

## Special Congregational Meeting Minutes

Sunday, 8 March 2020

Blackwood Uniting Church

### Attendance:

Chris Bray	Ian Penny	Jocie Dennison
Margaret McCaskill	Avis Whitbread	John Whitbread
Bev Eccleston	Bev Allison	Helen Blake
Jan Furness	Anthony Furness	Helen Brown
Graham Brown	Claudia Cliff	Estelle Pearce
Judy Adami	Peter Stead	Elisabeth Williams
Mark Williams	Robert Colbert	Bruce Marriott
Bonnie Marriott	Trevor Sutcliffe	Alison Sutcliffe
Carys Penny	Gwendolyn Morphett	Jan Wiseman
Bob Roach	Bob Potter	Ros Bardsley
Ken Bardsley	Kay Cranwell Mullin	Marnie Agnew
Daniel Roach	Christine Roach	Phil Marlow
Jane Marlow	Pat Collette	Jacqui Harrison
Jocelyn Gamble	Mark Gill	Richard Stead
Peter Smith	Julie Haddrick	Joan Hazeldine
Ewan Hazeldine	Penny Harper	Glenis Reid
Malcolm McArthur	Gloria McArthur	Jill Pope
Neville Pope	Ros Miller	Doff Lyon
Jan Rawolle	Keith Rawolle	David Hawkins
Lynona Hawkins	Bryan Belling	Joy Belling
Liz Waters	Peter Waters	John Hewitt
Gwenyth Hewitt	Rodney Pike	John Dixon
Anne Dixon	Janet Paull	Michael Bull
Peter Cranwell	Tony Miller	Anne Magarey
Michael Dowling		

### Apologies:

Wes Bray	Bec English	Bob Lyon
Thelma Pike		

The meeting opened at approximately 11.30 am, following a combined worship service.

### **1. Welcome & Opening Prayer**

Chair Michael Bull welcomed everyone and offered an Opening Prayer.

### **2. Overview of Meeting Items**

The Chair introduced the single agenda item, ie a progress report on the project *“Forward with Purpose”*. He invited members to sign the Attendance Sheets being circulated, and noted that questions would be welcomed after the full presentation.

### **3. Presentations**

Peter Cranwell acknowledged and thanked the other members of the *“Forward with Purpose”* sub-group of Council – Tony Miller, Anne Magarey, Michael Dowling – for their work in organising the 6 workshops that took place earlier this year and the development of the surveys sent to BUC members and to organisations within the wider Blackwood community.

Peter began with a powerpoint presentation, providing an overview since *“Forward with Purpose”* was first presented at the Annual Congregational Meeting in November 2019. He noted that BUC sought to be a flourishing, engaged and connected community, connected with each other and with the wider, local community – in a way that was a fresh expression of church.

To establish lasting, quality connections with our wider community, we need to know ourselves and the community better and, in this process, we seek to present ourselves in a way that makes us more relevant to the wider community. Although we are a small part of our wider community (eg, about 1%), the way we live out our faith hopefully will have a bigger ripple effect on our community.

The following activities have been done so far:

- Surveys
  - Online congregational survey – 88 surveys completed, representing 105 people
  - Community classes survey – after 2 weeks, 14 completed
  - Wider community survey – to be released in 2 weeks
- Workshops



- Indigenous issues A,B
- Inclusion issues B
- Women’s issues A
- Faith & Spirituality
  - Children or youth A
- Environmental
  - Climate action conversations A,B
  - Conservation conversation B
- Health & Well-being
  - Mental health A,B
- Social Interests
  - Movie nights A
  - Music performances B
  - Lego club A
- Preferred Times
  - Weekdays (day time) C
  - Weekdays (evening/night time) A
  - Weekends (day time) B
- Logo
  - 70% indicated “I like ‘the buc’ logo shown”



Peter thanked Tony and all who completed the survey, noting the fantastic level of response and encouraging people to look further at the full data at: [http://blackwooduc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/200303survey\\_quantitative-results\\_88-responses.pdf](http://blackwooduc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/200303survey_quantitative-results_88-responses.pdf)

Anne Magarey then presented a summary of the initial analysis of comments/feedback/suggestions provided at the 6 workshops.

