

# Appendix 3: Responses from local churches

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## Commitment to Action

Local churches were asked to complete a Commitment to Action with respect to the Requests for Change identified for local churches in the Project Violet Findings. Churches were also invited to offer a narrative on the decisions they had taken.

This Appendix contains the responses received by 30 September 2024.





# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Abingdon Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	SCBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Yes – in Church Meeting 17/9/2024

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women’s ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Abingdon Baptist Church

All seven requests for change were accepted.

(i) The first request was to make opportunities to listen to new voices, so that a variety of women's voices could be heard in church. It was suggested that churches review who had been involved in worship over a six-month period.

We felt Abingdon Baptist Church did fairly well, with a variety of women taking part, leading worship, reading and praying, though even wider participation would be welcome, especially from *new* voices.

(ii) The second request was for churches to make their position on women's ministry known prior to the settlement process. We had done this in the last vacancy. There was a suggestion from the project that churches should put a statement on the website about roles taken by women as well as making it clear in the profile. The feeling of the meeting was that this was not necessary, seeming like tokenism.

(iii) The next request focussed on the importance of role models, as women in some churches might never have experienced the ministry of a woman and might therefore not consider whether God could be calling them. The action suggested was that churches with women ministers might release them to preach at churches which had not received the ministry of a woman previously.

The meeting recognised the value of role models, and consideration would be given to how the suggested action might be implemented, releasing our own minister to preach away on occasion. This was not something we had previously considered to be particularly important.

(iv) The next request talked about 'developing slow wisdom' in the way church meetings are conducted. Abingdon Baptist Church is already acting on this in that we have Ruth Moriarty coming for a teaching day on discerning Christ in the Church Meeting on 16 November.

(v) The fifth request related to training in advocacy, following the recognition that unhelpful language and behaviour needed to be challenged as it happens to stop patterns of sexism developing.

The meeting agreed that it would like to know more about this!

(vi) The sixth request was for a theology of disability, to enable local churches to reflect on their practice, what they believe about disability and how those affected are included. Although at first sight this might not seem core to the Project Violet theme, feedback from researchers indicated that race and disability justice requests were essential for the inclusion of women. Chris noted that attention needed to be paid to hidden disabilities also.

The meeting accepted that this needed further reflection by the church, so that it could be implemented effectively.

(vii) The final request was to use resources (eg Powerpoints, posters, videos and newsletters) reflecting diversity in Baptist life. The suggested action was to ask younger members of the congregation to give feedback on how visual images represented women.

The meeting noted that it didn't just have to be **younger** people who were asked to give feedback on how visual images represented women, but that it would be good to have feedback from a diverse group about how they experienced worship.

Lastly, Chris shared the hopes of the Project Violet team, that churches would be or become positive places for women to minister, places where women were encouraged to listen to God's call and would be ready to engage in mission in a world where women and girls experience sexism.

The meeting was happy to accept all seven requests for change, as outlined in the Project Violet template for churches, with the specific implementation of these requests modified as noted above.

(One member present noted that the makeup of the church meeting discussing the proposal was made up of a majority of women members!)





## Project Violet – Commitment to Action Local Churches

### Feedback from Alcester Baptist Church

Hi. I presented all the findings from Project Violet to our church meeting last week. This is Alcester Baptist Church.

There were positive discussions with a unanimous decision that we agreed to all 6 suggestions re ways forward.

While we already have a woman minister (who is great!) it is important to always be moving forward and never be complacent. We would really like to continue to be involved with Project Violet and would really appreciate any further information you are able to send.

I look forward to hearing from you. All the best. Angela (Whitford)



## Project Violet – Commitment to Action Local Churches

### Feedback from Chris Porter: Senior Minister, Andover Community Church

I have noted and read the outcomes and findings of the Project Violet report from Baptists Together and the Centre for Baptist Studies. I am deeply saddened by the experiences of the women who have bravely told their stories.

I am passionately committed to promoting and encouraging everyone in ministry and in particular women of all ages and backgrounds. I am passionately committed to ensuring our church is a safe place for all and especially women. We have worked very hard at that in the churches that I have had the privilege of leading for many years.

I believe that whilst the outcomes and recommendations from Project Violet are helpful, they do not go nearly far enough to ensure the promotion of women in ministry and their safety in our churches, colleges, regions and union.

The experiences in the last few years of my wife (who used to volunteer as a Safeguarding trainer with our regional association) and the Associate Minister at our church at a College, Regional and National level within the BU have left them and me hurt, frustrated and hugely disappointed over their treatment by those organisations. I note that some of the sponsors, authors of and contributors to the report work for some of the institutions that treated those women so badly (although I accept that some of those people were not in post at that time). I believe that until Baptists Together commission a full and entirely independent study of the experience of women at the hands of our institutions (including our colleges, regions and central organisation) and commit to making any changes recommended by that study, we will not see the meaningful and deep change that we really need across our Union.

Chris Porter



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Baldwyns Park Baptist Church, Bexley
<b>Association you belong to</b>	London Baptists
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	The findings have been discussed at two Church Members' Meetings, on 18 <sup>th</sup> July and 19 <sup>th</sup> September 2024.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Baldwyns Park Baptist Church

R53/R41: Baldwyns Park Baptist Church has members of different cultures and feels it is inclusive as far as different voices and role models are concerned. However, the leadership currently does not reflect this position.

R51: Before the current pastor was appointed, the search team and church members were open to appointing a woman minister, if they felt that to be God's will.

R44: Church members would be interested to learn more about a theology of disability.





# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Battle Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	SEBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Yes, we have discussed it at leadership level

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Beckenham Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	London Baptists
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Report was introduced at the July Members' Meeting and people were encouraged to look at it over the summer. It was discussed at the September Deacons' Meeting and affirmed, and then at the September Members' Meeting which also affirmed it.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Belper Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	EMBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Offered opportunities to speak to leadership team over a period of a couple of weeks (with little take up!). Discussion at church meeting 17/07/2024

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement			
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting			
R05	Training in advocacy			
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice			
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Belper Baptist Church

A very positive discussion was had on a couple of the topics at our church meeting and the feelings/responses about the church in this area were very positive.

**Focused on:**

### **1. Opportunities for new voices.**

Many felt that we offer opportunities and encourage women (and a variety of people) to take part in all aspects of church life and that women are generally well represented across the board. The one area which perhaps could have more female representation was in preaching.

There was a suggestion, which was well received, that we could take a more proactive approach to support and mentor women in their gifts.

### **2. Role models**

All felt that role models were important and that, as above, we could have more women preaching more frequently.

It was suggested that we invite more guests from under-represented groups to speak to the church.



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Bethesda Baptist Church, Trowbridge
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Webnet
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Leadership Team (Church trustees) Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> June Church Members Meeting Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> July

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Bethesda Baptist Church, Trowbridge

### **Make opportunities to listen to new voices**

We have already planned a series in July when people who wouldn't usually be at the front of church can share brief thoughts (rather than sermons, 2 or 3 people will share each week for 5-10 mins and the majority of these will be women). I (the minister) have found that women often feel that a preach is a step too far and this format allows someone to have a go at speaking.

### **Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement**

This is something that Bethesda has done and will keep doing.

### **Role models**

When our minister (male) is not preaching, *at least* half of those preaching slots should be filled by women.

Some of the women at our church meeting spoke about some of the barriers and it was noted that women are more likely to feel imposter syndrome and women who are parenting often carry a heavier emotional load and this has a bearing on capacity. We need to be creative in raising the profile of our female leaders and not solely focused on preaching. Language is important, e.g. can you preach or minister sounds harder than could you share something.

### **Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting**

We found this a hard one to discuss because we couldn't find any written summary of what it meant.

We think we do well in this area, documents are supplied in advance of church meetings to give people space to reflect, subjects are staggered over more than one meeting with input and prayer in between and we use small group discussion regularly. It has been good to make use of other ways of sharing in meetings e.g. sticky notes and we want to consider how we can allow more space for a creative response rather than always defaulting to the verbal/rational approach. We have set up prayer stations before to help with reflection on an issue and this has gone well.

### **Training in advocacy**

Sexism has no place in church life and we look forward to training and resourcing in this area. It was noted that the minister had spoken about racism in a recent sermon.

### **A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice**

We would be grateful for a resource that helps us to do this and to evaluate if we are as welcoming as we think we are.

### **Use of resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life**

Careful consideration is already been given to this in the use of our visuals both in services and on our website.



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Bewdley Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	HEBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	We have discussed the findings in our church leadership team meeting in June 2024 and presented the recommendations at the Church Members meeting later in the month

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Blackley Baptist Church, Elland, W Yorks
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Yorkshire Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	2 sermons (8/9 and 15/9) and 1 whole service (29/9/24) Hosting of PV exhibition for the Association with workshops, discussions, prayer and lament (27-28 Sept 2024) Church meeting discussion and resolutions 29/9

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy – includes Diversity and Inclusion for Deacons and Elders	✓	✓	
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		



## Additional feedback from Blackley Baptist Church

We have reflected on the barriers and hurdles for women's flourishing in ministry, lamenting this and committing ourselves to the hopes expressed by Project Violet. The church felt that in many ways we are already delivering the above requests but recognised the dangers of complacency and the wider Baptist family may be in a different place.

