesus the Light of the World. A church leader from a local church walked over the bridge as the children were leaving, and he popped in to encourage the team that all these balloons with Jesus Light of the World written on them, were going home to families of other faiths and beliefs. We continue to pray for the impact of this. And a huge thank you to Denese for organising this event again, and all those who helped.

Our partnership with WPFC continues to be strong, as we run projects that compliment each other alongside each other in the building. With a lot of their Trustees, staff and volunteers also being part of WPBC, we are really reaching out to families through this charity.

Love God's Resources

As trustees of the church we have responsibility for how things are run, and to ensure we are compliant to charity commission and companies house governance.

The church house and flat are also our responsibility and we have tried to improve our care of what is legally our tenants, although its easy to forget this when they are so much part of our church family! Ken has been instrumental in ensuring we are compliant in our responsibilities. He will update us on this later in the meeting.

Hil and Lydia moved out of the Manse at the end of November, virtually 10 years after she and Jem moved in. It has been our honour as a church to support them in the last 2 years since Jem died, and to ensure they could move at the pace and time that was right for them in their journey of grief, as well as in God's perfect timing.

The Venue has continued to be a blessing to us as a church as we have been able to host meetings, events, and projects. God has amazingly provided for the income needed to run the building. We have found ourselves having to employ more staff for reception and facilities work, as this has proven to be essential to us hosting meetings, and we will continue to adapt this model as bookings come in.

Financially – full audit carried out.

So in conclusion, 2022 has been a year of God's blessing for the church during our continued interregnum. The certain hope we have that God has a plan for this church, and will guide us to the Pastor he is preparing for the next ministry remains. We have viewed a number of profiles, but are not yet in a position of having a name to suggest to the church. Please continue to pray with us, as we seek God's unfolding plan.

Elizabeth Welch on behalf of the Core Leadership Team