

MINUTES OF THE CHURCH MEETING SUNDAY DECEMBER 7th 2025

Present

Members: 18

Non-members: 6

Apologies: Janet and Harvey Lewis
Margaret and David Ballard,
Sandra Henchcliffe,
Gaynor Burton
Alison Murfin
Joyce Lester

Reverend Elsie Fraser opened the meeting with a reading from 1 Thessalonians 5: 12-18 and in prayer.

She gave thanks to Tracy Houchin for taking the minutes and to everyone who works hard behind the scenes (in preparation for the services, getting words ready and providing music). Also, to those who work hard to make sure we have tea and coffee on a Sunday morning.

She reminded us to acknowledge those who work hard among the church and all work together, encouraging each other, always striving to work for each other. She gave special thanks to Hilary Robinson who prepared the sandwiches for the Members Meeting.

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed as correct and signed from the previous meeting.

Matters Arising

The In-person Bible Study on Thursday mornings is proving to be a great success, with up to 15 people in the group. Next week will be the last week before Christmas, but the group will recommence on Thursday 8th January 2026. This is good way to study with others, regardless of knowledge or ability. All are very welcome to join.

Membership and Pastoral Matters

Roger & Sonia Howe – Remove from membership as they are now attending St Giles closer to their home.

We now have 34 people on the church membership

For all those who are interested in becoming a member, or would like to discuss what membership involves, please speak with Elsie.

Prayers

Elsie asked that we all pray for those who are grieving and struggling with ill health. In particular, for Sheila, following the death of Roger, for the Denning family, for Yvonne (who had her father's funeral on Friday), and for Paul and Shiela who are going through a house move at the moment.

Also, for Jean Barden who will be moving house on the 5th or 6th of January 2026 (who some of you will know from the Thursday evening bible study group). She will be joining us at the church following her move.

Safeguarding

Elsie handed over to Graham Falgate as our designated safeguarding person.

We now have a new Safeguarding Policy, which is available to view on the church website. If you have the opportunity, please take a look. For anyone who does not have access to the internet, there are copies available around the church for people to see (both in the community hall and the church itself). It is important to familiarise yourself with the document and that we look after each other and share any concerns. Graham thanked Tony Salt for the hard work that he has done in editing the website.

The following people received Level 2 training on the 9th November 2024: Janet Aukett, Margaret Ballard, Allison Burke, Paul Gardner, Pam Graham, Sandra Henchcliffe, Vicky NG, Hilary Robinson, Tony Salt, Anna Shum, Ming Kui Tam, Many Ho, Mabel Man. The following also received Level 3 training on the same day: Janet, Paul, Pam, Sandra, Hilary, Tony, Ming Kui Tam. Training is valid for 4 years, so there will be no need for them to do a refresher course for a couple of years yet.

On the Saturday 31st January 2026 there will be more safeguarding training available. This is provided by the East Midlands Baptist Association (EMBA) and trains up to Level 3. Elsie Fraser, Maggie Archer and Graham Falgate will all receive Level 2/3 training on this date.

As a church we are trying to provide a better provision for young people. For example, on the 21st December 2025 we are holding an All-Age Service. Maggie Archer (deputy safeguarding officer) will be coordinating the all-age crafts. She will be needing some volunteers. We will need at least 2 people to help her to work with the children. If you have a desire for this going forward, we urge you to take up the training. We are very fortunate that Littleover Baptist Church will be hosting the training in January. And it is important to note, that if you do not complete the training in January, you would need to travel to do the training at another time. If you are interest, you can speak to Graham or Elsie to join the training. Elsie gave thanks to both Graham and Maggie.

Fabric Team

Elsie passed over to Paul Gardner.

The consumer unit in the manse has been installed. The roof lights need replacing in the church hall; however, Paul is struggling with this as it is difficult to find someone who is willing to work on a flat roof.

