



Bryanston Methodist Church
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Minutes of Annual Society Meeting 2024

Date 25 November 2024
Venue BMC Sanctuary and Online
Chairperson Rev Thabiso Mcinga
Recorded by Sandisiwe Tyesi

1. Opening Devotion by Rev B. Makgamathe

Rev Boitumelo Makgamathe opened with a devotion in Colossians 3 vs 12-16. She spoke about the Christian community and emphasizing on the virtues that define the Christian character, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness. These virtues should replace the old virtues that we used to live by, which are pride, sinfulness and anger.

The passage calls us to show active love, peace and wisdom of Christ. As we speak to each other in this session, we need to clothe ourselves with these virtues. Rev ended the devotion with prayer.

2. Welcoming:

Rev Mcinga welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Constituting the meeting

The meeting was duly constituted with 36 members present in the sanctuary and 39 members participating online. It was noted that Rev. Ian Frans would join the meeting at a later stage. The Chair also acknowledged the virtual presence of Rev. Sikhupela.

No apologies were received.

In the absence of an officially appointed secretary, Ms. Sandisiwe Tyesi was requested to assist with the minute-taking, as she had undertaken this responsibility during the 2023 Annual Society Meeting (ASM).

4. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was tabled as circulated. As no additions or amendments were proposed, the agenda was accepted and formally adopted in its original form.

5. Minutes of the 2023 ASM

A correction was noted on page 7 under the Pastoral Care and Events Report, item 5.4. The names of the newly adopted leaders were recorded incorrectly. The Secretariat will obtain and insert the correct names as adopted at the conclusion of the meeting.

Subject to this correction, the minutes were adopted.

6. Matters Arising

Matters arising will be addressed as they appear on the agenda.

7. General Reports

7.1. Attendance and Stats (Rev B. Makgamathe)

Rev. Makgamathe reminded the meeting of the continued importance of ensuring that ushers record attendance statistics before the start of every service.

She also reported the following membership movements and sacramental statistics for the period under review:

- 27 transfers received from other churches;
- 11 members transferred out to other churches;
- 199 adult confirmands across the two confirmation services held;
- 9 youth confirmands;
- 53 children baptised;
- 13 adult baptisms.

Regarding attendance patterns, Rev. Makgamathe highlighted the following trends:

- In-person attendance declines during the winter months and increases again as temperatures rise.
- The 9:00am service shows strong attendance in the early months of the year, with a gradual stabilisation thereafter and a slight winter dip.
- Online attendance remains difficult to quantify accurately, as available data does not distinguish between full-service participation and brief log-ins of only a few minutes.
- A notable number of children attend the 11:00am service compared to the 9:00am service.
- YouTube and Facebook livestreams average between 200–400 views, with Facebook streaming having only commenced in May.
- The Children's Ministry continues to experience high attendance at the 11:00am service. The Children's Pastor has requested additional volunteers, noting that current ratios fall short of the guideline of one adult for every ten children.
- Youth attendance was significantly higher before university students returned to campus and has shown a predictable decline during examination periods.

Rev. Makgamathe also responded to a request for a 10-year comparative attendance analysis (2013–2023). The data indicates a decrease in the number of ministers from 6 – 3, alongside a decline in average in-person attendance from 1,689 to 1,119 over the same period.

The report was proposed, seconded, and formally adopted.

7.2. Financial Report (John Whitter)

Mr. Whitter presented the financial report for the ten-month period ending 31 October 2024. He reported a surplus of R1.6 million, primarily attributed to once-off donations amounting to R1.7 million, significantly exceeding the budgeted figure of R800,000. An additional contributing factor was the strong performance of the Rhona initiative, which generated R1.3 million, compared to the budgeted R970,000, indicating an exceptional year for this programme.

Total income for the period amounted to R11.8 million, which is R1.1 million ahead of the budget. Savings were released in several expenditure categories; however, it was noted that tithe-related expenses exceeded budget expectations. As part of these tithe-related commitments, the Joseph's Storehouse programme delivered goods valued at R11 million, collected from retail partners and distributed to beneficiaries.