Please find attached our Local Church commitment to Action form for Project Violet. We have loved hosting the exhibition this weekend, and welcomed 10 people from 6 other churches within YBA. 2/3rds of our congregation came to the exhibition, together with a full congregation at a church meeting to discuss and support.

We would be happy to talk further of our experience in working as a church through this, but have filled out the form as requested, where there is not a lot of room to add much detail. Particularly we would like to mention the discussions that we had for male allies, and their commitment to this.

Many thanks to our many sisters who have given time, energy, and heart space to this project, and to our male allies. We are very grateful to you all.

Joanna and Andy Williams, with Nikki Jenkins

Ministers at Blackley Baptist Church



## **Project Violet – Commitment to Action**

### **Local Churches**

#### **Feedback from Bookham Baptist Church**

Bookham Baptist Church Leadership team has discussed the Project Violet recommendations and we accept them all and fully support all the aims of the project. We have two female Ministers and woman active in every area of leadership in the church.

Our ongoing reflection, which we don't consider a just a gendered issue is the request to reflect upon issues around under-represented groups and disability. We will be thinking how we take this forward as our Leadership Team is mainly made up of white, educated, middle class people and know that we need to be aware that it might be easy for us to have blind spots in this area!

Kind regards

**Fran Pyatt**

Chair of Trustees

**Bookham Baptist Church**



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

<b>Name of Stakeholder</b>	Borehamwood Baptist Church
<b>How have you discussed the findings? (for example, meetings and dates)</b>	Leadership meeting 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sept 2024.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting.	we will consider using this when it complete		
R05	Training in advocacy on behalf of Ministers and Ministers-in-Training receiving unequal treatment			this is not relevant to our church at this time, we will review as and when it is
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches, Colleges, and Associations to reflect upon their practice	Yes to more theology, this is a theme close to our heart, we'd like to look at resource when it is created.		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	We would like to be stronger than this and would like to aim to have a page on our website about Project Violet where we state that we are open to having male or female ministers.		
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	Yes, we agree.		

R56	Local Churches, Associations, Colleges, Faith and Society Team	Yes, we agree.		
R41	Local Churches, Associations, Colleges, Key Roles Nomination Group	Yes, we agree.		

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Brandon Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	London Baptists
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	With Leaders – members to be updated at next meeting. We did not have opportunity before the summer.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women’s ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Brandon Baptist Church

We are an inner London, black majority, female majority Baptist Church, with a female minister. All of these changes are already on our radar, from advocacy for all whether the core issues are race, gender, financial or other focus points, to awareness of accessibility issues in our buildings and services. We are seeking to nurture all voices and people and to ensure our members are fully heard and represented in all areas of church life. Our minister has a habit of encouraging and supporting our young leaders, walking with them in sermon prep and service leading and are endeavoring to see equality at the front of church as well as across the membership. Some changes are slow steps, others I feel are already embedded in our practice.

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Broad Haven Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	South Wales Baptist Association (and Baptist Union of Wales)
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Deacons meeting (as requested by Church Meeting)

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Broad Haven Baptist Church

The deacons of the church note that the requests for change reflect some work that the church has recently begun to engage in, especially R56 and R41. This came out of some work on Racial Justice, but connections to women were also noticed.

With a female minister at the church (who has been involved in PV), recognizing the need for the church to reflect carefully on the reports has not been obvious to all. With that in mind, at their meeting in September, all the Deacons committed to reading several of the reports each month, when sent to them by the minister along with some questions for further reflection. This invitation will be made to others in the wider church at the October Church Meeting. After all the reports have been read carefully, the Deacons will then audit the practice of the church in relation to the Requests for Change and make commitments for necessary change which will be brought to the Church Meeting.



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Burgh Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	EMBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Deacons Meeting 5th August

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting			✓
R05	Training in advocacy		✓	
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Burgh Baptist Church

### Extract of Minute – 5<sup>th</sup> August

The Report circulated introduces local churches to Project Violet. It brings together the key documents local churches will need to respond to the findings, in particular the 7 requests for change directed at local churches.

What is Project Violet?

Over the last three years, Project Violet has both investigated women's experiences in ministry and developed the participating women ministers. The project has helped understand more fully the theological, missional, and structural obstacles women ministers face in the Baptist community in Great Britain and identify ways forward.

The research phase of the project has concluded and from 2 May 2024 all the research is being made available to the Baptist community on the website [www.projectviolet.org.uk](http://www.projectviolet.org.uk) There are 57 requests for changes to Baptist ways of working being made. 7 of those requests are directed at local churches.

BUGB requires the response from local churches by 30<sup>th</sup> September, but due to circumstances, we will not have time to take this to Church Members, it was agreed we would submit the Deaconate thoughts and decisions.

#### Response:

**There was disappointment that there were no scriptural references anywhere in the document, and therefore was more secular in its approach rather than theological.**

#### **R53 Making Opportunities to listen to new voices.**

*Women are not all the same and so it is important that a variety of women's voices are heard in church life.*

It was felt we were open to hear new voices, an example was using the Church Meeting to have discussion groups thus allowing all voices to hear. A Deacon to be placed in each group to ensure we hear all voices.

Through teams working at various ministries in the church also allows voices across the spectrum to be heard

#### **Decision - Accept**

#### **R51 Local Churches make their position on women's ministry know prior to settlement.**

*Women ministers can find it difficult to know which churches would welcome their ministry when they are applying to be a minister.*

We would not have a problem when involved in any future Settlement Process, of being open to an approach by a woman as Minister, and will happily make this clear.

#### **Decision – Accept**

#### **R41 Role Models**

*Seeing women minister helps other women hear the call of God.*

We wholeheartedly encourage, and are blessed by, women actively participating in every aspect of church life.

#### **Decision -Accept**

#### **R48 Developing Slow Wisdom in the local church meeting.**

*Churches are invited to reflect upon the way in which they conduct their church meetings so that they focus on discerning the mind of Christ.*

With no explanation or information given, we were unable to draw any conclusions.

#### **Decision - Decline**

#### **R05 Training in Advocacy**

*Challenging unhelpful language and behaviour as it happens stops patterns of sexism developing. Training will be offered to ministers and others wanting to increase their confidence in doing this.*

Skills would be useful, but at what level? What expectation? Ministers are called to pastor and to apply scripture, not to be trained counsellors or mediators.

#### **Decision - Modified**

#### **R44 A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect on their practice.**

*Reflecting on what we believe about disability can help us think about how we wish to include people with a disability in our church.*

Generally, our church is equipped to deal with people with disabilities, however hidden disabilities such as mental illness and diversity, hearing loss, or poor. Use of loop systems and microphones to help people with hearing loss, and copies of large print songs for sight loss, to be continued. Where people come forward for prayer etc., they should be able to come on the flat.

Screen images to avoid busy backgrounds and use bold print.

#### **Decision – Accept**

#### **R56 Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist Life**

*Ensuring that the resources we use – such as posters, PowerPoints, and newsletters – reflect the diversity of people involved in Baptist life.*

We already do.

#### **Decision – Accept**



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Burwell Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	EBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Elders Meeting 3 <sup>rd</sup> June, 1 <sup>st</sup> July,

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	We do this during services, also in testimony services, away days and members meetings.
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	We will do this next time we enter settlement process
R41	Role models	We encourage female speakers, service leaders and worship leaders. Three of our four elders are female. We have hosted visiting female ministers and our regional minister is female.
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	We do this
R05	Training in advocacy	We are willing to consider this
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	We believe we are doing this
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	We seek to do this

## Feedback from Carey Baptist Church

PROJECT VIOLET (re Women in BU Ministry)

Carey's statement, in response to some of the 'Requests for Change from local churches' - out of the May 2024 Project Violet Report – agreed at the Sept 11th 2024 church meeting of Carey Baptist Church

Given the Biblical affirmation for women's ministry, and bearing in mind both Carey's/(Marlowes BC's) past previous calling of Baptist women to accredited ministry in our church/joint team ministry and our Equal Opportunities Policy, we agree the following:

- 1) Carey BC's policy of seeking ministers for settlement will always consider women and men on an equal footing for ministry.
- 2) Carey BC will always seek to ensure that women are equally represented on our leadership team and are seen acting in positions of leadership, not just auxiliary roles.
- 3) Ensure that appropriate training (provided by the BU or the CBA or some other suitable training body) is offered to our leaders and members on the important themes of equality, diversity & inclusion, including equipping leaders & members to deal with discriminatory language or behaviour.
- 4) Ensure that under-represented groups are visually represented on our church website.
- 5) Ensure that any other measures deemed appropriate by the leadership and church meeting are taken, to ensure that Carey is an 'equal opportunity church'.

Blessings,

Colin Cartwright

Minister, Carey BC

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Centenary Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	EBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	For a short time at a leadership meeting in September 19/9/24

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement <i>system</i>		✓	
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing <i>slow wisdom</i> in the local church meeting – not understood		✓	
R05	Training in advocacy <i>Need to see</i>	✓	✓	
R44	A <i>theology of disability</i> that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice – <i>change not understood</i>		✓	
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓ Minister only		

## Additional feedback from Centenary Baptist Church

The leadership team were confident to accept the first six responses, some with modification in the short name as it was not understood as written. The seventh response was sadly not understood by the leadership team, and so it was accepted by the minister only (me).

Thank you, and God bless you.

