

## **Statement of Significance**

Wokingham Baptist Church has been a part of the Wokingham Community for over 250 years, a milestone we celebrated in 2024.

Over that time it's been a significant presence in the town, church members holding significant roles in the Town and Borough Councils and being honoured as Aldermen of the town. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century the church members founded a school which provided education for thousands of local non-conformist children over the years of its existence.

The church has a strong evangelistic tradition, through periods of strong conversion growth, to involvement in local church planting at various points in our history.

We also have a missionary tradition - people who have served courageously in some of the toughest places around the world with BMS, some in previous centuries, others more recently.

We learned that as a church we have often been pioneers, with a history of championing women's roles in ministry of all kinds. And our church members have served the denomination locally, nationally and internationally, not least our former Minister and current church member Lynn Green, of whom we are very proud.

## **Our Church Values**

As a church community in Wokingham worshipping God, following Jesus, empowered by the Spirit, we are committed to growing as:

### **A Welcoming Community**

We want to express how God welcomes all people unconditionally.

### **A Compassionate Community**

We want to demonstrate God's love for everyone, especially those in need.

### **A Diverse Community**

God has made us all different: different ages, different backgrounds, different cultures, different viewpoints - and we think that's a strength.

### **A Learning Community**

We've got a lot to learn about God and what it means to follow Jesus, but we're enjoying the ride.

### **An Active Community**

We want to be active disciples of Jesus, gathering to encourage and equip each other, then each going out to serve God wherever we are sent.

### **Statement of Need for Alterations from the church**

The Church currently has around 180 members, with a regular Sunday attendance of around 200. We are an increasingly diverse congregation including young families, teenagers right through to more longstanding and elderly members, becoming more culturally diverse in the last few years, which reflects changes in the local community. Significantly we have up to 100 Hongkongers who regularly attend and are gradually making us their spiritual home.

The church buildings are a significant community resource, with a range of halls and meeting rooms of various sizes. The main worship area seats up to 270 and is regularly used for concerts and other performances by various local bands, orchestras and choirs.

The modern hall is in constant use, not only by our own toddler, children and youth groups, but also by the Brownies, for numerous keep fit classes, local history and heritage groups amongst others, and a support group for children with ASD.

The church is a significant local hub for recovery groups: we run our own Celebrate Recovery ministry with a paid worker, but other groups meet in our building including Narcotics and Cocaine Anonymous groups, along with Kaleidoscopic for survivors of domestic abuse, partly led by our own volunteers.

Recently we have become a welcoming hub for migrants from Hong Kong, providing an initial Welcome Course for people who have recently arrived, and now providing basic English lessons and ongoing social sessions particularly for elderly migrants with limited English.