



SBC AGM 10 March 2025: Agenda

Welcome and Bible Reading

All attending were welcomed - Church representatives and those attending in a personal capacity.

Ellie Bell, College Administrator, was thanked for communicating with the Churches, setting up the meeting and sending out relevant paperwork. Thanks were given to Graham Meiklejohn, Lecturer and Academic Director, for coordinating the relevant polls to be conducted. Rev Charles Maasz was thanked for taking the minutes.

Psalm 71.17-24 was read.

The Chair reflected on the contribution and determined ways in which the College has sought to be faithful to its call, and on God's faithfulness to the College over the 130 years. This was followed by prayer reflecting the same and the missionary work of the College.

Attendees and Apologies

To be quorate, 10% of the membership require (i.e. 15 Churches) to be represented. Fifty-three churches were represented (*see attendees list at the end of the minutes*) - the meeting was declared quorate. In total there were 65 people on the Zoom call including Governors, staff and other interested parties.

Apologies from: Campbeltown Community Church, Carnoustie Baptist, Gerrard Street Baptist, Helensburgh Baptist, Thurso Baptist, Westray Baptist, Wishaw Baptist.

Approval of the Minutes from 11th March 2024

Profuse apologies were given by the Chair as section 8 of the minutes, 'Update on Board Members', was a duplicate from the AGM of 2023 and therefore not valid. The wording instead should read:

"During 2023, the Rev Chris Townsend was co-opted onto the Board. His nomination to join the Board of Trustees was accepted by those present."

Other comments on the minutes were invited - no further comments were made.

Proposer to approve the minutes: Al Weir (Dunrossness BC)

Seconder: Graeme Scott (Johnstone BC)

Vote: In favour 46; against 0, abstain 6. **Motion carried**

Interview with a Scottish Baptist College lecturer

Graham Meiklejohn reflected on Al Cuthbert's contribution to the last academic year and introduced Al to the group to comment himself on ministry, life journey, PhD studies and testimony. Al informed us that he had spent 16 years in Baptist pastoral ministry, formerly with YWAM. Alistair also reflected on the route his journey has taken, part time ministry and area of PhD study focussing on Paul Fiddes' 'Doctrine of God', balancing academic study with pastoral ministry throughout.

Graham reflected on routes following the graduation of former students with an emphasis on formation of Baptist Ministers as a core concern of the College.

Student Experience – interview with a Scottish Baptist College graduate

Rev. Anthony Luxton reflected on his route through the College, St Andrews and Stirling Baptist Church. The College came at a crucial time in life for Anthony when reflecting on his stated desire to explore entrepreneurship and a call into pastoral ministry. The College provided space, some necessary time and a foundation from which to make the next steps toward his vocation. Looking back, Anthony felt that the biggest impact was the teaching staff and their practical, real world based expertise and character. He stated that the development of character becoming increasingly crystallised was a stand-out quality of the Scottish Baptist College experience.

Anthony's takeaway from his learning? – you don't know everything. The collective will always know more than we do individually. There is always so much more to learn and to be known.

Finance Report

Neil Robinson, the College Treasurer, gave a brief summary of the accounts: Page 8 gives income and expenditure details.

In summary:

Income -	c£171,000
Expenditure -	c£232,000
Deficit -	c£61,000
Return on Investments -	c£20,000
Net Deficit -	c£41,000
Reserves -	c£360,000

An opportunity was given to ask questions – none were forthcoming.

Proposer to approve the accounts: Neil Robinson

Seconder: Joyce Holloway (Cathcart BC)

Vote: In favour 53, against 0, abstain 4 **Motion carried**

Appointment of Independent Examiners

Neil proposed the continuing appointment of Nelson Gilmour Smith, Chartered Accountants, with the approval of the Board.

Proposer to accept Nelson Gilmour Smith as Independent Examiners: Neil Robinson
 Secunder: Joyce Holloway (Cathcart BC)

Vote: In favour 49, against 0, abstain 2 **Motion carried**

Update on Board of Governors

The Chair stated that it was that time in the business when we welcome new Board members and also say goodbye to others.

