

Our ref: CS/LG/incorporation

17 January 2017

Dear friends

TO: All BUGB Member Churches

Re: Baptist Union of Great Britain (“BUGB”) – proposed change to legal status

I am writing to you on behalf of the BUGB Trustees in relation to a proposed change to the legal structure of BUGB.

Background

Like most Baptist churches, BUGB is established as a charitable unincorporated association and is registered with the Charity Commission under charity number 1125912. From a legal perspective, BUGB operates through its Trustees as BUGB itself does not have its own legal identity to enable it to, for example, enter into contracts or hold property in its own name. BUGB has established, either alone or with others, companies to undertake some activities including the Baptist Union Corporation Limited which holds property on behalf of BUGB.

Within Baptists Together, the Regional Baptist Associations and most Baptist colleges are already incorporated and it is now felt by the BUGB Trustees that a more robust corporate structure would be appropriate for BUGB at this time, given the size and complexity of the organisation.

Proposal

The BUGB Trustees have been working with our legal advisors to consider whether or not it would be appropriate to re-structure so that, amongst other benefits, BUGB has its own corporate status. In practice, this would mean establishing a new entity, registered with the Charity Commission, into which the assets and liabilities of BUGB would be transferred.

BUGB is currently considering the most appropriate corporate model to use. Whilst the traditional route is to establish a Company Limited by Guarantee which is registered with both the Charity Commission and Companies House, the Charitable Incorporated Organisation structure is now available and we are also considering this option.

As a BUGB member church you are invited to send delegates to attend the Baptist Assembly in Harrogate on 13 May 2017. At the AGM, which will take place during the Baptist Assembly, voting delegates will be asked to pass a resolution to approve the incorporation of BUGB and to give the BUGB Trustees a general authority to take forward the process of incorporation. This will include the transfer of the assets, liabilities and activities of BUGB to a new corporate BUGB charity and work on a new governing document for BUGB, for which we will seek approval at the AGM in 2018.

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Registered Charity Number 1125912

We anticipate that as members of BUGB, you may have some questions regarding the proposed change of legal status. We will therefore be holding an informal question and answer session at the Baptist Assembly in Harrogate prior to the AGM to offer your delegates the opportunity to raise any questions with us. The session will run from 9.45am to 10.15am and Rich Webb, Moderator of the BUGB Trustees and Caroline Sanderson, Legal Services Manager, will be available to talk with you at the session.

Grace and peace

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn Green". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Lynn Green
General Secretary