Kim  
Kim Downes  
Minister (in training)  
Centenary Baptist Church

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Chester Road Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Heart of England Baptist Association (HEBA)
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Leadership meetings: 6/6/24, 1/7/24, 5/9/24 Church meetings: 28/7/24, 22/9/24 Church ebulletin included link to Project Violet webpage

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Christ Church New Southgate and Friern Barnet
<b>Association you belong to</b>	London Baptists
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Deacons Meeting – September 2024

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Declined</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Christ Church New Southgate and Friern Barnet

Christ Church New Southgate and Friern Barnet (Baptist/URC) has a strong tradition of women in ministry and lay leadership. We are a local ecumenical partnership (LEP) so our history begins with the appointment of Rev'd Elsie Chamberlain in 1941 to the Congregational church at Friern Barnet; the Congregational church later joined the URC. Chamberlain's ministry lasted five years until 1946 when she went onto be a BBC religious programming producer. After the creation of Christ Church as an LEP, Rev'd Caroline Rogers (Baptist) was called in 2013, and then Rev'd Dr Ruth Moriarty called in 2017 to the present day. Our diaconate is an all-female leadership team which is diverse in age and ethnicity, in addition two of our deacons are lay preachers within the URC.

We warmly welcome the research Project Violet has created and look forward to the Baptist Union accepting the recommendations of the project for the kingdom development of the church. We look forward to the production of training materials on advocacy and disability which we feel will benefit our church most.

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Christ Church, Ipswich
<b>Association you belong to</b>	EBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Deacons Meeting – 12 Sept 24 Church Meeting – 29 Sept 24

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Declined</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Church From Scratch
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Eastern Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Discussed at trustee meeting, 18 September 2024

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting		✓	
R05	Training in advocacy		✓	
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Church From Scratch

Church From Scratch is a network of 'house churches' (which we call communities). Those leading/facilitating the communities agreed to make an effort when choosing music videos on YouTube (which is the principal way we experience musical worship) to ensure they aren't all videos of white singers. CFS is currently working, in partnership with the Baptist Historical Society, on a video resource for small groups on Baptist history that features the stories of Margaret Jarman, Dorothy Hazzard and Sam Sharpe. CFS is fully affirming of women's ministry: an accredited female Baptist minister is employed by Shared Space Social Enterprise (a project of CFS) and frequently leads worship gatherings.

The trustees agreed to intentionally discuss the experience people of different identities within CFS at each trustees and facilitators' meeting, for example women's experiences at one meeting, people with disabilities the next, the LGBT+ community and so on.

CFS was disappointed that the experience of queer women was not explored as part of Project Violet, as we are a fully LGBT+ affirming church. We plan to developing some inclusive queer liturgy as part of our ongoing effort to be radically inclusive.

The only reason we did not 'accept' R48 and R05 was that they seemed to refer to training/resources that were not in existence yet.

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Cornerstone Baptist Church, Leeds
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Yorkshire Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Church meeting, 26/09/24

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Crofton Park Baptist
<b>Association you belong to</b>	LBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Referred to findings, Preached particularly on subject, linking R41, R53 and RO5 with Acts 18, Priscilla and Aquilla. Noting also lack of women worship song writers. Followed by church meeting on 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2024

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
RO5	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Crofton Park Baptist

Church discussed importance of age and social background discrimination when appointing leaders, the need to shape diversity and to integrate the position of women, so that over-positive discrimination is avoided.



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Croham Road Baptist Church, South Croydon
<b>Association you belong to</b>	London
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Elders meetings 6-6-24 and 1-7-24 Trustees meeting 4-7-24 Church meetings 18-7-24 and 19-9-24 4 members attended an association day 17-7-24 Open discussion at all meetings with plenty of time for questions and further exploration

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	CMM 18-7-24		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement		CMM 18-7-24	
R41	Role models		CMM 19-9-24	
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	CMM 19-9-24		
R05	Training in advocacy	CMM 19-9-24		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	CMM 19-9-24		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	CMM 19-9-24		

## Additional feedback from Croham Road Baptist Church, South Croydon

The elders at Croham Road were the first to look at the Project Violet findings and recommendations. They spent considerable time, at their June meeting, exploring all areas of PV. Further conversation followed, especially about Slow Wisdom, because we wanted to be sure that what we assumed about it was correct.

The whole trustee body was next to discuss the recommendations, in July, and following this meeting a series of recommendations were taken to the church members meeting for discussion and decision.

The July church members meeting took a lot of time over introducing the topic, explanations, parameters and so forth with members asking a variety of questions ranging from who was being asked to take part to Biblical precedents or resources. In the past the church had a few very vocal opponents to women in leadership, but the church is in a very different place today and has benefited from women elders for in excess of a decade and more as well as having women preachers. Nevertheless, it became clear during the meeting that there was not a definitive stated position on the church's acceptance of women in leadership. Consequently, the church decided to concentrate on addressing the PV recommendations for change in the short term and then spend time in 2025 ensuring that it's position on women in leadership is clear. The meeting was able to make decisions on 2 of the recommendations at that point.

Before the September church members meeting all members received a document outlining the trustees thinking behind its recommendations. At the meeting a PowerPoint presentation was made to further clarify the issues being addressed. The meeting made decisions regarding the remaining 5 recommendations. Church members were offered a number of book titles to assist in preparation for the later conversation in 2025.

Croham Road was happy to agree 5 of the recommendations as they stand, but the church did feel it would want to modify two of the recommendations:

R51 – We entirely agree with the sentiment of the recommendation but feel that the recommendation should not be addressed just to churches “that do not accept the ministry of women”. We feel it wiser for ALL Baptist churches to make their position clear. Consequently, our modification reads **“That Baptist congregations formally review their position prior to a settlement process and then make the position of the church meeting known on their website.”** In making this modification we aware we need to do precisely this ourselves which is why we are set to address the matter in early 2025.

R41 – Again we agree with the emphasis of the recommendation, but we felt that worded as it is at present it opens us to “tokenism”, which no-one wants. The resulting modification is **“The Church commits to encouraging all those with the appropriate gifts to minister regardless of identity or background”**.

The PV decisions are just the start of a longer and necessary conversation. Thank you.

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Darkhouse Baptist
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Heart of England Baptist Association (HEBA)
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Deacons Meeting 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2024, Church Meeting 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2024. With Justice church rep 12 <sup>th</sup> September 2024

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy		✓	
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Darkhouse Baptist Church

As a diaconate and a church we looked what we were already doing, what we could improve upon in the long and short term and what perhaps we couldn't do ourselves but would look to be done on a national or regional level that we could support. We were encouraged that we were already making some progress in several areas addressed by the requests.

We are happy to accept all the recommendations but would suggest a training resource for advocacy be developed nationally that we could deliver and implement on a local and regional level (such as 'Activity Bystander training' delivered in secular organisations like the NHS but adapted for our church and translocal space settings). This resource could be like the Safeguarding training material and if developed nationally would help churches and associations not having to reinvent the wheel and also give consistency of approach.

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Dewsbury Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Yorkshire Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Church meeting 28/8/24 initial discussion of this document

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Declined</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Dewsbury Baptist Church

We are planning to more fully discuss the recommendations and how to implement them when our minister returns from sabbatical. We found R48 and R44 confusing as they didn't seem to relate directly to women ministers. Hopefully resources from Project Violet will help us with this. We have a female minister and are supportive of her, although there are a couple of dissenting voices - we will work to ensure these are respectfully listened to but not necessarily followed ! Resources which explain the scripture which seem to deny womens leadership might be helpful in this respect

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Didsbury Baptist Church, Manchester
<b>Association you belong to</b>	North Western Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Deacons' meeting, 10 September 2024

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Didsbury Baptist Church

The church is currently in a period of interregnum and the deacons are engaged with keeping church life going and working through the process of seeking a new minister. We completely missed the requests to engage with this and only noticed it early in September, hence why it has been discussed by the deacons but not a church meeting. The responses therefore reflect the views of the diaconate but not necessarily the whole church. Having said that we have had several women ministers and lay people (both Baptist and from other denominations) preaching and leading worship during the last six months and booked in for the future.

We will seek an opportunity to share the project with the wider church.



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Earls Hall Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Eastern Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	The Leadership discussed the recommendations to churches at two meetings on 2nd July and 10th September 2024. Due to our immediacy of entering a pastoral vacancy and the summer break, we have not yet had the opportunity to present the report to the church. The responses below therefore represent the view and commitment of the Leadership team only at this stage.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	*		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

\* We have not yet seen Dr Moriarty's research findings



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Eastgate Union Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	East Midland Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	<p>PROJECT VIOLET HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN THE ELDERS AGENDA AND DISCUSSED WITH ELDERS ON 3 SEPARATE OCCASIONS.</p> <p>OUR CHURCH NEWSLETTER AND ORDINARY CHURCH MEETING INFORMED THE CHURCH OF THIS ACTIVITY WHICH INVITED A WIDER RESPONSE. NO RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM ANYONE OTHER THAN THE ELDERS.</p> <p>FURTHER MEETINGS AND EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS HAVE INCLUDED DISCUSSION RE THE RESPONSE TO BALANCE ALL VIEWS SHARED.</p> <p>RESPONCES FROM ELDERS WERE EMAILED TO THE SECRETARY AND MINISTER FOR REVIEW. SOME OF THE VIEWS ARE BELOW.</p>

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement		✓	
R41	Role models			✓
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting			✓
R05	Training in advocacy		✓	
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice			✓
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life			✓

## Additional feedback from Eastgate Union Church

### R53:

- Happy to try things out, as long as it is biblical, and as long as it is relevant to the people we serve.
- I am not averse to changing things if the need arises, but I don't see the need for changing things just so we can say we have. The Church meetings have changed from Evenings to after Services, which is a change for the better. Each preacher (whether Minister, Congregation or outside) chooses the style of service (worship music, kids slot, preaching style) to suit them, so we are already open to trying things differently.
- There is always a balance to be struck between changing how we do things whilst not neglecting our past or current attendees wishes.
- Happy to try things out, as long as it is biblical, and as long as it is relevant to the people we serve.

