

Corsham Baptist Church Update Jan 2021

Norman - Welcome to the first members meeting of Corsham Baptist Church on 2021

We recognise this is so different to the way we wish to meet; but we must remember God is still with us.

Over the last year God has been encouraging us to use the acronym ACTS when we come to pray. ACTS stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication.

So let us pray.

- We praise you O God for your wonderful creation, for the changing of the seasons. We praise you for your overwhelming, never-ending love for us. We will still sing praises in our hearts even if we cannot sing together.
- We confess we have not loved you with all our hearts, minds and souls or our neighbour as ourselves. We confess we sometimes wonder from your path. Please forgive our failings.
- Thank you LORD for supplying all our needs at this time. Thank you for this technology that allows us to meet like this, that only a decade ago would not have been possible. Thank you for reminding us that Jesus is our Saviour and that you promised you will neither leave us nor forsake us. We thank you for the vaccine and pray that it will continue to be distributed quickly.
- We now pray for this meeting that we will hear your voice in all we do and say. [02:00].

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. - Romans 15:13

Amen.

Rob

We're all aware of the challenges that lockdown brings. It's why I'm speaking to you on YouTube, and not face to face. One challenge is that our constitution does not currently allow us to vote as part of an online meeting; votes must be in person. This is not a problem for a short period of time, but after a while, decisions inevitably need to be made, for which the membership need to vote. And at the moment, unless lockdown ends, we have no means of doing this.

The Baptist Union have provided an addition to the governing document, on which our constitution is based, which allows churches to meet online.

They have provided two options in this addition, the first provides for online meetings as an ongoing alternative, in or out of lockdown. The second limits meeting online to exceptional circumstances where we are unable to meet in person for more than two months. The Church Trustees (the facilitation team and oversight team) want to recommend that we adopt the latter. The option that would allow us to hold online meetings in exceptional circumstances.

Let me read the specific wording.

10.5 [option B] In exceptional circumstances where it is not possible for a period of more than two months to hold a Church Members' Meeting required under this clause 10 in person, Church Members' Meetings may be held, as agreed by the Charity Trustees: by suitable electronic means; or by a combination of a physical meeting and suitable electronic means in which each participant may communicate with all the other participants. Any member participating at a Church Members' Meeting either in person or by suitable electronic means agreed by the Charity Trustees in which a participant or participants may communicate with all the other participants shall qualify as being present at the meeting. Church Members' Meetings must comply with rules for meetings, including chairing and the taking of minutes.

(There are a number of other additions through the document which updated the wording to include online meetings under these circumstances – we've put a link to the existing governing document and the updates below so that you can read it through yourself.)

We are not making the decision now, but simply making the recommendation to you in the hope that in April we will be able to meet face to face to vote on whether to adopt this addition into our constitution. So, please do take the time to consider this addition, and if you would like more information, please do get in touch with Rob Durant or Tim Stephenson.

- Governing doc:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UppXeQQvEQgC4EoBpiza5EwbGd30oENXgz0e-glMrug/>
- Update: <https://www.baptist.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=269077>

Ian - "Your 2 minute update"

1. There are no meetings in church at the moment. BUT... We continue to monitor the situation and will let you know *as soon as the situation changes*.
2. The joint Priory Street service continues to meet on YouTube each Sunday at 10am. Or, for a more interactive meeting, join Church on the Screen on Google also at 10am. Everyone is welcome.

On the first Sunday of every month there is a prayer meeting online. And on the third Sunday of each month there is a praise evening (the most recent one is: <https://youtu.be/p7aSVB6n9h4>).

3. Stay connected! Join an online Transformation or LIFE group. Phone your friends. Remember to exercise, you can meet with one other person for a walk and to share your walk with Jesus.
4. Read your Bible; Pray; Have fellowship. Continue to stay firm in the LORD.

Leave a message on 01249 701078 if you'd like more details of any of these.

