# Saturday 24 June 2023 at Melton Mowbray Baptist Church, Leicestershire at 10.30am

**Moderator: Revd David Harvey (DH)**

**Voting delegates: 64 delegates representing 42 member churches**

**Approximately 100 present in total**

1. **The minutes of the AGM** held on 25 June 2022 at Queensberry Baptist Church, Nottingham were agreed with no abstentions and no matters arising.
2. **The Annual Review 2022-23** had been circulated in advance of the meeting (also available on the EMBA website) and was unanimously received by those gathered. DH encouraged those gathered to take the time to read through the report as it highlighted the many and various activities undertaken by the Association to support the local member churches, ministers and leaders within the region.

Particular thanks was expressed to the Regional Staff Team; the giftings, energy and enthusiasm of the Regional Ministers, Mark Clay, Mike Fegredo and Nick Ashton was noted as was the invaluable support given by the Admin Team of Becky Nicholls, Gill McNab, Hannah Fleming-Hill (comms lead) and Sarah Fegredo (providing consultancy support to the Team). It was noted that a lot of additional work had been undertaken over the last couple of years to upgrade office systems and the Association database, to enable more efficient and effective communication with our churches going forward.

DH announced that after 12 years as part of the Regional Team, Revd Mike Fegredo would be retiring in March 2024. It was noted that Mike would be working as normal up until his retirement, but over the next six months the Regional Team and Directors would be reviewing staffing structures and beginning the recruitment process for a new Regional Minister.

1. **2022 Accounts**

A copy of the summary draft accounts prepared by Pells Ltd of Nottingham (Independent Examiners) had been circulated to all member churches in advance of the meeting and Andy Smallridge (EMBA Treasurer) presented this to the meeting.

AS explained that income rose by £13,000 over the last year, totalling **£338,649, the largest proportion of funding coming from Home Mission (£119,668)**. The total expenditure on the work of supporting churches was **£316,811, the largest proportion being staffing costs (£174,083) and Home Mission Grants (£81,101).** The balance of unrestricted funds to carry forward totalled **£1,558,617**, giving a surplus income of **£29,549**.

However, AS explained that Home Mission funding is given to associations on a monthly basis and is based on the national pot, from which each association receives a share. AS highlighted that currently Home Mission giving continues to fall below the expected target, resulting in associations having to pay some money back. Last year’s giving resulted in a Home Mission clawback from EMBA of £31,000, taken January to March 2023, hence skewing the figures for 2022, the surplus of £29,000, actually becoming a loss of £2,000.

AS went on to report that the Association allocation of Home Mission funding for 2023 would be less than that received the previous year and as costs continue to rise, a significant overspend was predicted for 2023. AS noted that whilst EMBA has reserves which can be used to support its work, not all associations have. AS reported that currently it is money from the sale of closed churches that is keeping the Association afloat, a model which is not sustainable in the long term. It was shared that a national spending review is in process, looking at proposals to change the way Home Mission is funded. It was stressed that ultimately if churches don’t start to give more, then associations will have to cut costs affecting staffing, resulting in less support and resource available to churches.

AS recognised that church budgets were under pressure, many still recovering from the impact of Covid, inflation and rising costs but noted that many churches had also been helped by the resolution to the pension deficit crisis. AS noted that in places there seemed to be a loss of commitment to the Baptist family where stronger churches help and support churches with less resources and this raised a key question for the Baptist Family as a whole; do we value the help and support of our Regional and National Teams?

AS went on to share a model of giving adopted by his church a few years ago when they reviewed their giving to Home Mission. As a church they decided that each year 5% would be given to Home Mission, 5% to BMS and 5% to other causes, but that this would be paid out on a monthly basis to prevent a potential end of year balancing exercise. AS shared the model as a challenge for churches to work towards, but also with the encouragement that since his church took the decision in 2020, their income had risen by over 50%.

No questions relating to the accounts were raised and having been duly proposed and seconded, the accounts were unanimously accepted.

1. **Appointment of Independent Examiners**

Pells, 17 Newstead Grove, Nottingham NG1 4GZ were recommended as Independent Examiners for the Association for the following year. This was unanimously agreed.

Thanks were expressed to both AS and Irene Milburn (EMBA Bookkeeper) for the time and commitment they give to managing the Association finances.

1. **EMBA Board of Directors**

DH expressed his thanks to the Directors for the work done over the past year. It was noted that as well as fulfilling their governance responsibilities as trustees, the board work closely with the Staff Team in providing strategic leadership to the Association, in particular focusing on the best use of the resources available and how future change is managed.

Thanks were expressed to Revd Sam Hackett for his service to the Association, not only as a valued Director but also as a member of the Grants Group. DH explained that Sam would be leaving the region over the summer to begin a new ministry as a chaplain at Bristol University.

DH reported that regrettably, there were no Director elections at this year’s AGM due to no nominations having been received for the two vacancies on the board. It was noted that these vacancies would be carried forward into 2024. DH encouraged those gathered to prayerfully consider this matter ahead of Director elections next year.

The serving Directors present at the meeting were invited forward and prayed for in their role.

Thanks were also expressed to all those who serve God and the Association on the various working groups and committees.

DH then formally closed the AGM.

*The meeting ended at 10.55am.*

Signed…………………………………………………………. Date………………………………………