Operating expenses remain under budget, reflecting responsible financial management, and are 11% lower compared to the same period last year.

Income Overview:

The primary source of income continues to be EFTs, which have performed above budgeted expectations.

Rhona Initiative Progress:

The Rhona initiative has performed significantly above projections, recording a 146% increase compared to the previous year, against a budget of R970,000. One of the key objectives of the Rhona fund was to address the backlog of campus maintenance that accumulated during the COVID-19 period. To support this, an

additional R650,000 was allocated in 2023, complementing the R701,000 allocated in 2022, bringing the total maintenance provision for these projects to R1.3 million.

This was used as below:

RHONA PROGRESS – OCTOBER 2024	
2023 -24 BACKLOG MAINTENANCE PROJECTS	
2022 BACKLOG PROVISION FROM RHONA FUNDS	
2023 ADDITIONAL PROVISION FROM RHONA FUNDS	
TOTAL	
BUDGETED PROJECTS - EXPENSED TO DATE	
2022 Provision - expensed 2023	
Slate roof restoration - Chapel	
27A Manse water-routing project	
Fire Hydrant Valve 100m installation	
Waterproofing (Lower Office)	
Major 2023 church precinct revamp contract - fully paid	
Sub-total	
2023 Provision - expensed 2024	
School Roof repairs	
Slate Roof repairs - Finance, Sanctuary, Pastoral office	
Church gutter repairs	

It was noted that additional projects will still be allocated from the remaining balance of the R235,000. Management confirmed that the historical maintenance backlogs have largely been addressed. As a result, the 2025 budget will not include any backlog-related maintenance costs but will instead focus solely on routine and ongoing maintenance requirements.

Operating expenditure variance

All operating expenses remain within the approved budget parameters. The primary variance arises within the capital expenditure category, due to the need to replace a bakkie that had been stolen. The insurance payout received was significantly lower than the replacement cost, necessitating the procurement of a new vehicle.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 10 Months ended 31 October 2024						
Description	Actual YTD Oct 24 R000	Budget YTD Oct 24 R000	Variance R000	Actual YTD Oct 23 R000	Oct 24:23 Variance %	Actual YTD Dec 2023 R000
Base Tithe Income	8,032	8,160	(128)	7,657	5	9,048
- EFTs	6,626	7,130	(504)	6,685	(1)	7,891
- Cash collections	1,406	1,030	376	972	45	1,157
Large one-off Donations	1,729	800	929	1,168	48	1,268
Total Tithing Income	9,762	8,960	802	8,825	11	10,316
Other Income	759	778	(19)	762	(0)	921
Rhona Collections	1,336	970	366	912	46	917
Total Income	11,856	10,708	1,149	10,500	13	12,155
Less: Expenses	10,170	10,182	12	9,266	(10)	11,893
Tithe related	976	896	(80)	883	(11)	1,032
Assessment	1,332	1,332	0	1,327	(0)	1,593
Operating expenses	7,862	7,954	92	7,057	(11)	9,268
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	1,686	526	1,160	1,233	37	262

SUMMARISED BALANCE SHEETS			
Description	Oct 24 R000	Sept 24 R000	Dec 23 R000
BANK AND CASH BALANCES			
Ring-fenced funds			
- Property	618	608	575
- Guarantee	298	298	298
	916	906	873
BMC Bank & Cash Balances	3,977	3,512	2,612
	4,893	4,418	3,484
Other receivables	(132)	4	88
TOTAL ASSETS	4,761	4,423	3,573
LIABILITIES			
Funds held on behalf of others	251	232	320
Other liabilities	890	891	1,318
	1,141	1,123	1,638
BMC RESERVES	3,621	3,300	1,935
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND RESERVES	4,761	4,423	3,573

Questions and Responses

Inquiry: Has the Church considered investing funds into a fixed deposit?

Response: The Church has previously made use of fixed deposit instruments. However, one of the challenges encountered has been the need to grow our reserves while retaining sufficient liquidity. Going forward, leadership will explore opportunities offering improved investment rates.

