

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE HEART OF ENGLAND
BAPTIST ASSOCIATION WHICH WAS HELD ON
SUNDAY, 5TH JULY 2026 AT TAMWORTH CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH AT 5:00 pm**

Present: Six trustees, six members of staff and the representatives of 25 churches. Mrs Judith Miller in the Chair. Apologies were received from three trustees and two churches.

1. Judith Miller opened the meeting by thanking the host church for their hospitality and all attendees for attending this meeting.
2. She gave an outline of the event and checked that voting slips had been distributed. Two staff members counted the churches represented and confirmed that a quorum of members was present.
3. Prayers and worship
4. Minutes of the AGM held on 6th July 2025
5. Judith noted that the Minutes of the AGM held on 6th July 2025 at Birmingham Central Baptist Church had been posted on the HEBA website for several months. She reviewed the key actions at that meeting. **The Minutes were accepted with one abstention.**
6. The following changes to the Board of trustees 2025-2026 were noted.

Retiring Trustees

Rev Dr Denise Dobie, Mrs Joanne Green and Rev Amy Wearing

New Recruits

Ms Zoeta Brown, Rev Simon Jay (Safeguarding Trustee), Rev Claire Ord

7. The following changes to the Staff Team were noted.

Retirement

Rev Neil Le Tissier

Changes

Rev Dr Denise Dobie appointed RM part-time for two years.

Ms Karen Martindale reduced her hours and has a new role – Trust and Property Officer

Mr Sarb Thapar has been appointed Association Administrator, part-time temporary.

The chair presented Karen with a gift in acknowledgement and appreciation of her long service as the Company Secretary for the Association.

8. Church update

1. The Association has 150 churches in membership, one Associate Member and Several Pioneering churches and projects.
2. Grace Community Church, Tipton and Cedar Church, Kingstanding had been 'churches in fellowship' with HEBA, but not in membership, for several years. They have now withdrawn from fellowship. The trustees were hoping to re-establish a Baptist church in the Kingstanding building.
3. Judith thanked all trustees, staff and the very many volunteers that served and all the churches that made up our community of churches.

9. 2025 Priorities

1. Focus on our core value of Companionship
2. Pilot the Pastoral Ministers' structure – a couple of Pastoral Ministers were present at the meeting
3. Further develop the Justice Hub, including Project Violet. Following the year of Disability Justice focus, the Women's Justice Task Group would take over the focus at a Gathering on 26th September. Judith further reported that several gifts had been sent from HEBA churches to churches in the Jamaica Baptist Union following Hurricane Melissa and these had been very much appreciated.
4. Review staff handbook - this had been completed.
5. Continue working towards reducing the budget deficit

10. 2026 Priorities

1. Call to Prayer – encouraging us to pray together, supporting prayer events.
2. Helping to grow healthy churches
3. Justice Hub and Project Violet
4. Improve communication with churches and partners
5. Establish and expand Learning @ the Heart
6. Continue to offer and expand Governance Training
7. Risk management
8. Implement and review transitional plan

9. Reduce financial deficit

11. Special Resolution

1. A review of the Articles of the Association 2022 was prompted by the trustees' desire to be able to, if necessary and appropriate, pay a trustee for services rendered to the Association, for example delivering safeguarding or Learning @ the Heart training. The new Articles had been circulated to all churches, and the amended clauses were on pages 6 – 7, clauses 11-16. The changes would allow payment if certain rules apply and the correct procedures are followed. Page/clause numbering and some other small spelling mistakes were also amended. The changes had been made with the advice of HEBA's solicitor and had been approved by the Charity Commission – in accordance with relevant legislation.
2. The following Special Resolution will be put to the meeting:

"THAT having obtained the Charity Commission's prior written authorisation in accordance with section 198 of the Charities Act 2011, the Articles of Association attached shall be adopted as the Articles of the Company in substitution for, and to the exclusion of, the Company's existing Articles of Association."
3. ***The Moderator put forward the Special Resolution and it was carried with no abstentions and no votes against.***

12. Presentation of the Report of the Directors and Financial Statements for year ending 31.12.2024.

1. The Association Treasurer, Mr Chris Knight presented the Financial Statements. He pointed out that HEBA was experiencing challenging times, with an underlying deficit of around £100,000 in 2025.
2. Chris pointed out that income during 2025 had increased and expenditure decreased slightly when compared to 2024, resulting in the underlying operating deficit reducing significantly. Unrestricted cash was much lower than he would have liked, with less than 4 years survival being covered by these reserves. But it is improving and he hoped would continue to improve as the review of costs progressed, and the value of investments increased.
3. The Home Mission grants were discussed (Chris declared an interest, being a member of a Home Mission supported church). Both Chris and Adrian had

written to the churches seeking increased giving and he was pleased to report that the churches had responded well and giving has increased by 2.7%. Chris pointed out that one third of our churches give nothing at all to home mission and stressed the importance of the biblical principle of tithing. There were no questions.

4. The family solution loan. This was a loan which solved the problem of the large defined benefit pension scheme deficit. Chris described how the loan was taken out by the Baptist Union from the BU Corporation and secured on RBMHO houses when interest rates were low, and it was presumed that some RBMHO properties would be sold to cover the principal. However interest rates have risen, and properties owned by the RBMHO have not been sold as anticipated. The interest payments on the loan taken by BUGB was NOW creating a major constraint on BUGB finance and therefore on the wider Baptist family. Chris was raising this to inform churches in advance any further notifications.
5. **Resolution to receive the Annual Report and Financial Statements for year ending 31.12.2025** was put to the Meeting. The Report and Statements were received with no votes against and no abstentions.
6. **Resolution - Appointment of Auditor**

That we appoint Macintyre Hudson to complete the audit for 2026 in 2027.

The Auditors were re-appointed with no votes against and no abstentions.

7. **Resolution – Reappointment of Moderator of the Association and the Board of Trustees.** The Moderator left the meeting before the Resolution was put: *The Board of Trustees commend the current Moderator, Mrs Judith Miller to the Association for re-appointment for a further three years' service. Her profile was circulated prior to this meeting.*
8. **The Moderator was re-appointed** with no votes against and no abstentions. She returned to the meeting.
12. The Treasurer thanked the other trustees and the Association's staff for their support and particularly thanked Tom Russell for all of his work.
13. **Time of transition.**
 1. Adrian Argile described the time of transition in which the Association found itself, and thanked his regional minister colleagues and other staff for all of their support at this time. He would be retiring from his role in June 2027. He also gave warm thanks to all of the volunteers that support the Association in many different ways. He pointed out that the current emphasis was on finance and

especially prayer, as we seek God and pray for smooth transitions and that he will continue to fan the flame amongst us so that we can continue to see people coming to faith in Christ Jesus.

2. Adrian reminded churches that when asked what they want from the Association they asked for someone to walk with them and also for help with governance, he pointed out that the pastoral ministers were a way in which the Association was providing people to walk with churches and that help with governance was being provided in the form of training church leaders. He refers to churches to training available through the Association, the Everyone Everywhere regional days that would be available in the Association, and the Learning @ the Heart training which he commended to all members of all churches.
3. Adrian closed the annual general meeting at 6:00 PM