### R51

- No, I don't agree. A church shouldn't be forced to put anything on their website stating anything, it should be a matter of choice. Although, I would say that a church should be encouraged to know what their position is, on women in ministry.
- I completely agree that our position on this should be made clear on our website and paperwork when seeking a new Minister. I would also add that I believe our stance on core issues (authority of Scripture, Same-sex Marriage etc) should also be displayed on our website.
- I am in favour of people reviewing their beliefs and why they hold them, but I do not believe people should be forced to accept something they feel is against scripture.
- This should be about giftings.

### R41

- I challenge the statement "We can become what we see". We are becoming more like Christ, and that is the most important thing.
- In an ideal world we would have churches full of every age and generation with role models everywhere. There are many stories of Churches changing and growing from hopeless and dire situations, from closing down to huge growth. This is down to the work of the Holy Spirit and often we become what we can't see.
- I don't think anyone should be in leadership unless God has called them and I don't believe it's right to put someone as a leader based on anything else.
- I agree that role-models are important, especially people who are similar to us. However, I do not believe people should be 'promoted' or asked to do a certain job based purely on their gender, ethnicity etc.
- If a person seems suitable for a role, they should be allowed the opportunity to explore that. In regards to women specifically, I think we do very well as we have women serving in every aspect of Church life and when looking for a new Minister, we made it clear we would be happy with a woman if that was God's will for us.
- I would like to see more women in-house preachers, but maybe God will reveal a suitable person in time.

#### **R48**

- I'm afraid I don't know what exactly they're asking us to do here other than Ruth Moriarty creating a learning resource.

#### **R05**

- I can't speak for Associations and colleges but as a Church we should live the teachings of Christ and to love one another.
- Everybody is made in the image of God (except the sin we have inherited) and is loved by him. In Christ we are one and one body that everyone that is born again has a place without exception.
- We are against any form of prejudice or attack on people whatever their ethnicity, colour, gender or disability.
- I agree with all these and would include Advocacy training for all those in formal Ministry. To be honest, I'm surprised there isn't something similar available already as there are with other organisations.
- Not more courses!
- I believe we are aware!

#### **R44:**

- Regarding disability, which we have people with disabilities, I believe our building is quite practical and as a fellowship I believe we are very supportive. Disability affects both men and women.
- There is always something more that we can do and if the opportunity arises we adapt and learn.
- I'm not sure how I feel about this, or it could just be the wording. There is already theology on Disability out there, but this can be a little sketchy. We should not be discriminating against someone who has a disability purely because they are a woman, but should be helping and supporting them just as much as we would a man with such.
- As a matter of Biology, women do experience different 'problems' (menopause was mentioned by a couple of women in the Podcasts) to men, but equally these should be addressed and supported just like we would for men-specific problems.
- Any collective research by women who haven't found this to be the case should be welcome and encouraged in order for others to learn and change.
- Is this another bible?

#### **R56**

- The visual images and resources that we use is down to the discretion of the people involved with the service or the responsibility of the relevant ministries.
- I would say we do this already as the resources we use contain a variety of men, women and children, white and black people and some disabled people.
- As we do not have any deaf people attending at the moment, I do not believe we should start using BSL or alternative. However, if we do get deaf people attending, we can easily change (we have two people at least that I know of who know BSL).
- We already help with those who have partial hearing as well as those with vision problems.

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Great Ashby Community Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Central Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	We have discussed the findings at both Trustees and Church Members' meetings. These happened on the 21st May and 26th June 2024 respectively.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	N/A		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life		✓	

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Green Lane Baptist Church, Walsall
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Heart of England Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Deacons' Meeting

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Declined</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	5		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	4		1
R41	Role models	5		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	5		
R05	Training in advocacy	4		1
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	5		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	5		

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Grove Lane Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	North Western Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Church Meetings in July and September Deacons meetings in August and September

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	Yes; we want to explore this in the leading of worship and the discussions of church meeting		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	Yes; this is our ongoing position		
R41	Role models	to include more male voices. We will be looking at those who are up front, but also those who are welcomers at the door		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	This is our long term practice and we are committed to exploring it more deeply		
R05	Training in advocacy	Yes; we will continue to encourage our minister to take up CPD to help with this. We will also raise with inclusion group and seek their ongoing work, especially with choice of language		

R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	Yes; our inclusion group works at this already. We will continue to develop the resource.		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	Yes; we seek to do this, but will broaden the group making the choices of images etc, to seek to broaden our representation		



## Additional feedback from Grove Lane Baptist Church

We found this a very affirming process. Because we have been working hard at inclusion for several years, many of these issues are already on our agenda. The discussions provoked by this process have enabled us to explore some topics we had let slide. It has been the reminder that there is always more to do.



## Project Violet – Commitment to Action Local Churches

### Feedback from Hadleigh Baptist Church, Essex

In response to the outcomes of Project Violet and the request for feedback, the leadership team at Hadleigh Baptist Church in Hadleigh, Essex (part of the EBA) met in July to have an introduction to the information and to take the time to pray about it before meeting to discuss. We met on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September as part of our monthly leadership meetings to discuss thoughts and input.

While we broadly support the requests and have identified that we, as a body of believers, already adopt and support several of the requests (beginning every church and leader's meeting with prayer and communion and having clearly stated our position on not hiring a female minister), we came to the agreement that we will not be submitting the Commitment to Action document.

Our reasons and concerns are as follows:

1. We are being asked for black and white answers to chromatic questions.
2. The proposals are not clear and in some instances the wording of what is being asked is so obtuse that it does not have a real meaning.
3. There is no clarity on what our church is being asked to commit to. Given that some proposals, or parts of them, are contentious issues in the church, how can we commit to something that may go against what we have decided as a body?

It was also raised that when we were putting together our profile and wanted to include a statement about not hiring or interviewing a female minister, we were given differing views of how to present it (going against what is asked for in the proposals) and now have a statement that is still an issue for some members. A suitable phrase for churches would be appreciated to fit the expectation.

By not responding to the questions, we do not want to give the impression that we are not focused on supporting women's ministry in the church, which is reflected in 40% of our leaders being female. We are sending our concerns in this format in the hopes that further clarification can be given and clear direction stated to enable us to make informed decisions regarding our commitment and stance regarding the recommendations.

Hadleigh Baptist Church Leadership team

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Harrogate Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	YBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	We have had an initial discussion at our deacons' meeting in July, with a firm commitment to action. What action looks like will be discussed in our September deacons meeting, when we anticipate all deacons will be present. We anticipate reflecting on each one of the requests for action from the churches (one per month at our deacons meeting) to consider how best to implement in our context, involving the wider church.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices			
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement			
R41	Role models			
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Hooe Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	South West Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	A presentation of the project was given to Diaconate on 21 <sup>st</sup> May. It was agreed that the presentation with small group discussion would be taken to the next members meeting. This Meeting took place Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June, where members present discussed and agreed our commitment to action.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Hooe Baptist Church

As a female minister within the Baptist denomination I was encouraged in how my church didn't just pat themselves on the back but took the report, findings and requests seriously. They reaffirmed the church's position of affirming women. As part of their commitment to listening to new voices and role models within our baptist family they agreed to carry on inviting female preachers on a Sunday and are also offering to release me to our cluster and association to enable other churches to experience female ministry. The suggestion that I could be accompanied by some of our female deacons to demonstrate diversity within female ministry was also proposed. I have let the association know.

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Hoole Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	North Western Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Discussed at 2 of our leadership meetings and brought to the attention of our Church Family Gathering on one occasion.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	Yes		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	Yes		
R41	Role models	Yes		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	Yes		
R05	Training in advocacy	Yes		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	Yes		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	Yes		

## Additional feedback from Hoole Baptist Church

We are committed to look at and make some action plans on each of the 7 requests.

We believe as church that we have done reasonable well in the area of championing and advocating for women in leadership but recognise the need to do more so will continue to make sure these items remain on our agenda.

Every Blessing

**Andy**

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**Rev Canon Andy Glover**

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	King's Community Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	HEBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	A delegate attended the HEBA responses day in September. Then we had a members meeting on 29th September to draw together our united commitment to action.

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Declined</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	Yes		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	Yes		
R41	Role models	Yes		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	Yes		
R05	Training in advocacy	Yes		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	Yes		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	Yes		



## Additional feedback from King's Community Church

The members recognised that not every church within our association, or within the union, is the same as ours so these responses are drawn from a perception of where we presently are in a collective pursuit of wanting KCC to be a welcoming place where all can grow and develop holistically.

Specifically in response to each of the requests above:

R53 - The members feel we already make space for a variety of voices, especially from the women amongst us and would want this to continue especially those from under represented groups.

R51 - As a church we have never entered a 'settlement' process as we have always appointed internally across our history. This includes a female associate minister. But there was a commitment that, if we enter the settlement process, we would make it clear that we would welcome female ministers apply and would add this into our profile.