Inquiry: What is the value of measuring tithing against a budget when our expenditure tends to increase proportionally as income increases (“the more money we receive, the more expenses we incur”)?

Response: The Church allocates 10% of tithe income - excluding Rhona-related income - for specific ministry expenses. A tithe-out accrual account is maintained and has been steadily increasing. These funds primarily support the Joseph’s Storehouse initiative, soup kitchens, and international ministries focused on feeding communities in impoverished areas. Each of these ministries operates with an annual set budget.

Inquiry: Given the increase in online viewership, particularly on Facebook and YouTube, should the Church not be receiving revenue from these platforms? If so, who is responsible for collecting it?

Response: Revenue from online platforms is only generated once certain eligibility requirements are met. At present, the Church does not meet all of these criteria; therefore, no revenue is earned from Facebook or YouTube.

Inquiry: Operating expenses have increased by R700,000 compared to the previous year. What measures are being implemented to reduce these costs? Additionally: Are Rhona income amounts received from January accounted for in 2022 or 2023?

There is concern regarding limited CAPEX spending despite the growth of the Church. What is the long-term strategy for capital expansion?

Response: Base tithing income has not grown at the desired rate, although this has been offset by once-off large donations and Rhona income. A more stable and consistent pattern of giving from members would enable the Church to strengthen its financial planning and allocate greater resources toward future CAPEX development.

Inquiry: Has provision been made in the budget for enhanced security in light of rising crime levels?

Response: Leadership continually reviews security requirements. A budget for ongoing security measures is in place, and several enhancements have been implemented during the course of the current year.

Inquiry: With the increase in congregants, can a comparative analysis be conducted over the past five years to determine the impact of this growth on tithing?

Response: No formal analysis has yet been conducted to evaluate the relationship between service attendance trends and tithing patterns.

Inquiry: Is income increasing in proportion to the growth in church attendance? There is concern that although services are full, levels of financial engagement remain low.

Response: The Church recognises the need for renewed teaching on New Testament giving, structured giving and planned stewardship to encourage deeper understanding and participation in financial contributions.

Inquiry: There was previously a call for volunteers to support the media team, yet participation appears low. What is the status?

Response: A digital sub-team had been formed to work with Kerry on communications; however, it appears that follow-through on this initiative has not been consistent.

Inquiry: Are there systems in place to monitor and prevent wasteful expenditure?

Response: Expenditure is governed by an approved budget, and any deviations require formal justification and appropriate approval. A procurement policy is in place. Payments are processed only upon ministerial authorization and subsequently released by authorised bank signatories. Monthly financial statements undergo review to ensure compliance and oversight.

Inquiry: Does the Church receive reports on Eileen Ben's mission work?

Response: Yes. The Church received a report approximately 18 months ago. The Operations Manager continues to oversee and monitor reporting from this mission. The report was proposed and formally adopted.

Additional Notes:

John informed the meeting that the Church undergoes an annual external audit of its financial statements, typically conducted around March. The auditors issued an independent auditors' report, which included a qualified opinion based on the following three points:

- Insufficient audit evidence was provided in relation to Property, Plant, and Equipment (PPE).
- Insufficient audit evidence was provided regarding the sale of the manse.
- It is not feasible for the organization to institute accounting controls over cash collections and donations prior to entry.

7.3 2025 Budget (John Whitter)

Mr. Whitter reported that the 2025 budget has been drafted in alignment with the Church's Strategic Plan for the period 2023–2027. He noted that the strategic document remains a work in progress and will need to be revisited to ensure continued relevance and accuracy.

He further highlighted that all planned activities for the 2025 financial year are structured under, and directly informed by, the 6 BMC pillars.