Roger - FINANCIAL UPDATE – JANUARY 2021

REWIND TO OCTOBER 2020

You may recall that when I presented the Financial Plan for 2020/21 to you at our virtual meeting last October, I said that although we were dealing with more unknowns than usual, and

that our income had been reduced by about £1,250 per month since last March 2020 (this represents the cash offerings normally taken at services), and concluded that: We would still balance the budget for 2020/21, but would lean on Restricted Mission Funds and Reserves to do so, even though many regular activities would be reduced or not take place. In addition:

- There should be no need to take out an external loan to complete the Arnolds Mead works seamlessly.
- We needed to maintain the scope to be flexible, but monitor spending closely, aiming to be within or on allocation.
- We would take all reasonable steps to prevent staff being affected, and ministry being reduced, but if this looks likely, we would ask the fellowship to prayerfully consider their giving.

GIVING THANKS

God's amazing provision for us continues, so let's praise him for that:

- Thank you church for your generous and steadfast giving during these challenging times. Regular giving is holding up well, and is currently showing a slight upward trend.
- The work to repair and extend Arnolds Mead has gone well, and should be completed shortly.
- The Covid 19 Benevolent Fund looks well placed to meet potential needs.
- Our finances are working out pretty much in line with expectation. RISKS
- The main unknown that we face going forward is a drop in the estimated levels of giving should our people fall on tough times and/or the Covid restrictions on gatherings being maintained beyond April.
- To mitigate this:
 - Income and expenditure continues to be monitored closely.
 - A cash flow model through to the end of the financial year has been produced, and is updated monthly.

FORECAST

Assuming that there is no significant change to either regular giving levels, or expected expenditure, the cash flow model indicates that our bank balances carried forward to 1 September 2021 may be in the order of £79k, of which: £30k would be represented by the Reserves; around £26k by the remaining Restricted & Designated Funds; leaving £26k in the General Fund, with scope to repair the reduced Reserves to £40k and close to one month's average expenditure in hand. Some illustrative figures are set out below.

BANK BALANCES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

- Current Accounts:
 - Lloyds £94,818
 - Santander £11,571
- Deposit Accounts:
 - 7 Day Notice £21,242
 - 3 Months' Notice £13,630
- Total £141,261

CASH FLOW ANALYSIS – to 1 MARCH 2021

Assuming that all building project costs are paid by the end of February, the bank balances carried forward to 1 March 2021 could be in the order of £77.5k, of which £30k would be represented by the Reserves; £23.5 by remaining Restricted & Designated Funds and £24k in the General Fund.

GENERAL FUND - AVERAGE INCOME & EXPENDITURE COMPARISON (I&E)

It is useful to be able to compare the General Fund I&E over time, but whilst regular costs may be fairly constant, development costs invariably vary from year to year.

- 2018/19: Average Regular Inc £18.1k pcm Average Exp £19.4k pcm
- 2019/20: Average Regular Inc £17.6k pcm Average Exp £18.5k pcm
- 2020/21 Estimates: Average Regular Inc £17.3k pcm Average Exp £ 16.9k pcm

Alan - An update on the search for a new senior pastor

- We've prepared a profile that talks about the thriving ministries we have here and also that we believe we're being called to more local evangelism.
- That profile has been sent to West of England Baptist Association (Webnet) to use in what is known as the 'Settlement' process. They look to marry up churches looking for a new pastor with pastors looking to move on and names of suggested pastors have started to arrive.
- We've convened SPOT (Senior Pastor Oversight Team) made up of Adrian, Alan, Dan, Ian, Norman and Rob. We meet regularly to discuss candidates, listen to their preaching and to speak to some of them online. That too has started to happen.
- I'd like to remind you of two things:
 - We need to be confidential because some of the pastors existing churches may not be aware that they are exploring new positions.
 - As SPOT, our job is to recommend, the decision over a new pastor will ultimately be made by the church at a special church meeting. To that end, we're looking at means to allow that to happen.

Meanwhile please pray for SPOT, for Eddie and Kathy and for the new pastor God has in mind for us.

Tim

As we mentioned in October we've asked Norman and Roger to continue in their roles as Church Secretary and Treasurer for the time being. And similarly we've asked Ian and Norman whose term as Elders is up to continue in those roles until we are able to hold elections in the usual way. Hopefully in April!

Please join us for a Question and Answer session on Monday 1st Feb at 8pm:

- *Computer or smartphone:* meet.google.com/ncu-ywre-gcm
- *Telephone:* [020 3937 4860](tel:02039374860) PIN: 333 720 933#