R41 - Role models - The members felt that there are many existing positive female role models in our church.

R48 - While we don't currently use the language of 'slow wisdom' we have been using the language of understanding God's kairos direction through reflective practice. In our members meetings we currently make space for God's voice to be heard through one another.

R05 - Having recently had to navigate challenges for our women to feel safe, due to a vulnerable male's behaviour, we recognise the lack of training that currently exists in addressing societal undermining patriarchal behaviours. The church feel that, if this training was offered across the union, then many of our key leaders would value the wisdom and training so that everyday sexism can be helpfully called out so women can feel not only safe by able to fully participate as males feel they have the right to do. With this in mind we feel this is definitely one that would require a longer term strategy but definitely one we would commit to undertake.

R44 - Like R05 this is live and present for us, especially due to some unhelpful historic teaching from our charismatic renewal roots. While many with disabilities feel drawn to belong amongst us at KCC we feel a broader and deeper theological understanding would help marginalised groups feel a greater sense of value, 'just as they are right now', within the church/association/ union.

R56 - While we as leaders and preachers felt that we already seek to use a diversity of resources and imagery in our visuals and communication platforms the members felt there was still work that could be done to improve on this. Building on the commitments above the members felt that across a medium term plan we would be able to become more fully inclusive of our representation of the the Baptist family.

More generally our church has been on a long term trajectory towards women to feel more fully valued. It's early roots (1950/60's) were founded on a belief that only men could be 'elders' but women soon found themselves in middle leadership roles underneath male 'headship'. In the 1990's we discerned that women could and should be elders and now I find myself, as a male minister, serving with an all female deaconate/leadership with many other roles and positions being filled by women. Yet I/we recognise that there is still much that needs changing and challenging that comes from a patriarchal, middle class, white, approach where certain voices are held in higher esteem to others.

We applaud those who have contributed to Project Violet and look forward to a bright future where women, people of colour, those with disabilities, young people, and those not afforded easy access to educational excellence will find a greater degree of voice and recognition across our Baptist family.

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	King's Sutton Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Southern Counties
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Yes, as Deacons and Minister. It will be something that we share with church over time too.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from King's Sutton Baptist Church

We discussed this as part of our Deacons away day. I (Abby, minister) and considering how best to share Project Violet with the wider church.

A few things we noted as we talked together:

On reflecting on R53, we wondered if there could perhaps be a directory of those who might be prepared to bring different voices to local churches. We'd welcome the opportunity to hear different voices, but we aren't quite sure where to begin looking as there is not a diversity in our local networks. We talked about how perhaps these could be recorded sermons that could be used by local churches rather than someone having to travel around the country.

In discussing R51 the Deacons were sad to learn that there are churches within the BU that would not be open for having a woman in ministry.

R48: We look forward to seeing the training that will come from Ruth Moriarty on Slow Wisdom, and can very much see the value of this for church meetings.

R44: Again we look forward to resources and training on this to help us reflect and grow in our ministry.

As we talked about R56, we wondered whether it might be possible for BU to produce videos a little like the SCBA Home Mission short videos that should some of the diversity of church life within the Baptist Union – we are surrounded by other churches that pretty much look like us in church life, and so wondered if little videos might help us be able to see and learn from others further afield.

Thank you for all the hours and hours of work that have gone into Project Violet.

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Lee Mount Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Yorkshire Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	In leaders meeting (21/7/24) and church meeting (1/9/24)

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Declined</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	Yes		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	Yes		
R41	Role models	Yes		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	Yes		
R05	Training in advocacy	Yes		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	Yes		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	Yes		

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Lindsay Park Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	London Baptists
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We've read all requests aimed at churches</li> <li>- Had discussion at Deacons' Meeting 26/9/24</li> <li>- Introduction &amp; initial discussion at church meeting 29/9/24</li> <li>- We accept all requests and are happy to receive more training as this is rolled out</li> </ul>

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Mutley Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	South West Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	In Elders' meetings (10 and 27 June) In Church meeting (1 July) The 7 commitments were presented, with opportunity for questions and discussion, and agreed unanimously. We're working on implementation now...

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	YES		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	YES		
R41	Role models	YES		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	YES		
R05	Training in advocacy	YES		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	YES		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	YES		

## Additional feedback from Mutley Baptist Church

It was noted that we are already implementing and committed to R51, R56 but will continue to do that. We look forward to training and resources for R48, R05 and R44 but are committed to them. We seek to do more in implementing R53 and R41.

There are changes that we are now discussing and implementing to enable us to more fully embrace these commitments.





## Project Violet – Commitment to Action

### Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	New North Road, Huddersfield
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Yorkshire Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A short-life working group (SLWG) of 6 women was set up in June (2024). The group met 4 times in total (June-August) – initially just the women met and then meetings 2-4 included our minister, Mark Janes.</li> <li>2. Short presentations were made by the women in June and August Church meetings to introduce the church to the PV research findings and requests for change.</li> <li>3. A paper outlining the requests for change, explanatory notes and framing some discussion questions was circulated to the congregation (electronically and paper-based) at the end of August.</li> <li>4. The PV requests for change – main agenda item at Church Meeting 15th September. This was held round tables – with chocolates - in our café (tea/coffee prepared and served by men!), with each of the women facilitating group discussion (5-6 to a table).</li> <li>5. We are currently collating the outcome of the church meeting discussions and preparing a report for the church which we hope will enable us to take some of the requests forward into specific actions.</li> </ol>

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		

R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting <i>*on issues relating to mission and ministry</i>	✓*		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from New North Road, Huddersfield

It has been a privilege to work on these requests for change relating to our church and this process has provided us with opportunity to review and reflect on both our current strengths and challenges. We have not yet had chance to make many changes but we are very hopeful that the discussions started are an important beginning and foundation for us to build on. At our church meeting we felt a different ordering of the requests would best facilitate our discussion and some of the language in the original documentation needed careful 'unpacking' for church members. But we have now covered all the requests and there was generally positive acceptance of them all.

Request Number	Short Name	Commitment to action – for further discussion
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Giving voice to all, including women and children in our church's life</li> <li>2. Supporting each other through times of change and new experiences as a church.</li> </ol>
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	We agreed with this and also the expanded request that churches who do not want a woman minister should be encouraged to review their position prior to settlement (though some felt there should not be undue pressure to change).
R42	Role models	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Intentionally inviting women to preach on Sundays when our minister is away</li> <li>2. Considering which women in our own congregation might be invited to preach</li> <li>3. Considering other 'role models', including people with disabilities</li> </ol>
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting <i>*on issues relating to mission and ministry</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Including more missional items on our church meeting agenda, allowing longer time to process these</li> <li>2. Using round-table discussions more regularly to include 'more voices'</li> <li>3. Reviewing the time/venue for our church meetings</li> </ol>
R05	Training in advocacy	We agree this is an important aspect of ministerial training and in-service ministerial development. It could be extended to others in church leadership.
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	We welcome this wholeheartedly. It is a 'living issue' in our congregation and we recognize our need to address this by learning more about the lived experiences of those with disabilities and – as far as possible - removing barriers to their inclusion in all aspects of church life.

		We will focus on this request at a church service on 13 <sup>th</sup> October
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	<p>We are a church which includes different cultures, age groups, women and men with a range of abilities/disabilities.</p> <p>We are committed to inclusion and balance in our church programme and mindful that change is inevitable, though we need to be sensitive in managing such changes.</p>



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Newbury Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Southern Counties
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	<p>Project Violet was first introduced at a Deacon’s Meeting in June 2024. It was agreed to invite the church to discuss and reflect upon the research, beginning with a Church Meeting at the end of June.</p> <p>Various Small Groups met over the summer to engage with the Project, and some used the ‘A Name To Live Up To’ video and discussion guide.</p> <p>We encouraged feedback and brought it back to the Church Meeting on 29th September to discuss and vote upon the 7 requests.</p>

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Declined</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women’s ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Newbury Baptist Church

- For the vast majority in our church, this was not a contentious issue. We have long affirmed women in ministry, and have previously called women ministers. However it was good to practice a 'slow wisdom' model, rather than just asking for the church to make a decision, and this provided some helpful feedback.
- Indeed, some of this feedback revolved around R48 and the desire to see this practiced more in Church Meetings. The way we discern the mind of Christ is the focus of an upcoming deacon's away day in November, and some of this will be shaped by Ruth Moriarty's work on the subject.
- Our men's small group were keen to recognise the importance of "agency and allyship to promote change where change is needed", and this has already involved them helping one individual to reflect upon his theological beliefs which do not affirm women in leadership

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Olton Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	HEBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	During leadership meetings and engaging with chosen group of female leaders within the church community

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Olton Baptist Church

### R51

Regarding the local churches making their position on women's ministry known, while there was an understanding of why this was important, I think it is worth noting that there was a strong feeling within some we engaged with that this provision may be used to defend what they consider indefensible i.e. standing in the way of women in ministry.

However, in further conversations, the transparency that this provides was appreciated. Especially knowing women who have gone into spaces of ministry and been hurt because the churches were not honest or had not realized the general feeling of their membership with regards to women in ministry.





# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Orchard Baptist Church (OBC), Bicester
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Southern Counties
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LT meeting 1st and 15th July 2024</li> <li>• Church Members' Meeting 17th July 2024</li> </ul>

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices women are not all the same and so it is important that a variety of women's voices are heard in church life.	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement women ministers can find it difficult to know which churches would welcome their ministry when they are applying to be a minister	✓		
R41	Role models – seeing women ministers helps other women hear the call of God	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting – churches are invited to reflect upon the way they conduct their church meetings so that they focus on discerning the mind of Christ.	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy – challenge unhelpful language and behaviour as it happens stops patterns of sexism developing.	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		

	Reflecting on what we believe about disability can help us think about how we wish to include people with a disability in our church.			
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life ensuring that the resources we use – such as posters, PowerPoints, newsletters reflect the diversity of people involved in Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Orchard Baptist Church, Bicester

### Leadership Team meeting 1<sup>st</sup> July

LT members reviewed the **Project Violet Findings** prior to the meeting, bringing individual thoughts/responses on areas to bring for discussion at next OBC CMM on 17<sup>th</sup> July.

Focus on the 7 requests for change particularly specified for consideration by local churches.

- R41: Role models – **seeing women ministers helps other women hear the call of God** Women have been able to serve on leadership at OBC for more than 20 years and has had two women as Ministers in Training. In 2018 the church called a woman to serve as Community minister on Graven Hill and, more recently, has called a woman to serve as Co-minister. Our Ethos Statement (under Statement of Beliefs) includes: **Women in Leadership** OBC holds to the view that God created women and men equal in personhood and that He calls and equally affirms both men and women into a vast array of roles, including all forms of church leadership.

LT agreed:

- (R56) to look again at the visual images on the OBC website to review how they reflect the role of women and the diversity of our congregation and community in Bicester. Images on PowerPoints, backgrounds and videos to be similarly reviewed/monitored.
- to share and discuss Project Violet findings at the Church Members' Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> July. Members invited to view Project Violet video in advance of the meeting. Agreed we would look at the three hopes for churches, – i) Being a positive place for women to minister; ii) Being a place where women are encouraged to listen to God's call and iii) Being a church ready to engage in mission to a world where women and girls experience sexism.

### CMM 17 July

#### Project Violet Findings – Minutes...

Sarah encouraged us to read the Project Violet (named after Violet Hedger, the first female Baptist minister) findings which revealed there are some obstacles remaining for women in Baptist ministry, particularly in language and behaviour, entrenched ways and perceptions about women's roles. The BU is inviting local churches to respond by the end of September.

OBC is doing well but we recognise the importance to be vigilant of what language and images we portray and keep up encouragement and positive role models. This applies not just for women but across all demographics; we must ensure that our church meetings are representing the wider church, and that all voices are heard and taken into account.

#### OBC Responses

- a)R41 - to continue to affirm women in ministry – welcoming women to preach/lead worship
- b)R56 - look again at the visual images on the OBC website to review how they reflect the role of women and the diversity of our congregation and community.
- c)R53/R44 - to keep assessing how best we can listen to a variety of voices across the life of the church: we will actively seek to involve members (mainly women) unable to worship in person with us.

Exploring creative ways for them to contribute to our Sunday worship and church meetings. A commitment to continue to reflect on the ways we currently include people with a disability in our worship and wider church life.

d)R48 – linked to R53 a commitment to reflect on ways we seek to discern mind of Christ in church meetings; to consider timings/venues of meetings to support greater participation and representation.



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Priory Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Yorkshire Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	At an Elders Meeting and then the Church Meeting.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Priory Baptist Church

Priory BC has always welcomed everyone as equal. I have been attending the church for over 50 years and I am now their Minister, a female who is registered disabled. I have had nothing but support and encouragement from the church. We have a variety of male and female preachers and encourage our children and young people to take part in worship and services.

We are open to change but would need more information on slow wisdom in church meetings before implementing this.



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Queensberry Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	East Midland Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Our leadership team discussed the findings on 19.08.24 (having previously been sent links to the full report/website etc).

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Queensberry Baptist Church

As we discussed the findings and requests for change, we were encouraged that in some areas, we don't need to make many changes. For example, Queensberry Baptist Church appointed its first female Minister in September 2021. We have a mix of church members leading, teaching and sharing at church, both men and women. We do recognise that we need to have more diversity in ethnicity and race in those sharing 'from the front' at our church. We already make conscious decisions in our media, graphics, resources etc to ensure we include a diverse mix of people. Although we recognise we have perhaps overlooked the area of disability in this.

Our Minister recently attended a Fresh Streams Theology school and found Ruth Moriarty's teaching on 'Slow Wisdom' very helpful. We look forward to further training and resources re: a theology of disability.





# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Quorn Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	East Midland Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Extensive discussion in Deacons' meeting after personal considerations in the month prior. Next Members' Meeting considerably after the deadline for feedback.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
1-57	<p>We found it odd that the Report to local churches (and this feedback document proforma) had 7 items (which didn't all seem to relate to local churches in the details given); but the full list of requests identified 9 items for local churches. Overall we found the presentation of the documents to be confusing and time consuming to navigate.</p> <p>The stated purposes of Project Violet seem to relate to the role of women in churches and especially women in Ministry. It may be a matter of semantics, and both are important, but sometimes it is not clear whether the ministry of women or the Ministry of women was being mentioned. Further the project seems to overreach into matters that do not relate to women's roles in churches – the scope of the project seems to have become too wide, making its findings less manageable to process.</p>			
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices		✓	
	<p>The text of this request seems to be very vague. And it doesn't mention what these new voices should be – diversity of gender, race, theology? As a leadership team we consider that we do have a variety of voices in our services and wider church life. As a leadership team we have a responsibility to invite voices (from within or without) to speak who will be faithful to God and effective in speaking (albeit recognizing training opportunities too) – so, for example, we would try to be race and gender blind in inviting preachers. We would not consider diversity quotas to be an appropriate way to invite voices.</p>			
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement		✓	

	<p>Question re. clarity of wording – does the request mean “the ministry of women” or “women Ministers”</p> <p>We considered that the requirement to review “that position” prior to settlement should be something required by the BU prior to settlement – so the request should go to the BU first, then to local churches.</p> <p>We do not agree that the position should go on the website – this is primarily a matter for the settlement paperwork – i.e. the church profile drawn up under guidance of the BU Ministry Department and Regional Ministers.</p> <p>In our last interregnum this matter was reconsidered, and the decision made was reflected on the church profile.</p> <p>Furthermore, all churches should formally review their position on this (and other relevant issues) prior to the settlement process, not just churches who currently do not accept the ministry (Ministry?) of women.</p>			
R41	Role models		✓	
	This relates quite closely to R53 above. We would reiterate that the criteria for role models are character, calling and ability, rather than DEI quotas.			
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	?	?	?
	<p>The text of this request makes <b>no request of local churches</b>. It is written as a specific request to a certain individual to do some more research (and reporting) in an area of personal interest.</p> <p>Therefore, we did not consider it possible to commit to this request for change.</p> <p>When this resource is made available in the future then we will consider its implications for discernment in our church.</p>			
R05	Training in advocacy		✓	
	Again the specific text of the request makes <b>no immediate request of the local church</b> , when any resource on advocacy becomes available we will be able to assess whether it is relevant to consider training in it.			
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice		?	
	Again, there is no immediate request to local churches for us to commit to. This seems to be one of the areas where Project Violet has reached beyond its own stated purpose, although dressed up as a women’s issue – we would consider that men with disabilities (etc) could also experience these difficulties.			
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life		✓	
	<p>The two primary factors in choosing “resources” is to be locally relevant and clearly copyright free (or available). This results in us creating a lot of our own resources.</p> <p>Do you really mean what you say? Do you want “egalitarian” churches to use resources that reflect that there are complementarian churches? Do you want churches that maintain a traditional Biblical position on sexuality and gender to use resources that affirm anti-biblical ideologies? Surely churches should use resources that reflect the life of their local fellowship first and foremost?</p>			

	Would it not be contradictory to use diversity resources that differed to positions held? (So, for example, do you want churches to declare on their website that they are complementarian, then also to use images of women Ministers to reflect the diversity of Baptist life?)
<b>Next two are highlighted for local churches in the main table of the 57 requests, but are not included in the Report for Local Churches.</b>	
R02	Listed as relevant for local churches in main table (page vi), but nothing relevant for the local church, nor specifically relevant to women in ministry / Ministry. Do colleges and associations not already have materials for people considering training as Ministers? I'm sure when I trained nearly 20 years ago there were resources.
R52	First, there would seem to be an error – currently Deacons (Trustees) are required to do Level 3 Safeguarding training, not just Level 2. It is often said that although this is a requirement, the training delivered is really relevant to the DPS, or Minister rather than to the role of a Deacon. Whether the church could agree to the use of EDI training would depend on whether there was good EDI training to use – there was concern over the possible ideological slanting of the training. There would be some value for Deacons, but a concern that it may not be practicable – can all Deacons undergo and maintain training in Safeguarding, EDI, Fire safety, etc – multiplying such training demands will put some people off from serving as Deacons (a voluntary role is becoming professionalized).

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Raglan Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	South Wales Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	We have had a number of informal meetings and discussions and it has been briefly discussed during leader's meetings on August 15th and September 16th.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	Yes		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	Yes		
R41	Role models	Yes		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	Yes		
R05	Training in advocacy		Yes	
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice		Yes	
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life		Yes	

## Additional feedback from Raglan Baptist Church

R53 - R48 - fully accepted

We are happy to share that these are all areas where Raglan Baptist Church can offer examples of good practise. We have been working on ways to encourage a larger range of voices in our church meetings, by sharing documents in advance and inviting both members and non-members to contact the leadership team if they would like to offer an opinion in an alternative way to speaking up in the meeting (R53).

