

Governance of Baptist investment properties

A proposal submitted to Wellspring members on 14 May 2015.

BACKGROUND

When Wirksworth Methodists and Baptists voted on 17 November 2013 to adopt the LEP Constitution, it had implications for the way in which Baptist investments would be managed in future – whether we realized it or not!

Proper notice of the vote had been given, so there's not a problem. But the effects of the new constitution on the way in which the Baptist manse, cemetery and cottage would be managed were not spelled out. Nor was it made clear who would manage the proceeds of sale of the Baptist chapel.

The trustees of these properties and monies still have to comply with the various historic Wirksworth Baptist trust deeds; and with their statutory duties under charity law.

It is hoped that the LEP Trustees will recommend the interpretation proposed on the next page.

The proposal

- Allows *all* the members of the Property and Finance Working Group to be day-to-day managers of the Baptist manse, cottage and cemetery: its income, expenditure and maintenance.
- But in the last resort it is the Baptists among the trustees who bear the responsibility for managing these properties.
- Their decisions can be reversed by a meeting of the Baptist members.
(Remember, this only applies to Baptist investments!)

PROPOSAL substantially notified at the Congregational Meeting on 15 January 2015, to be voted on by both the Baptist members and the Methodist Church Council on 14 May 2015.

That the members of Wellspring Church, Wirksworth, adopt the following supplemental rules as a consequence of their previous vote to adopt the Wellspring Constitution.

1. As a Local Ecumenical Partnership, Wellspring Church Wirksworth is subject to the constitutional arrangements set out in the Churches Together in England model documents adopted at the joint meeting of Wirksworth & Bonsall Baptist Church and Wirksworth Methodist Church on 17 November 2013.
2. Paragraph 23b of the Schedule to the Wellspring Constitution requires that the functions of the Baptist Deacons' Meeting and thus of the Trustees of the Wirksworth Baptist investment properties are exercised by the LEP Trustees.
3. In order to comply with the various Baptist property trusts, their management is ultimately restricted to those LEP Trustees who:
 - (i) have at least six months Baptist – or new LEP – membership; and
 - (ii) are not the spouse of another Trustee;It is also required that:
 - (iii) a majority of such Baptist Trustees have been baptized as believers.
4. When functioning in the capacity of Baptist Property Trustees, the eligible LEP Trustees must comply with customary Baptist governance unless to do so would constitute a breach of their statutory duties as trustees. That is to say that they shall be accountable to the Baptist members in all things and that a Baptist Members' Meeting shall have the right to revoke any of their decisions.
5. Paragraph 26 of the Schedule to the Wellspring Constitution provides for separate meetings of the Baptist or Methodist members of the LEP to be held if necessary to meet denominational constitutional requirements.
6. Paragraph 11 of the Schedule to the Wellspring Constitution defines as Baptist members of the LEP not only those who were members of W&BBC before the inauguration of Wellspring on 21 September 2014 but also all those who become members of the LEP after that date.

It is also proposed

That this interpretation is attached to the Constitution of Wellspring Church Wirksworth.