Decorating

The notice boards outside need replacing. Paul has contacted the company that deal with this to see what needs to be done.

The light over the community hall has failed. Paul has contacted the company to get it repaired. The flooring in the community hall is starting to show signs of wear, and therefore Paul is looking to get quotes for replacement costs.

The roof is not leaking at the moment, but we may need to put something in the budget as a contingency just in case, as currently there is nothing in the budget should any repairs be required, which would be very costly.

The baptistry has been successfully renewed. We have had a contribution of £1,000 and will be having a thanks offering in January towards that fund.

Elsie gave thanks to Stan Walker for his work behind the scenes. And also gave thanks to Paul, who has been doing an amazing job (despite his injured shoulder and impending house move). She wants Paul and Sheila to have some rest. They do so much around the church. She wants to make sure everyone is looking after their own health and that no one is making themselves ill due to pressure. Please, always ask for help.

Graham mentioned the notice board. Pam has changed the Tranquillity Café one. Over the next weeks and months, there will be work going on to update the rest of the notice boards in the community hall. This room is like a shop front for us. We don't have anyone specifically to do update notice boards, but if anyone would like to volunteer to take on this task please speak to Elsie. At the moment Pam and Elsie will start to tidy them up. It was put to the vote, and all were happy with that. We now have 3 old free standing notice boards which were in the church spare, so if anyone needs them, they are available.

Within the fabric aspect, it has been proposed, that the bars around the baptistry are quite dark, being black. It has been suggested that they could be painted. The views of the church members are important and it was opened to the floor for thoughts or comments. Marie shared that when Alan was still Secretary, there were children that had been frightened by the black bars and thought it was an open grave. The bars have to be there for health and safety purposes, but do not need to be black. It was also suggested that the colour makes people think of a prison.

A discussion was had around the tables and put to a vote on:

- a) Do the bars remain black
- b) Do we paint them, and if so, what colour

The general consensus around the room was that greenery should be added to the bars, in addition to them being painted. The majority of members agreed they should be painted blue.

All members agreed for this to continue to be discussed by the Diaconate. If anyone would like to add or discuss anything else, speak to Elsie or someone in the diaconate. Paul reminded us that the Fabric team consisted of only himself and David Balland. Paul suggested it would be good to have a couple of other volunteers on the Fabric Team. Anyone wishing to volunteer to speak with Paul.

Ministry Updates

Elsie gave thanks to Graham, Rob and Sandi for their help in preaching and teaching. We also have 2 other people who may be willing to lead a service. It is Elsie's aim to have 1 person leading and 1 person teaching for a service, so that we will get a broader spectrum of learning.

In January we will begin a series 'A Life of Love and Loyalty', based on the book of Ruth. Our Lent series will be 'Living without limit', which will take us up to Easter. Rob, Graham, Elsie, and Sandi will be involved in these preaching series. If anyone has any ideas for preaching series, speak to Graham, Sandi or Elsie.

Church Anniversary

7th & 8th February 2026 is the church's Anniversary. In 2026 we will also be celebrating 100 years of women in Baptist ministry. We'll be celebrating the ministry of Violet Hedger who became the first College-trained female ordained minister in the United Kingdom and began her ministry journey here in Littleover. If you would like to know more about Violet Hedger, Tony Salt has a copy of a dissertation written about her, which he is happy to share with you by email.

On Saturday 7th February we have the Hammond family from Derby Salvation Army coming to our church for a musical evening. Any donations collected on the day will go to Derby Salvation Army.

On Sunday 8th we will be welcoming Rev'd Jenny Few to preach during this service. Graham will be leading the service. There will be a thank offering uplifted at this service. The total of the thank offering this year will be towards the baptistry repair.

On the Sunday 11th October 2026 we have Lynn Green, General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, preaching at our church. She usually preaches at large events, so we are very fortunate to have her as our guest. This is a big event for the celebration of Baptist Women (and men, you are valued too) so please put this date in your diaries.

