



Billericay Baptist Church

Church Profile

Charity Number: 1174549

Website: www.billericaybaptist.org.uk

1. Introduction

We are a vibrant family church, worshipping in two congregations – Perry Street and Thynne Road. We desire to help our current congregations to grow and develop, but we would also love to play a more active role in our town and the communities that we all engage with on a daily basis. We have a good reputation in the town for hosting activities across age ranges, with a strong, longstanding youth and children's ministry as well as an extensive array of mission partners, many of whom were previously church members, and we see both as being integral to the church in the future, as we continue to be a training and sending church.

For about four years now, we have been seeking to understand what it means to develop under God's prophetic word, given to us many times recently, of 'See I am doing a new thing', but we had not expected to find ourselves going from a place of a full ministry team just a year ago to a radically slimmed down team, for many different reasons.

To prevent concern and by way of background, our structure had been that of a Senior Minister, who stood down last summer following health issues and an Associate Minister who trained with us and who then took up the call to become a Senior Minister elsewhere at the end of 2021. A Children's Worker, who has been part of the church for many years, trained with us and been in post for some time. She had felt the tug of pastures new for a while and ended her time with us at the end of the 2021 too. A long-term Youth Work Director, who is still on his journey of recovery after having a sarcoma successfully removed last year, and a part time Pastoral Assistant, who now finds himself busy, remain with us. These are supported by a part-time Church Administrator.

Such radical change within a few months has led us to a period of prayer, reflection and review, as we ask the Lord to show us HIS 'new thing', the outcome of which forms the basis of what we see for the future and which is, in part, captured in Sections 4 and 5 of this profile.

We are seeking to put in place a Ministry Team that can lead, inspire, enable and equip us to best fulfil and enjoy the journey God has in place for our church and our town and although we have our ideas, we have learnt we need to remain open to being 'surprised' by God.

2. Our church as it is now

Our people

We have a current church membership of around 200, the majority of whom play an active role in the church either in volunteering or taking part in prayer meetings or discipleship (small) groups. We have a strong youth and children's work being the only church in the town still to have paid workers engaged in this ministry. Pre-pandemic our Sunday morning attendance (which was three congregations at the time) would be around 230 adults and up to 70 youth and children. Whilst we have now re-opened our church buildings we have yet to see a full return, with some preferring to participate in church 'online' as our Perry Street based service is live streamed.

Perhaps with the exception of the 20s to low 30s, we are well represented in all other age ranges. Whilst a friendly and welcoming community, it is our desire to deepen this, aiming for everyone to be included and for us to become fully representative of the demographics of the town.

Our employed staff

We currently employ a part-time Pastoral Assistant and a part-time Church Administrator. We see both roles continuing to support the church for the future. We also employ a full time Youth Work Director (since 2003) who holds an MA in Missional Leadership and is currently training for ordination at Spurgeon's College. Together, we will be exploring God's calling on his life.

Our leadership structure

We are structured as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and registered with the Charity Commission (number 1174549). The Ministry Team and Church Elders (currently four), supported by a team of Deacons (currently seven), take primary responsibility for the church's spiritual welfare. The Church Trustees (currently four) take primary responsibility for its governance. Although we see advantages to this 'split' responsibility model, we also recognise that it could work better and are exploring ways to develop and improve it.

Our Sunday services

We normally hold a Sunday morning service at both congregations and, although prior to the pandemic we held a weekly evening service (significantly smaller but more intimate than the morning services), we are currently operating with only one evening service per month, normally hosted on the same day as our morning family and all-age service.

We see worship, prayer, fellowship and the preaching of God's word as integral components of all our services and we rely heavily on many gifted and dedicated volunteers to help make this happen. We would like to see greater freedom in the Holy Spirit expressed in our services and see this as an area for the church to grow into.

Our Perry Street congregation is multi-generational and often the children and youth will participate in collective church worship before being taught in various groups led by church volunteers. The Sunday morning services from Perry Street are live streamed and made available via YouTube.

Following a merger between the South Green and Sunnymede congregations, the newly formed congregation at Thynne Road is developing its own identity. Currently, this congregation is predominantly made up of adults, with most of the young people's work being undertaken at Perry Street.

Our buildings

We meet in two locations in the town, Perry Street and Thynne Road.



The Perry Street building (on the left) is our larger building, able to hold around 300 for Sunday worship and provides a number of 'break-out' rooms as well as working space for our Church Administrator and the Ministry Team. The Perry Street building is multi-functional with the main space used for Sunday worship, as well as youth, children's and other activities during the week.

The Thynne Road building (previously known as Sunnymede) was refurbished last year and is able to hold around 60 people for Sunday worship. It too is a multi-use building being used for other activities during the week.

Both buildings have full audio and video facilities as well as WiFi connectivity.

Our activities

The church has the usual range of activities expected for a church of its size although as a result of COVID restrictions, we have had to limit some of what we are able to do on a face-to-face basis.

