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# **Gungahlin Uniting Church**

## **Minutes**

### **Congregational Meeting (Annual General Meeting)**

**Sunday, 14 November 2021**

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**1. Welcome and prayer**

- The meeting was opened by Matt Grudnoff.

**2. Attendance and apologies**

<b>Attendance (30, 3 zoom)</b>			
Margaret Reeson	Heather Lamb	Elizabeth Phythian	Pam Thompson
Jack Barnard	Peter Kidd	Mark Phythian	Lily Ting
Christine Walmsley	Chris Martin	Matthew Phythian	Michael Ting
Chris Dodd	Jenelle Martin	Jack Bernera (zoom)	Prince Jyubeh
Narelle Dodd	Bruce Warren	Sue Lloyd	Gloria Ku
Matt Grudnoff	Elizabeth Warren (zoom)	Patsy Coleman	Cass Nokham
Bronwyn Asquith	Brooke Kilah (Zoom)	Shirley Williams	
Holly Wright	Alison McKenzie	Jean Terbeth	
Darren Wright	John McKenzie	Lynne Butson	

<b>Apologies (4)</b>			
Clive Walmsley	Rob Shelton	Mark Butson	Noeleen Jeffrey

**3. Explanation of consensus method, questions, voting slip procedures and approval of scrutineers**

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- Chris Dodd and Alison Tweedie were approved as scrutineers by consensus.
  - 2021 Church Council nominees were identified:
    - New: John McKenzie, Sue Lloyd, Bronwyn Asquith, Bruce Warren, Jenelle Martin
    - Ongoing: Elizabeth Phythian, Lynne Butson
  - Voting papers and attendance sheets were distributed.

#### **4. The minutes of the 2020 Congregational Meeting (8 November 2020).**

- Accepted.

#### **5. Community Garden update**

- Narelle Dodd provided an update on the Community Food Garden:
  - Proposal seeks to partner with a community food garden organisation to turn our present food garden into a community garden. Is part of GUC's mission plan to lift our profile in the community and was a recommendation coming out of the earlier Mission and Vision Workshops. Tasked by the Mission and Vision workshop to take the proposal forward
  - Discussions to date held with Canberra Organics Growers Society (COGS), a non-profit organisation operating 12 community gardens across the ACT including Crace and O'Connor Uniting Church. Is the largest community food garden in ACT; is experienced with established processes. Synergies with GUC- stated focus on building community, organic gardening, sustainability.
  - This proposal is in the planning stage only – no commitments have been made by either party.
  - Minimum of 500 sq m required for a community garden to be feasible. CC has given in-principle agreement for any community garden to be extended to behind the food pantry
  - Land remains property of GUC. Can be taken back at any time without penalty. Are well established procedures across community gardens for this.
  - Terms of the agreement set out in MoU or other agreement
  - COGS responsible for costs of setting up garden, including fencing, building raised beds, any landscaping, irrigation and getting water supply to the garden.
  - COGS are investigating these costs before committing to proceed.
  - COGS would install a water meter to pay for water usage
  - COGS would manage garden according to their rules. This includes compliance with organic growing principles, membership, plot allocation and

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levies, insurance, OHS, water usage, security, maintenance, code of conduct and dispute resolution etc

- Preliminary consultations occurred with Synod and ACTPLA- all positive.
- Concerns expressed and responses:
  - How does it benefit the church? Is a business transaction not a community builder
    - A: Part of mission, creates links etc
  - Will produce go to the pantry?
    - A: Decision of community garden, but likely benefits to pantry
  - Will new infrastructure impede decision making if we decide to extend in the future
    - A: No. We retain land and can request it back without penalty. Is a risk that COGS considers when setting up.
  - Is this the right time? Should we wait for a new Minister? Will a new Minister want a different focus. Should our focus be on building our own community? Is a big project and will involve lot of work for volunteers. Are we washing our hands of the garden's mission and future development?
    - A: Little impact on volunteers. Came out of M&V workshops as part of our mission and vision
  - Impact of parking on Sundays
    - A: Good point – will take up with COGS as an issue to address
  - Food pantry grows some food in garden. Will lose this.
    - A: Can look to address this – options could be either a plot in the community garden or a plot alongside the food pantry building
  - What about the person who sleeps rough and works occasionally in the garden.
    - A: This has been specifically addressed – is opportunity for him to be a “friend of the garden”.
- Support expressed:
  - Is very much part of mission and being part of a wider community. The church is not just for GUC to use – being part of a community means inviting people to also use the property. Is an opportunity to serve the community; to reach into the community.
  - Garden has not been used. Is an eyesore and has been going to seed. Previous efforts to get volunteers or other users unsuccessful. Ideal opportunity to use it productively and to benefit community. Provides opportunity for people in nearby apartments a place to grow produce.
  - Not something to put off until a new Minister. Churches die when they do this. Came out of M&V workshop and offers us a role in the community
  - This is a recommendation to explore the setting up of a garden. Why would we not want to explore this?
- Other options proposed:

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- GUC take on a coordination role
  - Put off for 2 years
  - Consider other options – in particular Canberra City Care who has an existing relationship with the pantry
  - Recommendation put:
    - That the Congregation agrees to Church Council continuing to explore the setting up of a community garden managed by COGS
    - 23 agreed, 3 disagreed
  - Recommendation amended:
    - That the Congregation agrees to Church Council continuing to explore the setting up of a community garden by an external organisation, within the church or a combination of both.
    - 25 agreed, one abstained.
  - Actions:
    - Narelle Dodd to explore Canberra City Care as a potential organisation to set up a community garden; explore opportunities for pantry to retain a vegetable garden area; follow up on parking (no parking Sunday mornings). Take back to CC.
    - CC to report back to congregation

## **6. Outcome of the election**

- All 5 2021 Church Council nominees were successfully elected by secret ballot.

## **7. Other Business**

- There was no further business.

## **8. Meeting closed**

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***Next Church Congregational Meeting***

*To be advised*

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