

MINUTES OF THE EXTRA CHURCH MEETING HELD ON 22ND FEBRUARY 2015 AT 12NOON IN CAREY HALL

Present: Andy Potter (Minister) in the chair and 37 other members and members of the congregation

1. **Opening Worship** was led by the Chairman
2. **Welcome and Apologies:** The Chairman welcomed all present.

3. Buildings

Andy explained the background to the meeting:

- Last year the deacons commissioned a survey of the buildings in order to gain an independent expert view of their condition and what work is likely to be required over the coming years.
- There was good news in that there are no critical problems with the buildings, in fact we were commended on their general condition.
- The surveyors did make a large number of recommendations, approximately 150 in total, of items of work they believed were necessary. Some big decisions need to be made on how to proceed.

Andy led in prayer.

Tim outlined a summary of some major findings of the survey:

- **Masonry:** In places there are plants growing out of the walls. There are areas of loose and spalling brickwork. The total cost to rectify all of this is expected to be £35-40k over 5-10 years.
- **Roofs:** There are 3 main areas of flat roof plus several small sections. All will require replacement at some point and there are already a few minor leaks. To replace the main Carey Hall roof would cost approx. £30k. Short term repairs need to be made immediately; provision should be made for replacement in five to ten years.
- **Drains:** On the advice of the surveyors a separate specialist survey was commissioned. This identified one item of urgent work that was dealt with straight away along with several lower priority items totaling £8-10k over the next 5 years.
- **Electrical:** The electrical installation is very old and was not designed for today's demands. The distribution board is located in the cellar which has a damp problem. The circuit breakers in Carey Hall suffer frequent nuisance trips. To address the issues and rewire will cost £25-30k expected to be spent over 5-10 years.
- **Manse:** There are concerns around the roofing supports, several leaks,, minor concerns around the electrics and likely medium term issues with some of the external brickwork– the total expenditure could be in the range £10-30k over 10 years.
- **Smaller items:** Broken windows, plastering, CWR kitchen.

Tim has a copy of the full survey report and members of the congregation are welcome to view it. The view of the Maintenance Committee is that the surveyors have been cautious in their recommendations - some of the work recommended could be considered 'nice to have' and the costs given are based on having the work done by a professional property management company - in fact much of it can be done by members or by local firms at discounted rates.

The Maintenance Committee have analysed the recommendations in the survey report, set aside the ones that they believe are not in fact necessary and compiled the remainder into a maintenance plan that includes real costs, details of how the work will be carried out and proposed timescales. Tim handed out a one-page summary of this plan.

The two most pressing items were the collapsing drains below the side passageway and the brickwork above the children's play area. The former has already been dealt with, the latter needs to be done as a matter of urgency.

In order to completely fulfill the recommendations of the Maintenance Committee, the total cost of the necessary work would be approx. £25k per year. However the deacons feel this is an unrealistic target and that a target of £15k per year is more realistic and that the work we do will be prioritized as necessary. This is £15k per year above our current income and budget. One of the purposes of this meeting is to discuss how this can be achieved. The money could come from increased giving, other forms of fundraising or cuts to existing areas of expenditure. An extensive discussion was held and the following points were made.

- At present there is £55k reserve in the General Fund. Our existing expenditure is £33k on ministry, £20k on World Mission and £20k on everything else.
- Expenditure on World Mission: £13.5k to OMF for Peter and Janet Dallman, £2.5k to BU Home Mission, £3k to BMS World Mission, £900 to Pathway, £2k to other organisations.
- Gift Aid is a good way of increasing income – members of the congregation should contact Ian if they give regularly and do not have a declaration in place – however most people do have a declaration in place.
- Rental income: the main component is that from the playgroup – we could increase their rent but doing so could drive them out of the business. The rest is mainly parties on Saturdays – there are on average 2 parties per month, more over the winter months.
- We have a Building Fund which has funded most of the recent buildings items but it has now depleted so there is only approx. £2k remaining.
- Our income has tended to decline over the last 5 years – regular donations have declined significantly but special and loose offerings have held up and income from premises has increased.
- John Melbourne commented that the decline in income is linked to the decline in the numbers in the congregation and the ultimate solution is to increase the number of people in the congregation.
- Tim commented that the additional expenditure now required on the buildings is not as a result of past neglect but all buildings require maintenance, this is a big building, our past expectations on how little we could get away with spending on the buildings were unrealistic and the ongoing expected expenditure is not unreasonable.
- Currently half of the annual Thank Offering is kept by the Church and the other half is given to an external charity - one possibility to increase our income is to keep the whole of this offering. The total amount is normally in the range £2-3k. Coral Burrigge commented that in the Church's history, the whole Thank Offering was originally kept by the Church - it was a means of members to give thanksgiving for the Church. It was agreed by an overwhelming majority in a vote of those present that the whole of the Thank Offering will be kept by the Church this year.

- In the past we have done fundraising events for other organisations – we could do similar events and direct the money to the Church. Such events could also be beneficial for social and outreach purposes.
- There is a need to consider radical measures – to think about what really matters to us and what we are trying to achieve.

Andy urged those present to think and pray about this issue, whether to review the amount they give, and whether they have any suggestions.

We will leave the issue with the congregation for the time being and the Deacons will review our finances later this year to assess whether we can support the increased spending on our buildings going forward. If this review suggests we have not increased our income sufficiently, further meetings will be necessary to review where we are spending our money and to make appropriate but difficult decisions for the next financial year.

Paul Burt asked those present to speak to any of the deacons if they have any concerns about how this issue is being handled or if they want to know more.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 12:45 pm

Signed.....

Date.....