



**Annual General Meeting
5pm, 23 September 2018
Hill Cliffe Baptist Church, 12 Red Lane, Appleton,
Warrington, WA4 5AD**

Minutes

Welcome & opening prayer – Simon Oxley opened the meeting with prayer.

Apologies for absence – apologies had been received from:

Philip Elson, Moderator
Ken Irwin, Sion IM Church
Simon Schofield, Latchford Baptist
Brian Davison, Haggate Baptist
Hope Baptist Church

As Philip Elson was unable to attend, Simon Oxley had been asked by NWBA Council to Chair the meeting.

Minutes of AGM 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2017 were proposed as being an accurate record by Phil Jump, seconded by Tony Crawford and accepted unanimously.

Appointment of Company Secretary & Treasurer

Council invited the meeting to re-appoint Mark Heaton as Company Secretary and Treasurer. The appointment was agreed unanimously. Simon expressed sincere thanks on behalf of Council for all of Mark's time and hard work.

Annual report and Accounts – 2017

The Annual Report and Accounts had been previously made available on the website. Mark Heaton presented the accounts reporting on a positive year with the Association remaining in a strong financial position. There had been some changes in the way that the Association received funding with all Home Mission funding now being distributed through the Association. Mark reported an overall deficit of £24K for the year, however, this included a payment made to cover the pension deficit of a closed church of £23K – it is hoped some income would come from the sale of land which would help to cover this deficit.

Mark reminded churches that due to FICA rule changes, the Association can no longer make loans to churches, however, grants are available subject to application.

The Association pension deficit currently stands at £130K and nationally Home Mission giving is down on the previous year, although giving in the North West is up. Whilst there are some challenges ahead, Mark reported that the Association is still financially strong.

Phil Jump presented the Annual Report. He emphasised the importance of holding the activities of the Association team accountable. He drew attention to a typo on page 8 which should read "Finance - Grow "Count me in" donor base to a minimum of 120 by the end the year" not "12". He thanked churches for already giving generously to Home Mission but asked that they raise awareness of the 'Count me In' scheme which allowed individuals to give personally if they were able to. The Association was already seeing the benefits of this scheme with projects being supported directly out of these funds.

The Annual Report and Accounts were received unanimously by the meeting and thanks were offered to Mark and Phil for the work gone into preparing it.

Home Mission Update

Due to the change in distribution methods, the Home Mission report will be included in the Annual Report from next year.

Phil reported that a total of £135,845 went to 25 churches which helped to support 2 Eden workers, 3 church planters/pioneers, 4 projects and 4 new ministerial appointments.

Notice of Special General Meeting

Mark Heaton reported that there was a need to update the current constitution as it is now 30 years old and needs bringing up to date with current charity law. The draft constitution had been approved by Council and it was now necessary to gain Charity Commission approval before going to a Special General Meeting. It is unknown how long the Charity Commission will take to reply which is why no firm date can be specified, however, the meeting was given notice of the intent to call a Special General Meeting in Spring 2019 to agree the amendments to the constitution.

Once formal approval has been received, the document will be made available online prior to the SGM. Mark urged people to take the time to read it.

Questions had been received in advance and Phil was thanked for responding to the questions so promptly. The questions and answers were also made available online.

Questions received ahead of AGM 2018

Q1. Could I request that the Baptist theology which underpins the changes be communicated during the year.

We will seek to publish a theological overview of NWBA's operations at the very latest by the end of 2018. We will make this available through the NWBA website.

Q2. Could I request that there be clear lines of how churches speak into the council and who represents them if the network minister system is being replaced.

While Network ministers have been a significant presence on NWBA council, they have served alongside a diverse group of people, and have never been envisaged or operated as the sole point of contact for churches. We hope that churches will continue to engage with the work of NWBA through the relationship and interaction that comes from working with NWBA team members, attending organised events and through effective relationship with ALL members of council. We would also have to say that while the Network Minister arrangement has worked well for some areas, this has not been the case for others. The proposed changes do not preclude a representative appointment, but nor do they require it – we believe this better serves the diverse reality of NWBA. One key point of interaction was envisaged as being the spring roadshows, which rely on local networks to arrange them – in reality, many have not. By moving this responsibility into the role of a staff member, NWBA can be more prescriptive in making sure these happen, while at the same time retaining the important “local connection” that these events require. Our expectation is that a larger staff team, more geographically spread will make it easier for churches to engage. Formal accountability will remain the same, through an annual report presented at an Annual General Meeting. Shifting the AGM back to a longer, weekend event, is one expression of how we are seeking to make that event more able to properly engage and hold people to account.

Q3. Can churches have the proposals a minimum of one month before the AGM next year in order to think and pray about the major changes. (This would be in response to The NWBA value of Prayerful Listeners)

The narrative version of the changes is now available, providing around six months for response and consultation. The required changes to the Articles of Association have been approved in draft form by the trustees, and will now be sent to the Charity Commission for comment/approval. We HOPE that this will be complete in time for formal approval at NWBA council in November, but would stress that we are completely in the hands of the Charity Commission in terms of timing. We have not yet fixed a date for the proposed Spring EGM, because we do not believe this is wise until the documents have achieved Charity Commission approval. It seems reasonable to request that the date is not set unless there is at least a clear month between the meeting and those drafts becoming available. Our expectation is that there would be a longer timescale, but if the meeting wishes to impose prescribed timings, these can be accommodated.

Any Other Business

No other business had been notified.

Close

Simon offered thanks to those attending the AGM and the meeting closed by sharing the Grace together.

Simon was thanked for stepping in and Chairing the meeting.