2025 KEY BUDGET ASSUMPTION

RESOURCES REQUIRED - EXPENDITURES

- No new 2025 staff positions
- Salaries & allowances: overall 6% increase in payr
- 2025 budget makes provision for continuation of ministry internship program : 3 children's ministr a cost of R121k
- Circuit assessment: 16.2% increase to R1,856k *(to help St. Paul's and Cosmo City)*
- Worship team musician allowances – R312k (new

2025 KEY BUDGET ASSUMPTION

RESOURCES PROVIDED - INCOME

- Base tithe & offering income to grow at inflation -
- Large one-off donations: balancing figure, set at R *of 2024 projected)*
- 2025 Rhona budget R1,250k *(2024 projected - R budget – R970k)*
- Rhona income still excluded from Gross Tithing I reserve levels restored
- Out

There are a few added items on the expenses that we didn't have in 2023. These include worship team musicians, Divorce and grief care, minister and staff debriefing with psychologists, various in person courses that will be budgeted for.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER... INCOME & EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

All amounts in R 000	% Incr	2025 Budget	2024 Projected
Total income	(2)	13,392	13,726
Less: Total expenditures	8	(13,392)	(12,391)
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	(100)	0	1,335

Income and Expenditure

Finance noted that the projected income for the upcoming financial year reflects a conservative estimate regarding large once-off donations, as these contributions cannot be reliably forecast or incorporated into the operational budget. Other income streams are expected to remain relatively stable, with minimal year-on-year increase.

Bambanani has formally requested a slight reduction in rent. In addition, the school has requested a 5.5% rental increase, which is below the proposed 6.5% increase aligned with current inflation trends.

Reserves

One of our strategic objectives is to grow our reserves to be at least equal to 3 months of ministry, mission and administrative obligations. This equates to 25% of our 2025 budget i.e. R3,350k

One of the goals of Rhona should be to continue to help restore our reserves.

CAPEX Budget

CAPEX items needed for next year are mainly AV and worship instruments, children's ministry jumping castle, slush machine for the youth. All in total are R100k.

Budget challenges

Growing the base tithing income. Not much growth here, only a little over inflation. Property holding costs There's not going to be backlog maintenance but ongoing maintenance because if its deferred too long, it becomes more costly.

Question & Answers:

Question: With respect to the music budget, how was the budgeted amount determined? Additionally, is it possible to extend support to other service musicians, given that the query arises from the 9am service?

Response: The 9am service follows a different worship style from the 11am service. Some musicians are required to travel significant distances for rehearsals and services. To maintain a high standard of music, it is necessary to use professional musicians and sound technicians. GracePoint generally appoints professional musicians who are often financially vulnerable and who, in this context, are compensated at rates significantly below their standard professional fees.

Question: Is it possible to retain the Rhona budget at the same level as the current year by reducing Rhona services from four to three? The concern raised is that additional Rhona services place financial pressure on congregants, potentially reducing base tithing as members attempt to save for Rhona contributions.

Response: The Rhona Committee is aware of the financial strain experienced this year and has consequently budgeted for a lower amount than what was achieved in the current year. It is anticipated that increased membership and attendance will assist in sustaining the revised projections. This concern will be formally communicated to the Rhona Committee.

Question: A proposal was made to install front monitors, as congregants seated on the stage/front area often experience difficulty hearing.

Response: This concern is acknowledged. Typically, monitors are removed after the 9am service because there are seldom congregants seated in the front area aside from the minister presiding over the day's service. For larger services, monitors will be installed to ensure audibility.

Question: How many individuals are included in the musical team, given the allocation of R6,500 per Sunday? Additionally, concerns were noted regarding musical shortfalls in the 11am service and the need for consistency across services.

Response: Approximately four musicians are currently compensated, each receiving about R1,500 per month. Further details will be provided in the Worship Report.

Question: Concerns were raised about the high CAPEX figures, particularly regarding items such as the slush machine and jumping castle. Clarification was also requested regarding the decision to support Cosmo City and St Paul's through circuit assessments.

Response: All CAPEX cost estimations follow the established procurement process. The circuit assessment for Cosmo City and St Paul's was approved at the Circuit Quarterly Meeting, as presented by the circuit treasurer.

Question: Does the Rhona amount presented as “brought forward” include all Rhona-related funds across the various Rhona accounts held at BMC?

Response: The Rhona fund presented reflects the portion that has been utilized for backlog maintenance since 2022. The historical Rhona fund is currently dedicated to funerals, member support, and covering costs associated with ministers assisting with burials outside of town.

