

Annual General Meeting
Sion Baptist Church, Burnley, BB11 2DW
Sunday 22 September 2024, 5pm

Minutes

Opening Devotions – The NWBA Moderator, Revd Simon Oxley, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Simon reflected on the purpose of the AGM and while it is a requirement set in legislation and is important for accountability, it is also good to remind ourselves that we are a member of something together. It is a privilege as well as a responsibility for us to be involved in this process; the process of discerning the mind of Christ. We should look beyond this gathering today because NWBA is also a means of churches supporting one another and what we can do together; our AGM is an opportunity to celebrate that. Our conversations should never be ‘them’ and ‘us’ but rather ‘we’ – what can we do together?

Simon noted how he had been struck by the verses in John 13: 34-35 – “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” More often than not, we take the ‘you’ to refer to us as individuals, but it can also refer to churches as well. That our communities love one another – that love is a witness to the God we serve.

Our hope is that our meeting today is an opportunity to celebrate what God has done as well as being an opportunity for God to open our eyes.

Simon offered gratitude for the NWBA staff team who face the same pressures and problems as everyone does and encouraged the meeting to hold them in their prayers.

Simon opened the meeting in prayer.

Apologies for absence

Revd Tim Presswood
Oldham Baptist Church
Revd Brian Davison, Haggate Baptist Church
Anne Peters, Bethania Baptist, Leeswood
Princes’ Drive Baptist Church
Leyland Baptist Church
Altrincham Baptist Church
Revd James Booth
Richmond Baptist Church
Waterloo United Free Church

Minutes of AGM 2023 – The minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 3 September 2023 at Hazel Grove Baptist Church had been circulated ahead of the meeting. The minutes were accepted unanimously as an accurate record.

Appointment of Company Secretary & Treasurer

Trustees recommended the re-appointment of Mr Mark Heaton as Company Secretary & Treasurer. Mark had expressed his willingness to continue to serve in this role and the recommendation was received and agreed unanimously. Simon thanked Mark for his faithful service in this role.

Appointment of Trustees

Simon Oxley stood down as Chair of the meeting and Phil Jump took over.

Biographies of nominees had been posted on the NWBA website ahead of the meeting. Voting would take place by ballot. Annette Parkinson and Sarah Nutter of Sion Baptist Church were appointed as scrutineers.

Appointments require at least 50% of those present and voting. Each church is eligible to appoint 2 voting attendees.

The following individuals were nominated to be appointed for a term of up to 3 years:

Simon Oxley – (Simon has indicated a willingness to serve 12 months)
Doreen Landriau (3 years)
Ruth Gouldbourne (3 years)
Kevin Wisdell (3 years)

Ballot papers were circulated, collected and counted by the scrutineers. All 4 candidates were overwhelmingly elected.

Presentation of Annual report and Accounts – 2023

Mark Heaton presented the financial report. There had been a small amount of investment income but the largest portion of income was the grant received from BUGB each year in the form of Home Mission. The amount received is linked to the BU income generation in the previous year. In addition, there had been some smaller grants and gifts received along with some income generated from activities. Staff secondments also brings in some income. Mark explained that 'Other' includes income from closed churches and while we have benefited significantly from closed church income in 2023, we can't sustain balancing the books by income from closed churches. In terms of outgoings, staff costs makes up the largest portion followed by Home Mission distribution. £154K had been distributed to churches during the year.

Phil Jump drew attention to the Conversation Days that were taking place during the autumn across the Association; these are opportunities to talk together about how we move forward and sustain our financial future. Home Mission funding is now distributed by associations and at their discretion, we invest at least 50% of that funding in local churches with 63.7% being distributed in 2023. The meeting watched videos from 6 people representing work in their local communities:

Phil Brawn, Trinity Baptist Radcliffe
Zac Adeleye – Serpentine Road Family Church
Helen Bradbury – Farnworth Baptist
Ed Green – Pioneer
Stephen Smith – Greenfield Church Urmston
Rose Uitterdijk – Ellesmere Port Community

Phil noted that none of the stories that had been heard would have been possible without the giving of churches and individuals. There are currently more Baptist churches in the North West region that there are M&S stores – we CAN make a difference. If every member of our churches could give £5 per month, everything we do would be funded. Phil urged those attending to not just respond personally, but become a representative for their church and to download the posters from our website and videos from the You Tube channel to encourage more people to give £5 per month.

There is a contingency fund held by the Association of £200K which would allow it to run for one year.

Phil presented the Key objectives for the year; these are plans set by trustees at the beginning of the year which are brought to the AGM in the autumn.

Key objectives included: taking part in the financial review being carried out by BUGB; continuing what we do; Project Violet response; the new Onesimus project; maintaining ecumenical engagement; re-establishment of the Skelmersdale Ecumenical Centre which is now thriving; Everyone Everywhere; Disciple.

A full copy of the Annual Report was still available on the NWBA website.

Simon Oxley took back the Chair.

Simon offered thanks to all of the elected trustees who perform an important function in the life of the Association.

Any Other Business

There were no further items of business. Simon thanked the regional staff and regional ministers for their work over the last year and offered thanks to Sion Baptist for their hospitality in hosting the AGM.

The meeting closed by sharing the Grace together.