

QUINTON METHODIST CHURCH

Registered Charity no. 1128423

SPECIAL CHURCH COUNCIL- 2 December 2020 at 7.30pm on zoom.

MINUTES

Introduction

The Rev. Ajay Singh welcomed all to the meeting, held on zoom.

Ajay opened with a Prayer, devotions and reflections, with the theme of Change being a natural process, supported by quotations about moving forward. He stated that this would not be an easy meeting.

The meeting was considering one report from the Leadership Team about the creation of

Flexible Worship Area (replacing the pews with chairs).

The report had been sent to Church Council (CC) members on 21 November inviting comments or questions.

Those present on zoom

20 people were present

Apologies received.

3 apologies had been received.

Creation of a Flexible Worship Area.

The context of the report was about implementation of an action already agreed in the Mission Action Plan. This Plan was adopted in September 2019, and reviewed in August 2020, in anticipation of reopening after the first lockdown, and approved by CC in September 2020.

The Church Council on 10 September 2020 agreed the action to-

Prepare plans for a more Flexible Worship Area

Arrange for Children's Area to be close to focus of Worship.

The background now was a continuing drop in numbers of Church Members, adherents and in the congregation (around 10% a year). If this trend continued then the Church would have no congregation within 10 years, but would become unviable well before that.

The future of the Church needed to be secured and this required change now. This meant taking opportunities, becoming more attractive, contemporary, and welcoming including to people of all abilities; encouraging access for all, and attracting more and younger people. Scope for different forms of Church Service could be provided. There was an immediate opportunity to purchase Church Chairs at a very advantageous price, and this opportunity expired very shortly. Volunteers were available to collect the chairs and help remove pews.

A number of responses to the Report had been received and these were summarised for the meeting.

Ajay advised that he had wondered if we should go back to Church Members or wait for the ACM, but neither was applicable because the Mission Review process had taken place following discussion and consultation. The opportunity arising was an immediate one. The focus should be on Worship and how we see our Church.

There was extensive discussion considering all implications and concerns. Suggestions were made that if we did not proceed with the proposal, the chairs might be resold.

It was pointed out that CC members were appointed to represent the interests of, and people in, the Church. There was concern that the matter would be divisive, and that not everyone may have appreciated the implications and complexity of the matter, and that there should be further and wider consultation.

This suggestion about further consultation was countered by the fact that CC are the decision making body.

The following proposal was put to the meeting, with zoom poll launched.

Provision of a Flexible Worship Area.

'Are you in favour of replacing the pews with chairs'

Of 20 members attending, 16 voted in favour, 3 against, 1 abstention.

Thus the proposal was carried very clearly and overwhelmingly at 80%.

There followed further discussion about consultation and whether we should seek the views of the congregation before implementing the decision. It was made clear however that the decision had been taken, we were bound by it, and the task was to explain this to the congregation.

Ajay stated that it was now for Property Committee to work out the practicalities and costs, for example for the floor, carpeting, electrics etc. If more budget was needed this request should be brought to CC. It was confirmed that the Property Committee had the ability to do this, with the reminder that other volunteers were available to help.

It was recognised that not everyone may like this decision, and that change and doing things differently will always be difficult. To help it was agreed that it was essential to explore further the issues that people might want reflected as part of the implementation.

Ajay confirmed that he was ready to help pastorally for anyone requiring this.

A summary of the CC meeting would be prepared for the congregation explaining the decision taken.

Closing

The meeting closed with Prayer and the Grace.