**Minutes of Church Members Meeting held at 8.00 pm on 31st January 2018**

58 members present.

Welcome: Duncan Tuft

Apologies for absence had been received from: Chrissie Dore, Derek and Carrie Page, Craig Rowland, Jim Green, Rob Rowland, Pippa Durn, Sheila Wills, Carol Skov and Alison Cave.

Opening prayer.

1. **Worship**

There was a short time of worship led by Simon Dennis.

1. **Treasurers Report**

Craig Rowland had sent his apologies for the meeting as he was hosting a table at the Anniversary Dinner for Tear Fund. In his absence, John Bawden presented the Treasurer’s report.

The position was in general a positive one. The accounts for 2017 had now been closed and the outturn had been almost exactly on budget, both in income and expenditure. The decline in monthly offerings had halted during the last quarter of the year, with the actual offerings 7.3% higher than the last quarter in 2016. The total offerings for 2017 had been £281,000 which was exactly the same as for 2016. The total income in 2017, excluding the Margaret Hoare legacy of £120,000, has been £6,000 better than budget although offerings were in actuality £28,000 below budget. The church had received more income from legacies, one off donations and Gift Aid tax rebates than originally expected. The total expenditure in 2017 has been £2,000 over budget. The over spends on the manses had been partially offset by underspends on the ministerial team/administration, mission and church property. Overall the church finished 2017 with a surplus of £4,000 better than budget.

The year end statement for the church’s loan with the Baptist Union had been received in early January. The loan, as at 31st December 2017, stood at £214,000, a reduction over 6 years from the figure of £677,000 for the loan in 2011. The church was continuing to pay down the load as far as bank reserves permitted with the aim of quickly reducing the annual interest charge of £8,000. At the last Deacon’s meeting it had been agreed that £50,000 of the Margaret Hoare legacy would be used to further pay down the loan.

A final payment from Margaret Hoare’s estate of £11,747 had been received in early January bringing the total legacy payment from this source to £131,747. A Legacy Fund had been for legacy income had been created from which large capital items and special one off expenditures could be funded.

Excluding legacies, the church’s cash reserves had fallen by £38,000 for the year ended 31st December 2017. This was an improvement on the original forecast and was due to an increase in income and a reduction in expenditure caused by paying off the Baptist Union loan faster and lower running costs.

Comments and Questions from members included:

* Trevor Bradshaw clarified that in real terms the church still had a deficit of £13,000 at the end of 2017.

John Bawden commented that the payment to the Buildings Fund accounted for this.

1. **Membership Matters**

Alison Dennis presented. There were two applications for membership from Flipe Phitzgerard and from Matt Osborne. Flipe Phitzgerard had been interviewed by John Reynolds and Joshua Newton. Joshua reported on the interview to members. The application was approved unanimously. Matt Osborne had been interviewed by John Bawden and Rob Rowland. John reported on the interview to members. The application was approved unanimously.

Alison reported that John and Anna Harland-Smith had moved to Chesham and following this had resigned their membership. They were attending Hivings Free Church in Chesham.

Alison confirmed that the total membership for the church currently stood at 310.

1. **Children’s Worker**

Helen Yarrow presented. The initial period of two years for which the post of Children’s Worker had been offered was due to end in August 2018. The Deacons were recommending that this post be made a permanent one.

Chris Gardner commented that it was important that members recognised that the funding for a permanent Children’s Worker post would need to come from the main Church budget, rather than through an arrangement of one off donations as had been used to finance the role on a temporary basis. Helen Yarrow confirmed this and explained that the transition to funding the post from the main budget would be eased by funds which were available from the original donations which would cover a further 16 months of the post.

Duncan Tuft proposed the following resolution which was put to the meeting;

“We the members of Ruislip Baptist Church resolve to make the post of full time children's worker a permanent staff position”

and was unanimously agreed.

1. **Time of Prayer**

Helen Yarrow led a time of prayer.

1. **Community Outreach report**
2. Dave Rose presented a report from the Community Outreach group. Thanks were recorded to all those involved in the events at Christmas. The Alpha course had been running for 2 weeks and was going well with good attendance and a broader mix of individuals than had attended in recent years. This presented both challenges and opportunities.

Café Connect, a drop in café in the foyer of the church for those who were more isolated in the community such as senior citizens, those at home during the working week who are lonely and carers, would be starting in April 2018. This would offer refreshments, quizzes, games, guest speakers and other activities to those attending. David Rose explained that this new initiative was broader in its scope than an existing local network of drop in cafes called Memory Cafes. The latter were primarily aimed at those with dementia whereas Café Connect would have a broader appeal. Denny Fleming would be heading up Café Connect and members were encouraged to pray for it as an initiative and get involved if they were able to help.