During the year, various people have been co-opted onto the Board and the meeting was asked to approve the following recommendations: Rev David Fraser, Rev Adam Oellermann, Dr Dudu Rance, and Mr Oliver Spence.

Oliver Spence will assume the role of Treasurer. Rev Dr Ian Birch has assumed the role of Company Secretary. Joan McDowell was due to retire from the Board but has been asked to remain, fulfilling the role of Chair of the Board, to which she has agreed.

The meeting was asked to approve these recommendations.

Proposer: Leslie Edge (CBC Community Church)
 Secunder: Ken Sinclair (Montrose BC)

Vote: In favour 54, against 0, abstain 3 **Passed**

In saying goodbye we acknowledge the work of two Board members.

Firstly, we want to thank Dr David Finch for his very active 3 years of service on the Board. Throughout this time, David has volunteered to lead and participate in several activities which have been greatly appreciated. His calm, considered manner and deep questioning at the Board will be greatly missed. We know that David will still take an active interest in the work of the College but, in the meantime, we want to thank him most sincerely on behalf of the Board, staff and students for his service.

Secondly, much as he has requested to step down for many years, it is now actually happening. We are very sorry to see Neil Robinson, our Treasurer and Company Secretary, now resigning. Neil cannot remember when he joined the Board but we reckon he has been on the Board for about 12 years. Neil was very active in the development of the College as a Company Limited by Guarantee and writing the Articles for the College in 2017/2018 which was no easy task. His wisdom, common sense and Godly perspective on all things, financial in particular, will be greatly missed. He has a way of presenting the accounts that ensures

we all understand them. He will be greatly missed and we pray God's blessing on him as he continues to serve our Lord in other ways.

As the Chair, Joan thanked the Board for their hard work throughout the past year and is looking forward to the coming year knowing we are doing the Lord's work.

Principal's Report

Ian Birch shared a presentation on screen relating to his report. He said it was a privilege to be Principal; an honour to be in the position, supported by the Board of Trustees, colleagues and students.

He reflected on what the College felt called to and made comment on the context of the College. There are eleven other theological colleges in Scotland, resulting in an expansion of provision, with a corresponding drop in the number of people enrolling in courses.

Baptist College – 1 of 12 theological institutions in Scotland

Widened access to theological study and training.

Small institution nurturing students to achieve their goals.

Academic learning in the service of mission and ministry.

Breadth of vocations and callings – many streams of ministry.

Evangelical at the core, but thinking critically and deeply.

Only Baptist and baptistic college in Scotland.

Ian shared a graph reflecting the 41 current students' preferences for in-person, online and flexible streams. Students come from a wide variety of locations and situations, so the variety of approach is beneficial, albeit with a doubling-up of class provision required from teaching staff. The ongoing viability of this is being considered.

Future Plans:

- Learning in Context modules are currently being developed – Preaching; Mission & Culture; Baptist Perspectives. These will be church/ministry-based learning (inc degree course). Other modules will be developed in the future.

Upcoming events:

- Wednesday 12th March - Anabaptism at 500 'What did the Anabaptists ever do for us? - Lecture on the Anabaptist anniversary, Ruth Goldbourne will present on the history and the legacy of the Anabaptists. *(This event took place and a recording is available on the [College website](#).)*
- There will be a [campus open day](#) on Wednesday 16th April 10:30-13:30. AGM attendees were encouraged to pass this information on to anyone who might be exploring a sense of call to ministry. Thanks were given to churches who pray for the College, as a vision for the future is developed.

Pray for resources, recruitment, and wisdom for leaders.

Pray for the staff, the students and the UWS which is experiencing very challenging times.

Student Experience – interview with a current student

Graham Meiklejohn spoke with Bel Reynolds about her experience of the College. Bel currently works in education and is a ministry associate at Portobello Baptist Church. She is a parent of 2 teenage children and is two years into her pre-accredited period.

She felt that there is a great relationship between study and work life/family life. This is Bel's second degree experience and she is loving it. Studying whilst working in ministry and progressing through accreditation is proving beneficial – providing grounding theological learning and reflection in real life contexts. Bringing these things together is proving to be really helpful. Bel reflected on specific modules and topics that have been particularly helpful to her on the journey. She could not speak more highly of her experience of life at the College.