(R51) We appointed a female minister at our last appointment and she is currently in post. While we didn't make it explicit at the time, we feel that we would make the effort to do so in future, in light of this recommendation.

(R41) We are an all female leadership team with a female Pastor. Many of the men in the congregation could be described as 'allies'. In the past, a female member of our congregation was suggested and accepted for ministry while a male Pastor was in post. Some of our visiting preachers are women. So, our church has long embraced the ministry of women.

(R48) We were interested to read the comments about 'slow wisdom'. Recently, our leadership team has begun a process of discernment around the future leadership of the church. We hope that by starting this process well in advance of the retirement of our current Pastor we can employ 'slow wisdom' to help us listen to one another with grace and make well considered decisions when the time comes. We are also taking time to consider our church ethos statement around inclusion, listening to a range of views and voices, and seeking to respect all.

R05 - R56 - Why modified?

These recommendations gave us more to think about, so we are not able to fully accept them yet as in some instances more work is needed. In general, we would seek to work towards these recommendations, when it becomes appropriate.

R05 - In our local church context of female leadership, this recommendation seemed a bit irrelevant at first glance, but then the question was raised; 'How would the lay members of the team support the female Pastor if she was to come in for criticism around her gender?' Would we speak up, or would we seek to conciliate in the interests of fellowship? Perhaps training for lay leadership of churches could be considered, to equip more people with an understanding of the theology of women's ministry, in the face of the continuing use of a theology of complementarianism among so many Baptist leaders (around here at least!).

R44 - We have made good efforts to make our historical buildings more accessible to those with physical disabilities, and while there is more that could be done still, it is clear that those with mobility issues are welcome. However, we are aware that we need to do more to fully understand what it means

to minister to those with educational barriers, neuro-diversity, and mental health issues, all of whom are represented in our congregation. So, this is an area of growth and development for us.

R56 - We make use of resources that use male and female voices and images and old and young voices and images. We regularly de-gender songs and hymns when it is appropriate. Occasionally we use images of disabled people. We are challenged around the use of more ethnically diverse resources as we seek to reflect the people we have in the room; and we are a rural chapel where the local population is predominantly white. This recommendation is useful to remind us of the need to revisit our practise from time to time, and check that it is reflecting the congregation that we have.



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Revive Baptist Church Leeds
<b>Association you belong to</b>	YBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	<p>We haven't discussed this with the congregation before sending this in. But we will make them aware.</p> <p>The Support Team has had a short discussion on this before sending in the form. We will discuss further at our next meeting.</p>

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Declined</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	Yes		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	Yes		
R41	Role models	Yes		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	Yes		
R05	Training in advocacy	Yes		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	Yes		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	Yes		

## Additional feedback from Revive Baptist Church Leeds

We have not discussed this with the congregation. To be honest, it feels a little too obvious and patronising to ask them if we agree corporately or not with the basic premise of whether Baptist Churches should be better places for women - and I feel that I know us well enough to answer 'yes' for us. We are an Inclusive Church and member of OBOF and Affirm.

The support team (who consists of our Lay minister, trustees, staff etc) have had a brief discussion prior to me filling in this form. We are sad (although not surprised) that this needs to be a big research project with evidence provided by churches that things need to change. Whilst some of this isn't relevant to our context, we will join in with the process to help those who are trying to change things and make them fairer for all. Not that we have it all right, there are ways that we can work better and be more inclusive. Well done and thank you to all the researchers and compilers, and we hope and pray that it results in Baptist churches and the BU that are more inclusive and relevant to 21st century society.

R53	<p>Make opportunities to listen to new voice</p> <p>Our Lay Minister is female. Our administrator (me) is female. Our support team consists of six people (incl the Lay Minister and myself) and of them, four are female, two male.</p> <p>Looking back throughout 2024 at those who have spoken (incl guest speakers), led worship or who have otherwise led meetings in any other way, it's a 50/50 split between men and women.</p> <p>We are, however, a mostly white, middle-class church, so we do have plenty of scope for listening to new voices.</p>
R51	<p>Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement</p> <p>If we were to go through a Ministerial settlement process, we would make it very, very clear that we would accept a woman as a minister. Indeed, as we are an affirming church we would also consider a minister who identifies as LGBTQI+ (which is of course widening out the scope of this commitment to more than just gender)</p>
R41	<p>Role models</p> <p>See answer to R53</p>
R48	<p>Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting</p>



	<p>Whilst the specific details on this are light in the Request for Change, this sounds very much like our sort of way of doing things. We agree that this is a method of meeting which we would like to do more often. We recognise that it is still easiest to hear those who speak loudest and quickest - but we have had discussions where we make a specific and deliberate effort to hear everyone, and will continue to do so.</p>
R05	<p>Training in advocacy</p> <p>Yes, we commend this. And would go further, to request making some similar training available to leadership teams of churches, and also to congregations.</p>
R44	<p>A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice</p> <p>Yes, absolutely.</p>
R56	<p>Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life</p> <p>Yes, absolutely.</p>



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Rugby Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	HEBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agenda item at Deacons’ Meeting July 2024 and September 2024</li> <li>2. Small group meeting (2 deacons and 1 other church member) in August 2024 to discuss how we as a church might respond to the requests</li> <li>3. Church Meeting Agenda Item September 2024</li> </ol>

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Declined</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women’s ministry known prior to settlement		✓	
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Rugby Baptist Church

Two deacons and another member of the church looked through the Project Violet research findings, resources and information on the Project Violet website and presented some suggestions to the Church Members Meeting in September 2024.

The suggestions, which were accepted by the Church Members Meeting, were:

1. That we accept all seven of the requests directed at local churches, but with a modification to R51

R51 Modification:

The request is that churches that *do not* accept the ministry of women formally review that position prior to the settlement process and then make the resolution of the church meeting known on their website.

We are a church that *does* accept the ministry of women, as has been made apparent recently as we have appointed a female minister in training. As such, we want to modify this request and take steps to make it clear on our website that we are a church that accepts the ministry of women, and this not just for the purposes of being clear to any women ministers in a future settlement process, but also to anyone wanting to know about the church and especially those who might want to join the church.

Currently we have a female minister in training on our staff team, so it is clear, but at some point in the future it is possible that we may not have a female minister on the staff team, and at that point we would want to find another way to make it clear on our website that we are a church that accepts the ministry of women.

R48 Comment

We accept the principle that we reflect on the way we conduct church meetings, but in practice we are not sure how we would do this. We support the suggestion that a learning resource is developed to help local churches do this, and if such a resource is created, we would be interested in taking a look at it.

R05 Comment

We accept the principle that those with responsibility for the wellbeing of Ministers and Ministers in training should be confident in how to advocate etc. We recognise that members in the local church are all responsible for the wellbeing of our ministers, but perhaps especially that responsibility lies with the deacons. We support the suggestions made, and if there were opportunities or resources aimed at local churches to help us with this, we would potentially be interested.

R44 Comment

Similarly, we support the development of a resource for local churches that would help us reflect on our practice in enabling the full participation of people with disability, and if such a resource is created, we would be interested in taking a look.

2. We were impressed by Project Violet. We thought it was a substantial piece of research, well conducted and addressing an important subject. We recognised that it was impossible to condense it into a 5 minute agenda item at a church meeting, and that we would need and would benefit from time to absorb, consider and discuss. Therefore, the second suggestion accepted by the church members meeting is that we have some discussion evenings in 2025 that will enable us to unpack some of the material and consider it in greater depth. The evenings would be an opportunity for some of us to share experiences, opinions and reflect together. We are planning to use the series one podcasts for some of this.
3. Project Violet has come at an interesting time for us as a church as the findings have coincided with us appointing our first ever female minister. The third suggestion accepted by the Church Members Meeting was that if our new minister is in agreement and feels it would be useful, we would like to bring together a small group of people who would listen to and reflect together on some of our her experiences during her time of training with us.



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Rushmere Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Eastern Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Leadership team meeting June 2024

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices <i>Grateful to God that we have a female minister (our 2<sup>nd</sup>) and currently have a good balance of men and women in leadership positions. We have a variety of people who lead different aspects of our services, including worship. However we recognize that we can't be complacent about this. It would be good to have visits from women in different ministry roles eg chaplains – information and guidance on how we can achieve this would be helpful</i>	Yes		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement <i>Already done in our history</i>	Yes		
R41	Role models <i>This is necessary not just in relation to women but also to men and different ethnicities etc. We would welcome more diversity and have recently agreed a Church statement on inclusion, aware that currently our membership and role models reflect the predominantly white, older age group of the neighbourhood.</i>	Yes		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	Yes		

	<i>Already doing some of the practices advised. Intend to try more.</i>			
R05	Training in advocacy <i>Good for churches, especially lay members in leadership, to have advice/ guidance to draw on should concerns arise as we are able to for example on safeguarding issues.</i>	Yes		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice <i>We believe God makes each person in His image and equips all called to serve Him. We are committed to be open to God's leadership and calling. We recognize that "disability" does not mean a need for healing as it is conventionally understood. We cannot be complacent but need to keep challenging ourselves in terms of beliefs &amp; practices looking to the example of Jesus.</i>	Yes		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	Yes		

# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches



<b>Name of Church</b>	Saltash Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	South West Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Leadership Meeting June 2024 Church Meeting June 2024 Leadership Meeting September 2024

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Declined</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	Yes		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	Yes		
R41	Role models	Yes		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	Yes		
R05	Training in advocacy	Yes		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	Yes		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life		Yes	

## Additional feedback from Saltash Baptist Church

**R53:**

We are already blessed with many women who lead, preach and are in positions of Leadership. As a church we continue to make sure this continues and seek ways in our services and church meetings to hear many voices.