Baptist Home Mission has requested that we increase our giving to them. We took a vote to see if everyone would be happy for our offering to go to them on that day (11th October). All agreed.

Daniels Den

The group continues to meet on Tuesdays, but it is no longer run by the church. As a result, Mags has taken out her own insurance. This would mean that it won't be advertised in the same way it previously was as it is not a church group.

Daniel's Den is a 'Community Activity' and Paul, along with other members, viewed their concerns that we should continue to advertise it. Paul was particularly upset as he felt that no one in the church has offered to help to run it. Pam reminded people that she had ran the group for 10 years. However, there is a limit to what we can do as a church.

Elsie pointed out that we have the Guides, Brownies, Rainbows and Tiny Tots. We must look at what resources we have.

It was also clarified that The Tranquillity Café is a church group. And that if we advertise groups that are not run by the church, we open ourselves up to criticism from other organisations who use the community hall. We need to show a distinction from church activities. Only church run activities are covered by our safeguarding policy.

We discussed the difficulties of distinguishing profit-making organisations. Each group has negotiated their own fees for the room bookings also. There is nothing to stop these groups putting their own boards out to advertise their groups. It was put to the vote to see if all were happy in general for a group to advertise but not put it in our church notices. All agreed, except 1 who was against, and 1 who abstained.

Room Bookings

David and Margaret Ballard have resigned after many years of service. Elsie thanked David and Margaret for the many years they served in this ministry and a gift and flowers were given to them at the morning service.

In the future, it is proposed that the job will be coordinated between Tony, who will look after the emails, Tracy, who will be responsible for administration and contracts, and Alex, who will organise opening up / closing the hall, clearing up. If anyone wants heating on during any groups, they are to let Stan know, who will also be included in the Booking Group Email Distribution List. It was put to the vote if all were in favour of the proposed changes. All agreed.

Margaret and David's number is currently showing in the church phone directory as booking stewards. If any calls come to them Margaret and David can will pass the numbers onto the new team rather than the whole directory be reprinted at this time.

Flourish Event – 31 January 2026

Unfortunately, this event has been cancelled. Jason (the minister at Haven has resigned from his ministry there but will continue part time at St Peters.). As it is not clear what will be happening at the Haven, it was decided to postpone the event. We were all asked to pray for the churches working together.

Finance

Elsie handed over to Christine who had produced a proposed budget which was sent out to all members prior to the meeting. We have a deficit which is too high, and although we have got quite a lot of money in the bank now, it will not last. The deficit is approximately £1,789 per month. The deficit has gone up, but the income remained the same. Also, we no longer have the rent from the Manse.

Budgets are guidelines, we cannot necessarily stick to them. It is guesswork. Elsie gave thanks to Janet and Christine and those involved in the finance team.

Ministers' Stipend

The Baptists Union (BU) recommends a Minimum Stipend for Ministers each year. In January 2026 this will increase to £30,405 (which will be an increase of £800). Elsie was asked to leave the room whilst we voted on whether it should be increased.

It was agreed by all that we only really need to vote on it, if it is something different. And that it should increase by the minimum amount each year (as per the BU guidelines), without the need to vote. Paul proposed this and it was seconded by Graham. All agreed.

It was pointed out that expenses go up each year and that people might want to consider amending their giving. Because we have the Manse, we have to do work to upgrade it. (It has been rented out for a few years, and no work has been done on it). All were happy with budget proposal for the year. The next time we review it will be at the AGM.

A.O.B.

Thank you to Ruby and David for the chocolates we shared at the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 17th March – 7pm – combined AGM and Members Meeting

It was proposed that we continue to have with 2 evening meetings in the lighter months and 2 Sunday meeting in winter. It was suggested that one of the winter Sunday meetings not be in December as it is not a good month for a meeting for many people as there are so many other commitments. All agreed.

Stephen closed the meeting with prayer.

Signature —————

Date —————