- “Love” was clearly a common thread throughout all the workshop discussions – especially in the faith workshops.

- Love and compassion were seen as special elements of our faith community.
- Love was described as a core belief that is demonstrated through inclusion, acceptance and being non-judgemental.
- We want to serve, be kind, and advocate for those who need help.
- We feel that helping those in the community is something we should do.
- We noted that Jesus lived out unconditional love and this is fundamental to who we are.
- We don't want to "step on toes", don't want to "take over", be pushy or "churchy" – but we want to be recognisable in the community.
- We might need some training to do this right, to know what our skills and passions are.
- We want to grow and learn in our faith journey.
- How we use our property, our car park, our manse should be guided by our commitment to love.
- The sub-group was struck by how love permeated the responses.
- We are seeking ways to operationalise – to put into action – this love.

Anne noted that the workshop feedback will be further explored. She thanked all for their attendance and input.

Peter thanked Anne and emphasised how much material Anne had been looking through, with 270 bullet points having been collected from the Faith workshops alone. People were advised to contact Michael Dowling if they wanted to look further at the "raw data" from the workshops.

Peter noted that, in terms of a road map for moving forward, the sub-group will be concentrating initially on what things could be done quickly without much cost or significant additional effort. Although no decisions have yet been made, feedback does suggest such areas as:

- Extending the "breadth" of the Community Classes
- "My Story Telling" opportunities
- Meeting the needs of the ageing
- Creating a commercial precinct
- Having opportunities for board games, hosting a Lego club, having music jam sessions

While about 70% liked the proposed logo, or a slight modification, all comments on the logo will be further considered before any decision.

Peter presented the following tasks for proceeding from here:

- **SYNOD notification**

Start the conversation with them so they are in the picture

- **Plan - sequence**

Activities must be realistically achievable

Each activity to have goals to measure progress e.g. start and finish dates or duration

- **Finance**

Need to determine budget expenditure required for various stages

Need a Business Plan detailing viability – based on previous Technical Committee suggestions

- **“Low hanging fruit”**

Identify in sequence, based on least cost and most achievable

We expect there will be quite a number in this category that can be started very soon.

- **Timeline**

Need to be realistic, based on detailed assumptions regarding human and financial resources

- **Effort strategy**

Who will do What, When and How?

Management – needs to be driven by someone until bedded in.

Possibly 3 years?

Audits – Would be wise to have someone audit against plans on a frequent basis. Phil Megaw, former member and a qualified engineer, has offered to do this.

#### **4. Questions**

Bev Eccleston - Will we see a plan of what will be done to the building?

Peter – Yes. It is too soon for specific building works but there have been 3 draft plans developed. One was presented in the workshop to give some idea of changes being considered. However, until more analysis of what will be needed, eg moving walls, we can't present a final proposal. The congregation will be involved in further discussion.

Michael Bull – Could you describe what's being considered with the *Blackwood Times*.

Peter – We have met with the paper's editor and he's very excited about what we are doing. He wants to publish a story each month about BUC.

#### **5. Concluding Comments**

Michael Dowling expressed much thanks to Peter, Tony and Anne for all their work. He noted that quantitative data is easier to analyse, with more time needed to fully summarise the qualitative workshop data. We will look for patterns of what people have said, what they want – will do this using “soft eyes”, looking for the whole gestalt vs the little pieces. Patterns are waiting to be seen, to emerge.

## **6. Next Meeting**

The next congregational meeting is scheduled for Sunday, 17 May 2020. We expect more information on “*Forward with Purpose*” will be available then. The Chair expressed sincere thanks to the sub-group, and also to Council for their direction and support.

The meeting concluded, with a closing prayer from Michael Dowling, at approximately 12.20 pm.

Minutes drafted by Michael Bull