Any Other Competent Business

The Chair invited questions from those attending.

- Rev. Dave Murray asked if a Masters course would be made available – Ian Birch responded that this is in the pipeline and being worked on.
- Brian Boag (Culloden BC) asked what the full-time equivalent number of students was – Ellie Bell confirmed the FTE was around 21 this academic year.
- Ian Birch stated that the College will not be offering PhDs but will recommend candidates to IBTS (Amsterdam).
- Rev. Brian Talbot (Broughty Ferry BC) asked about the different theological training providers and how they are made up, given the theological landscape in Scotland and asked if there was any conversation between them. Ian Birch replied that there is a will to get together but that this has not yet happened. It was noted that the College brings unique, important things to Scotland.
- Rev. John Hulley (Culloden BC) asked about a fundraising group – Joan McDowell answered that the group is currently on hold but that fundraising is very much in mind by all involved with the College.
- Douglas Craig asked about whether a comparative religion course will be offered – Ian responded in the affirmative. A lecturer has been sourced and planning is underway.

Closing Comments & Thanks

The Chair thanked all the staff at the College for their exemplary work during the past year. This included Ian Birch, as Principal; Graham Meiklejohn as Lecturer and Academic Director; Ellie Bell as Administrator and Academic Registrar; Fiona Parratt as Assistant Administrator, as well as the Associate Lecturers: Paul Beautyman, Alasdair Black, Steve Younger, Alistair Cuthbert and, for a short while, Don Currie..

The Chair thanked everyone for coming, for their interest in the work of the College, their prayers, financial support and prayed God's blessing on our Baptist brothers and sisters throughout Scotland.

Closing Prayer - Neil Robinson

Member churches represented at AGM:

Adelaide Place Baptist Church	High Blantyre Baptist Church
Alness Baptist Church	Hillhead Baptist Church
Bearsden Baptist Church	Inverkeithing Baptist Church
Bristo Baptist Church	Inverness Baptist Church
Broughty Ferry Baptist Church	Islay Baptist Church
Broxburn Baptist Church	Johnstone Baptist Church
Buckie Baptist Church	King's Park Baptist Church
Canonmills Baptist Church	Ladywell Baptist Church
Castlehill Baptist Church	Larkhall Baptist Church
Cathcart Baptist Church	Leith Baptist Church
CBC Community Church	Leslie Baptist Church
CBC Community Church	Lochgilphead Baptist Church
Paisley Baptist Church	Milestone Christian Fellowship
Crieff Baptist Church	Montrose Baptist Fellowship
Crown Terrace Baptist Church	Nairn Baptist Church
Culloden-Balloch Baptist Church	Newton Mearns Baptist Church
Culloden-Balloch Baptist Church	Peterhead Baptist Church
Dedridge Baptist Church	Pollok Baptist Church (SCIO)
Denny Baptist Church	Portobello Baptist Church
Dunoon Baptist Church	Queen's Park Baptist Church
Dunrossness Baptist Church	Rutherglen Baptist Community Church
Erskine Baptist Church SCIO	Shettleston Baptist Church (SCIO)
Falkirk Baptist Church	Southside Church (SCIO)
Fort William Baptist Church	St Andrews Baptist Church
Galashiels Baptist Church	Stirling Baptist Church
Gourock Baptist Community Church	Tillicoultry Baptist Church
Granton Baptist Church	Viewfield Baptist Church
Hawick Baptist Church	Westwood Baptist Church

Joan McDowell	SBC Chair of Governors
Ian Birch	SBC Governor
David Finch	SBC Governor
Martin Hodson	SBC Governor
Charles Maasz	SBC Governor
Adam Oellerman	SBC Governor
Neil Robinson	SBC Governor
Dudu Rance	SBC Governor
Oliver Spence	SBC Governor
Chris Townsend	SBC Governor
Graham Little	Interested party
Graham Meiklejohn	SBC Staff member
Ellie Bell	SBC Staff member