

**Annual General Meeting
Sunday 3 September 2023, 4.30pm
Hazel Grove Baptist Church**

Minutes

Welcome & opening prayer – Simon Oxley, Moderator, opened the meeting offering thanks to Hazel Grove Baptist for hosting. He welcomed Alan Donaldson and Tim Presswood in his capacity of BU president. Simon read the words of Psalm 24:1 – “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him.” The NWBA region includes: the non-UK area of the Isle of Man; 2 metropolitan counties; historic cities; seaside towns; ports; agricultural villages; green fields; hills; forests and lakes. As a region we have produced people of all skills and experiences and welcomed immigrants from all over the world. The earth is the Lord’s, God loves it and God loves us. But Simon reminded the meeting that it is not all paradise and there are problems all around us – for all the good people we have fostered, we have also produced people like Harold Shipman amongst others – BUT the earth IS the Lord’s, God loves it and God loves us. We rejoice in the churches that make up the NWBA in which we see faithful living, faithful worship and faithful witness. People that are faithfully reflecting the creativity, energy and love of God. It is no accident that we have food banks, warm spaces, debt advice, chaplains serving and members permeating every part of society. “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it.” Simon read from Psalm 46 and opened the meeting in prayer.

Apologies for absence – Apologies for absence had been received from Brian Davison (Haggate Baptist Church), John Thompson (Penrallt Baptist Church), Ken Irwin (Lymm IM Church), Hoole Baptist Church, New Brighton Baptist Church, Sarah Nutter (Sion Baptist & trustee), Fiona Firestone.

Minutes of AGM 2022 – The minutes of the meeting held on Sunday 8 May 2022 via Zoom 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. This recommendation was received and agreed unanimously.

Appointment of Trustees

Nominees were as follows:

Kirstie Banks Lyon (3 years)
Sarah Nutter (3 years)
Lorna Quigley (3 years)
George Ayoma (2 years)
John Bradbury (2 years)

The meeting appointed Robin Urwin and Jonny Hirst as scrutineers.

In accordance with the Articles of Association, nominees were required to receive the vote of at least 50% of those present and voting at the meeting. A secret ballot overwhelmingly re-elected all 5 nominees.

Annual report and Accounts – 2022

The Annual Report and Accounts had been made available ahead of the meeting via the NWBA website.

Phil Jump highlighted some key points from the Annual Report. It was noted that while the Association had not managed to appoint a Church Life Minister for Cheshire by the end of the year, that appointment had now been made.

Following Covid lockdowns there had been a huge demand for safeguarding training – training is now up and running and thanks were offered to the safeguarding team and operations team for the work they had done to catch up and meet the demand.

Mark Heaton presented the finance report. Mark highlighted the main sources of income for the Association, namely, the BUGB annual grant being the primary income source; donations; activities and other income alongside a small amount from investment income. He expressed disappointment in the reduction in BU grants over recent years and also noted the income received from a closed church whereby the Association receives 50% of the proceeds. In addition there had been a donation direct to NWBA from a closed church in 2022. It was emphasised that this income cannot be relied upon and neither would we want to rely on this as a source for income. In terms of expenditure, the biggest costs remain staff costs followed by grants and Home Mission grants which amounted to £149K in 2022. The overall deficit for the year was £23K. It was noted that the Association holds reserves of £200K representing one year's running costs; a property valued in the region of £300K; designated funds of £93K and a general reserve of £213K. The deficit for the first half of 2023 has been offset by closed church income. The meeting was asked to note that the use of reserves in this way was not sustainable. Some staff have been seconded with others covering different areas of work. A leaflet was also available regarding opportunities to invest in the young leaders programme and delegates were reminded of the invitation to join the Count Me In scheme whereby if each church member who was able, gifted £5 per month to the Association, all grants and activities would be met.

Trustees had previously delayed holding a financial review pending the results of the BUGB review, however, it had been agreed that this couldn't wait any longer. Jonny Hirst distributed leaflets inviting churches to invest in our young people.

Fiona Firestone presented some stories from Renew Wellbeing churches along with stories being shared by some of our churches in the North Wales region.

Simon Oxley offered thanks to Phil and Mark for bringing our annual report and accounts to life. Simon proposed accepting the accounts and annual report and these were received unanimously.

Simon encouraged attendees to continue to pray for all those things that had been seen and heard about.

Any Other Business – no other business had been notified.

Simon expressed gratitude to everyone in the Association and the churches of the Association and the meeting closed by sharing The Grace together.