Much of our children's and youth activities (from babies up to the age of 18) are now fully up and running and include Boys' and Girls' Brigades, age-appropriate Sunday morning teaching, mid-week discipleship groups, summer camps and Holiday Bible Clubs. As a result, we are in contact with around 200 young people in the town each week.

For adults we offer a range of discipleship groups (which are well attended), parent and baby/toddler groups and Sunny Days, a well-respected gathering offering activities, a short message, and love and support to older people.

We have a strong history of supporting mission having an active partnership (prayer and financial support) with 15 mission partners, some in the town, some elsewhere in the UK and many working overseas. Our mission budget for 2022 accounts for approaching 25% of our offerings including associated Gift Aid. Some mission partners were previously attendees/members at the church who were then called to the wider mission field. In addition, we take up special offerings three times a year specifically to support mission organisations.

Our weekly prayer meeting moved to Zoom during the pandemic 'lockdown' and partly as a result of increased attendance numbers we continue to meet in this way. We also have a week of prayer and fasting at the start of each school term and ask members to share with the leadership any words or pictures from that week.

The church is an active member of Churches Together Billericay (CTB) and supports joint initiatives including Schools Ministry Billericay (SMB), and Street Pastors. A number of our members also volunteer at the Foodbank.

3. The area

Billericay is a busy town of around 40,000 people situated in South Essex. Its position on the mainline railway route from Southend to London makes it a prime choice as a commuter town, with Liverpool Street Station being (on a good day) around 35 minutes away.



Billericay falls within the boundaries of Basildon Borough Council, Basildon being one of many new towns built after World War II to house the London overflow, particularly from the East End.

Billericay lies six miles north of Basildon and nine miles south of Chelmsford, the County City of Essex.

Its High Street is now predominantly service oriented, with several pubs, restaurants, and other “eateries” attracting large numbers of locals and visitors alike both during the day and in the evenings. This shift in emphasis was one of the reasons for pursuing the Street Pastors initiative.

The town has a mixed demographic with many younger families attracted by its schooling and other amenities, whilst the older community is served by increasing amounts of sheltered accommodation. There are primary schools scattered around the town and two large comprehensive secondary schools, Billericay and Mayflower. There is also a private school, St. John’s, in Stock Road.

Pre pandemic, many people commuted to London to work although it remains to be seen if the ‘working from home’ pattern persists and what impact this will have on the town. There is a small industrial estate and also a business park near the railway station and Ford Motor Company continues to be a significant, although declining, employer in the wider Essex area.

There are churches representing all mainstream Christian denominations situated in the town. A Christian legacy pervades the town as it has connections to the Pilgrim Fathers, who are believed to have met in Billericay prior to sailing on the Mayflower. At one end of the High Street there is the Community Hub which houses the Foodbank and is the base for Street Pastors, and SMB have their base at the other end of the High Street.

4. The church we would like to see

As we seek to grow and move the church forward, we have identified three distinct and intertwined ministries. We believe that each ministry should carry equal prominence, and that together these ministries will help us to achieve what we perceive to be the six-fold focus of our future church.

The ministries recognise the different contexts of equipping and caring for those within the current church community and engaging with non-church communities in order to make new disciples. A

children's and youth ministry is separately identified because of its importance to the church and the different environment inhabited by children and youth.

The three ministries

External - making new disciples

This is primarily an external ministry (outside of the current church community) focussed on the making of new disciples. This ministry would incorporate a mission strategy that included both structured mission activities (e.g. CAP, Alpha, etc.) and involvement with the community in other ways (e.g. Foodbank or other new and innovative ways of engagement), and everyday life mission equipping people to better engage with their own day-to-day communities. It would also build upon the number of warm contacts the church has with its fringe (e.g. Brigade families).

Internal – growing disciples (incorporating care for the church family)

This is primarily an internal ministry (inside the current church community) helping us to grow as a church family; grow in our freedom to move more in the Spirit; providing Bible-based teaching speaking into life issues; but with an emphasis placed on equipping, resourcing and releasing disciples.

This ministry will be supported by the current part-time Pastoral Assistant.

Children and youth (perhaps extending to families)

This ministry is intended to impact children and youth already associated with the church (internal) as well as those with currently no church contact (external). The goals would be similar to those for the other two ministries, but delivered within the different context of children and youth.

Six-fold focus

Following consultation with the church and a church leadership 'away day', we see these three ministries helping us achieve a six-fold focus for the future church. We recognise that there will be times when certain areas take priority over others, but we see each area as important in its own right. The summary below is not in priority order.

Grow as a family

The goal is for the church family to actively love, serve and care for each other, whilst providing welcome to people wishing to come into the family. All welcome, none excluded.

Engage with the community

Community, as it applies to all types of communities e.g. friendship groups, geographical groups, work groups etc. Making use of structured events and activities but also importantly equipping the congregation for 'everyday life' engagement within their own communities.