David Rose informed members that the March church meeting would include a presentation from the Community Outreach Team to relaunch and explain the focus of their work. There had been some confusion over the purpose of the team. Although events were developed by them they were not as such an Events Organising team for the church. The main focus of the group was as a strategic outreach team, taking the lead on encouraging individuals in outreach on a day to day basis and communicating on what outreach was taking place. The primary aim of the team was to look for new ways of sharing the gospel and encourage those attending the church to move forward with these and in reaching out.

1. **Time of Prayer**

Duncan Tuft led a time of prayer focussing on the work of the Trafficking Small Group, the Alpha Course, the Cap Course, the Café Connect initiative and other outreach initiatives.

1. **Secretary’s Report**

Duncan Tuft highlighted the Induction of Michael Lovejoy as Minister at Northolt Baptist Church on Saturday 10th February. Members were invited to this event and were asked to notify Duncan if they planned to attend.

1. **Front of Sanctuary**

**9.1 Cross**

Mick Ledden presented. Some principles had been established for the design and mounting of the cross. It was envisaged that it would be of plain wood, with no decoration on it, and suspended through the ceiling. There were some structural and architectural issues to be considered and members with relevant expertise who would be willing to help in the putting together of proposals for the final arrangements were invited to see Mick. Technical advice would also be sought. Proposals would be brought back to the church meeting half way through the process of development and if approved quotations for the work would be invited, with the aim of completing the installation by the end of 2018.

Questions and comments from members included:

* Had the projection of a cross using light as opposed to the installation of an actual cross been considered? (Roy Treadaway)

Mick Ledden confirmed that the possibility of backlighting an actual cross had been talked about.

* Did members still feel that the church needed a cross in view of the banners in place which had been viewed very positively? (Chris Gardner)

Mick Ledden stated that members had voted to have a cross and that the chief aim was to achieve consensus and peace and as far possible unanimity.

* Trevor Bradshaw commented that a vote had been taken and that members had agreed to the installation of a cross. Work should now move forward in the implementation of this.
* Helen Yarrow commented that the banners were good and the quality achieved in their design and construction gave her faith in the process for moving forward with the installation of the cross.
  1. **Replacement of small pulpit with lectern**

Phil Ross-Smith presented. It was a good time to think about an alternative lectern arrangement to the present foreshortened pulpit. It was important to look at the function of any structure from which people would be reading God’s word and speaking and not just at the appearance. The existing pulpit did not provide adequate shelving for placing speaking materials on and it was difficult to attach microphones and lights securely to it. It was also very heavy to move.

Phil Ross-Smith showed images of some lecterns which were available. These more modern designs and other models could be provided with built in microphone/microphone points, lighting and a range of shelving arrangements inside the structure itself. All the designs shown would be easily portable.

Questions and comments from members included:

* Are the ministers both keen to change from the existing pulpit arrangement?

(Alison Dennis)

Phil Ross-Smith confirmed that both ministers were keen to change. At present there was nowhere to put materials when they were speaking.

* Mike Harvey commented that it was important not to lose the Christians ethos in the appearance of the front of the church. A modern lectern with no markings could appear secular in character.

Phil Ross-Smith confirmed that all the designs shown and indeed all modern lecterns of the type being considered could be ordered with a cross incorporated in the design.

Duncan Tuft confirmed that proposals for a new lectern for use at the front of the church would be brought to the March church meeting for members to vote on.

1. **Approval of/correction of Minutes of last meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2017 on were approved.

1. **Any Other Business**

The following items were raised:

* Maggie Gardner asked members to bring any spare rolls of Hillingdon recycling plastic bags to church.
* Duncan Tuft confirmed that at a recent Deacons’ meeting it had been agreed that the church would no longer being using disposable plastic cups once the present stock was used up.
* Gordon Webb asked about the blue curtains that had in the past been used behind the glass panelled doors to the sanctuary at ground floor level to screen the service off from the foyer. These had been taken down during the process of reconfiguring the front of the sanctuary and redecorating and had not returned.

Helen Yarrow clarified that the curtains, when taken down, were found to be in a poor state of repair and had therefore not been put up again.

Gordon Webb commented that more people were entering the sanctuary for the service late via the ground floor doors now that the curtains were no longer in place.

Helen Yarrow confirmed that the ministers were happy with no curtains in place. It might be possible to put up a sign indicating that another entrance should be used after the service had started and it would be possible to ask the stewarding teams to direct latecomers to the other entrances to the sanctuary.

* Helen Yarrow gave an update on the progress of Graham Green’s son who had recently been involved in a motorbike accident abroad. He had now arrived home safely and was at home with his parents. He would be getting the results of a scan on Friday and was at present dong well. Members were encouraged to continue to pray for him and for his recovery.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm with a prayer from Duncan Tuft.