The budget was proposed and duly adopted.

7.3. HR Report (Namhla Mxenge)

The HR report was circulated in advance for perusal. Key points highlighted in the report include:

- The HR Committee convenes on a monthly basis.
- There is currently one vacant intern position following a recent resignation.
- The HR Committee continues to seek and welcome individuals interested in joining the team.

The report was formally proposed for adoption and subsequently adopted by the meeting.

7.4. Pastoral Care and Events – Rev. Monoametsi

Rev. Monoametsi presented a report on pastoral care and upcoming events. Seven potential leaders, who have undergone the necessary vetting and training, were recommended for appointment. No objections were raised regarding the proposed names, and the recommended leaders were subsequently processed for appointment.

A concern was raised regarding certain class leaders who have not been active in the church for an extended period. In response, Rev. Mcinga clarified that, in accordance with the Book of Order, class leaders must be members in good standing, and there is no restriction concerning the duration of their membership. A query was raised as to whether assistant class leaders could be elevated to the position of class leaders. Rev. Mcinga explained that promoting assistant class leaders has been the strategy employed by the church over the past several years.

The report was then proposed and duly adopted.

7.5. Youth and Children Report – L. Dhlamini

The report was circulated prior to the meeting. The following highlights were noted:

There remains a need for volunteers for both youth and children ministries, particularly for the 11:00 am service.

Discussion and Questions:

Question: Could the ministry consider being less accommodating of overflow, given safety concerns due to insufficient volunteers?

Response: The request has been duly noted.

Question: Should leadership require a minimum number of parents to assist and take responsibility during services?

Response: Jenny attempted to implement a roster for parents; while some parents participated, many did not.

Question: How should the ministry address volunteers who fail to attend when scheduled?

Response: The concern has been noted.

The report was proposed and adopted by the meeting.

7.6. Trust Property & Justice and service

Rev Mcinga raised that the Justice and service, and Trust properties reports were not in the pre-read pack but they are available to be reported here. Meeting decided for the reports to be distributed to the people and discussed at the next leaders meeting.

Concern was raised that these 2 reports were also late last year for the same reasons.

7.7. Worship Report (C. Strydom)

Regarding musician payments, several alternative solutions were explored prior to implementing the current strategy; however, these earlier approaches did not yield the desired results. The strategy now proposed is considered a more permanent and sustainable solution.

Financially, the plan is to remunerate all 4 musicians on a weekly basis, amounting to approximately R6,500 – R7,000 per month.

A member acknowledged and commended Kabelo for his dedication and the significant contributions he makes to the team.

The report was proposed and subsequently adopted.

7.8 Communications Report – K. Wetton

Kerry presented the communications report, highlighting key challenges, achievements, and ongoing initiatives:

- It was noted that revenue from YouTube and Facebook is limited due to the requirement to pay CCLI licenses each time a worship song is used.
- Both challenges and celebrations within the communications portfolio were shared.
- The launch of an online Care Slip process and an upgrade to the finance server were announced.

Questions and Discussions:

Question: Has the building of the new finance server taken cybersecurity into account?

Response: Yes, a comprehensive investigation was conducted to ensure cybersecurity measures were incorporated.

Question: Can we explore creating a TikTok account?

Response: A TikTok account already exists for the Youth in our Church.

Question: Can we make better use of positive news emerging from BMC?

Response: The suggestion was duly noted.

Question: Can communications regarding CQMs and other circuit meetings be enhanced?

Response: Information about CQMs is currently sent directly to the leaders. The suggestion for broader dissemination for other meetings was noted.

Concern: Some attendees may not want to be recorded during services. What is the strategy to manage this?

Response: One resolution is for the preacher to make announcements requesting attendees refrain from taking pictures and videos during services.

The Communications Report was proposed and adopted.

7.9. Lanseria Preaching Place Report (K. Njwabule)

- The congregation continues to experience growth.
- There are currently 57 full members, with an average attendance of approximately 38 members each Sunday.
- A project has been proposed to explore the acquisition of a new plot for the construction of a dedicated church building, in comparison to continuing activities in the community hall.