Equip and release disciples

We are a body of Christ and the equipping and releasing of disciples into the ministries God has called them to is seen as essential to the future growth and direction of the church.

Encourage children's and youth work

This is an important and longstanding ministry for the church; one which the church has long recognised and invested in by way of resources and paid ministry staff. Recognising children and youth work as a ministry in its own right emphasises the importance of this continued work.

Lead us towards greater freedom in the Spirit

It is important that we seek greater immersion in, and more fully embrace, the things of the Spirit.

Ensure teaching is Bible based, speaking into life issues

Ensure that Bible-based teaching continues, and that it includes life and everyday issues including those thorny ones that we tend to avoid.

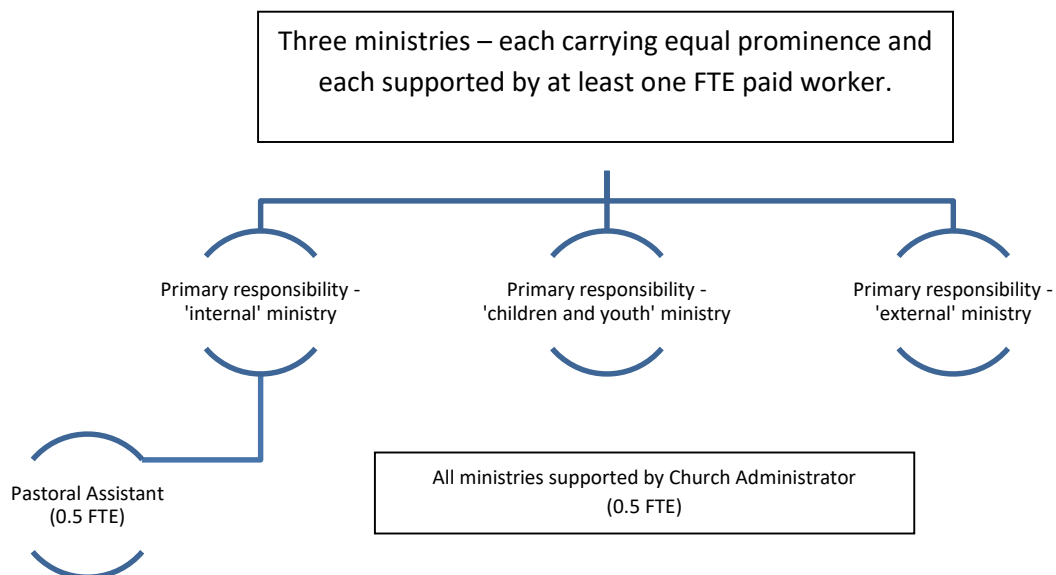
5. The team we believe we need

We anticipate having financial resources for a paid Ministry Team of four (Full Time Equivalent (FTE)) and we envisage that each of the three identified ministries will have at least one FTE allocated to it either as a full-time role or a combination of part-time roles. The internal focussed ministry will be supported by the already employed part-time Pastoral Assistant (0.5 FTE). Whilst we are open as to how this capacity may be best utilised to serve the people of our church and our town, we would anticipate the team including at least two full-time roles with at least one of these being an accredited Baptist Minister.

In addition to the primary responsibility of leading one of the three identified ministries, one member of the team will act as a team leader. This role will carry the title of Lead Minister and whilst it would carry the added responsibility of acting as a Trustee, it would not extend to active management of the other ministries which would remain the responsibility of those appointed to lead them.

Our current theological understanding agreed by the church in 2012, and applying to the role of Lead Minister, is that headship should be male. The church leadership is currently reviewing this position and would expect to bring a proposal either to affirm or change it later in the year.

Possible future church ministry team structure



Ministry blend

We are seeking passionate leaders able to steer the church through its next season of growth and development. We understand that in modelling the 'body of Christ' our church must draw on everyone (paid or volunteers) to play their part and that growth takes time.

In our time of reflection we identified that we want to be a church populated with equippers, encouragers, empowerers, teachers and communicators. We want a church that is engaging and which embraces diversity and inclusion whilst seeking to connect Bible teaching to modern life issues. We want to shine brightly as God's light in this area.

6. A brief history of the church

Following a vision from some 20 years earlier, in February 1964 Billericay Baptist Church was formally constituted and moved to its current location on Perry Street in 1968. New congregations were planted in the South Green (1991) and Queens Park (1997) areas of the town, the latter running for nine years.

In 2013 we extended a working partnership with Sunnymede Chapel fully integrating it into the church as a third congregation. The Sunnymede and South Green congregations have recently merged and now meet in the refurbished and renamed Thynne Road church building.

7. Practical matters

The church owns two residential properties, both of which have been used as manses in the past. Depending upon experience and responsibilities, remuneration will typically be at a level around 20% - 25% above the BU standard stipend and will further include either manse provision or a housing allowance.