The report was proposed and adopted.

8. Organizational Reports

The organizational reports were presented and taken as read. Rev. Mcinga proposed that the reports be adopted collectively, and the proposal was duly accepted by the meeting.

9. Society Stewards Elections

Two current stewards have requested to step down, and the terms of office for an additional two stewards have concluded. Consequently, five steward positions were open for nomination. Nomination forms were circulated and made available in printed format.

Following the nomination period, five nominations were received and subsequently vetted:

S. N. Sithole - under 35 category – 7:00 AM

L. Kwele - 9:00 AM

K. Ntshingila - 11:00 AM

Z. Ndamase - 11:00 AM

A. Dyili - 11:00 AM

All nominations met the eligibility criteria and were approved for inclusion in the upcoming election process.

Q: Do stewards only steward in their respective services where they worship?

A: No, they will steward all of BMC.

10. Appointments of committees

Treasurer: Mr. J Whitter

Society auditor: LSG Integrated

Finance committee (FINCOM): D Khosana, M Monyaki, J Whitter, B Nkosi.

2 new names to be added: Sithokozile nominated from the floor, the 2nd name will be co-opted by the FINCOM team.

Trust property Committee: S Booi, S Ntanjana, B Mbewe, K Mabaso, K Matseke, BMC property manager.

HR committee: A Mcineka, D Khosana, B Wooler, A Gans, K Mdyogolo, L Pangwa, P Gida, N Mxenge.

Rhona committee: C Mamane, T Ndlovu, K Makhawula, K Njwabule, L Kulukunqu, N Mxenge, N Mfuphi, R Spirit, T Mchophele, W Vitsha, Committee to co-opt the last name.

Communications committee: T Kunene, K Hadede, T Hadebe, S Cebekhulu, M Msomi, R Ntshinga, M Dakada, Communications Manager.

Leaders meeting secretary: N Mankayi

Mission group leaders: Organizations to submit the elected names to Kerry before the end of the week.
Local preachers: leaders to please submit the elected names to Kerry before the end of the week.

11. Stationing 2025

It was noted that in addition to Rev. Mcinga remaining in Bryanston for 2025, the Conference had stationed two additional appointments to the circuit: Rev. Sikupela and Deacon Q. DeBeer. Deacon DeBeer had then subsequently moved to the United States. In response, the Presiding Bishop has established a Pastoral

Commission to investigate and provide clarity on the process by which this stationing decision was made. The society is currently awaiting the report from this Commission.

In the interim, it was proposed that the services of a supernumerary, who meets the required profile for the station, be engaged on a 12-month contract to cover the year 2025. Consequently, the Circuit Treasurer will need to revise the budget to remove allocations for Deacon De Beer and reallocate funds to accommodate the new supernumerary appointment.

Q: What was the rationale for requesting a deacon for BMC, given that deacons are generally under less direct control than ministers?

A: Currently, the society does exercise oversight over deacons. The original request to the Connection was for a minister; however, Deacon DeBeer met the profile requirements for the station and was therefore appointed.

Q: Can the society executives not independently appoint a supernumerary without members submitting names?

A: The process for stationing is clearly outlined in the Laws and Discipline and must be followed. Members are therefore entitled to submit suggestions for consideration.

Comment from the floor: There was a suggestion that consultative engagement be undertaken with the ministers and stewards of BMC, noting the ongoing challenge of securing a White minister for the station.

Q: Is there scope for society ministers and leaders to influence the appointment of the minister, or is the decision restricted to the engagement of a supernumerary?

A: The recommended way forward is to engage with all society ministers, society stewards, and circuit stewards in order to determine the most appropriate course of action.

It was further noted that preparations for Rev. Sikupela's arrival are progressing well. He will reside on campus, arriving on 19 - 20 December 2024 with his wife and three daughters. He has requested a period of settlement without visitors for the remainder of the year. Concerns regarding his ongoing radio commitments were raised, and he assured the meeting that these will not interfere with his duties at BMC.

12. Notices and closure

The Superintendent prayed and led the meeting with a benediction.