**R51:**

In the early part of 2025 we will embark on a short Sunday series exploring the ministry of women, after this we will then send our reflections of the congregation and bring this into a statement that can be added to our website

**R41:**

We have an associate minister who is female, over 50% of our leadership is female and we have women who preach and lead (although not as many as we would like). Our commitment is to find role models who can take positions of leadership to encourage a new generation

**R48:**

We have already done some training with Ruth on this, our commitment is to a complete review of the way our church operates to make sure slow wisdom is a practice for our meetings.

**R05:**

Our Ministers will go on all training in this area

**R44:**

We are looking to the accessibility of our building, but recognise that in some point in the future we need to bring in not just the practical, but also the theological. This will be done through the Faith and Society resource

**R56:**

We will try and balance the need for diversity, but at the same time reflecting the community that we are part of. Images that we use tend to be in house anyway. However, we will reflect on which images we use and bring a greater diversity.





## Project Violet – Commitment to Action Local Churches

### Feedback from Shipley Baptist Church, Bradford (YBA)

Please find below our response to Project Violet. We are an Inclusive Church and through this process we have identified areas where we need to do more work.

We also feel challenged to enquire of our association - Yorkshire - and the Baptist Union Council their response to Project violet and their actions to implement some important recommendations.

With sincere thanks for all your hard work, for the website and the important material on it,

In Christ,

- Keith

The Revd Dr Keith G Jones  
for Shipley Baptist Church Leadership Team

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Shipley Baptist Church, Bradford “the church at the centre”



Draft Response to the Project Violet recommendations

September 2024

#### Introduction

Shipley Baptist Church has considered the **Project Violet** initiative and reviewed the recommendations in a Deacons meeting and at a Church meeting.

As an Inclusive Church we strongly affirm the ministry of women amongst us and we believe the Yorkshire Baptist Association and the Baptist Union of Great Britain, through Council and Trustees, must actively consider all the relevant recommendations and ensure that these are reviewed, and the majority adopted, with the minimum of delay.

We believe those churches within the YBA and BUGB who do not presently support the ministry of women amongst us, must seriously consider their current stance and their place within a denomination where the ministry of women has been actively affirmed amongst us since 1918.

### **Specific points relating to certain recommendations**

**RO2** - local churches to be more open in encouraging women to train for ministry.

**Response:** We have encouraged two in recent times- Ann Hayward and Kez Robinson.

**SBC Church meeting:** The challenge for us that the majority of the church meeting at last count, don't want separated local ministry, so perhaps this is a barrier to encouraging anyone to go for something the church no longer sees as necessary. Is this worth teasing out? Do we presume we certainly want to encourage those with a sense of vocation to explore appropriate theological education through an institution itself affirming inclusivity?

**R41** - providing role models in the leadership of women.

**Response:** We are doing this through our women in leadership in the Diaconate, speaking leading etc, but perhaps not as much as we ought to in leading worship - the majority of the key people are presently male.

**R44** - theology of disability.

**Response:** We are not as challenged with this as we were when Andrew was alive, though we do have people with disabilities. This is a specialist area of theology and practice for Sally Nelson (disability) and Gaynor Hammond (dementia). Should we organise an event for them to speak at?

**R48** - developing "slow wisdom" in the Church Meeting.

**Response:** We understand this to mean moving back to the older anabaptist traditions of discerning the mind of Christ by more measured reflection, with greater focus on worship and prayer, rather than business meeting style. The church meeting should spend time reflecting on this request.

**R51**- making our church position on women in ministry known

**Response:** SBC do this through our Inclusive Church statement and, when we are allowed, inviting women to speak and having as an aim 50% female speakers - though hard to achieve without more in-house women willing to have a go! Should we offer encouragement evenings for people to learn more about leading worship and speaking in worship?

**R52**- training in EDI to be offered in the church

**Response:** Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training is offered in the YBA to ordained ministers. Should the church meeting arrange such training for members? We have people within our membership who could help us to do this.

**R53** - listening to new voices.

**Response:** we need to ask some of our newer members and members of the congregation to help us do this.

**R56** - having a range of resources we use which reflect diversity.

**Response:** We need to review the resources we use in worship, Junior Church, youth work and elsewhere to ensure our resources are diverse and address our stand as an Inclusive Church.

*Draft paper for discussion an amendment on 05 September 2024.*



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Shoeburyness & Thorpe Bay Baptist Church (stbbc)
<b>Association you belong to</b>	EBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Church Meeting (24.09.24)

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Shoeburyness & Thorpe Bay Baptist Church

The meeting was unanimous on all recommendations, and we are simply delighted to celebrate where we are already active regarding these recommendations and determined to grow in the areas we need to develop further in. Thank you project Violet team.



## Project Violet – Commitment to Action Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Sixways Erdington Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	HEBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Minister and Secretary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More meetings to follow with wider engagement</li> <li>- We feel we are already on board with these issues</li> </ul>

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Declined</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	Yes		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	Yes		
R41	Role models	Yes		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	Yes		
R05	Training in advocacy	Yes		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	Yes		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	Yes		



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Sketty Community Church, Swansea
<b>Association you belong to</b>	South Wales Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Yes. Presented to Deacons Meeting in July and August

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Spurgeon Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Central Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Deacons' meeting 6 <sup>th</sup> September 2024 Church members' meeting 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		





## Project Violet – Commitment to Action

### Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	South West
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	At two deacons' meetings in May and June and the church members meeting on 8 <sup>th</sup> July

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Stoke St Gregory Baptist Church

All points are accepted in principle. We have already had two female ministers. We are open to receiving training on church meetings and advocacy.



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Stoneygate Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	East Midland Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Discussed at deacons meeting on 5 August Church meetings on 18 August, 15 September

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy		✓	
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Stoneygate Baptist Church

We wished to modify the request relating to 'training in advocacy' as we felt that it would be good to make such training available to church members as well as ministers, as they share responsibility for ministers' wellbeing, and such training may help them to advocate for themselves and others in areas of their lives beyond church.

The specific commitments we have made include:

- expand our pool of guest preachers
- continue to encourage church members to speak from the front (leading prayers, offering reflections etc)
- add our inclusion statement to any future profile to make clear that ministry is open to people from all demographics (including women)
- encourage all members to take an active part in church life so that all people can see themselves as role models, and do this in a way that is authentic and does not reduce anyone to representing a single demographic
- keep making space for listening and support quieter voices
- engage with BUGB resources as they are made available
- be intentional about other resources we draw on



## Project Violet – Commitment to Action Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Tamworth Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Heart of England Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Yes. Deacons 2/9, Church 26/9

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices			
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy			
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice			
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Tamworth Baptist Church

**Tamworth Baptist Church** already has several women who preach and lead services and this is a regular occurrence. Several women from our church were sent for ministerial training, one of whom was deaf. We have always made it clear that we would be willing to accept profiles from women ministers and have carefully and prayerfully explored any that we have received. The church has, in the past, engaged in deaf awareness and signs for worship. We are extremely interested in basic EDI training for members and a level 2 for Deacons. Thank you for highlighting the resources that need to reflect diversity – this we will be mindful of going forward.

We have not answered all the questions above, not necessarily because we are against them, but we do not yet have a clear position or a clear understanding of the issue.

Regarding disabilities, we would need to be confident that we can offer the right support for any minister who has a disability, ministry is very demanding, and it is unfair that a person should struggle on both fronts.

Whilst Tamworth is very open to women in ministry - we did have a visitor (a lady) from an Eastern European country who complained that a woman was preaching – she believed the Bible said that women should not be in ministry. We explained our position, but she did not return, we believe this could be a cultural issue and that women's ministry is not universally accepted. Whilst we would not change our practice, we wanted to highlight that some churches may be reluctant to embrace women's ministry because of those cultural issues which can be deep seated.

This paragraph was in the email:

Thanks for all your work on this project and to all those who have worked on research or contributed to the findings. We have responded to the commitments where we can but some areas we are not either clear on or do not have a clear consensus so we have left these blank. We do not currently have a minister and have struggled in some areas with the language used, but appreciate it is mainly for academics.



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Tilehouse Street Baptist Church, Hitchin
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Central
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	A group of volunteers of up to nine members (including the minister) met on eight Thursday evenings for an hour and a half each time. The meetings were held between 13 June and 12 September. The group's responses were taken to the church meeting on 22 September and discussed. Our responses are attached.

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Declined</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Tilehouse Street Baptist Church, Hitchin

The following people were involved in at least three of the eight discussion sessions:

Sue Apthorpe, Joyce Bleasby, Val Chivers, Stephen Copson, Meg Granger, Anne Moody, Mary Taylor (and Brenda Pulham from Rugby Baptist Church at the R41 sessions) with Rev. Jane Robson

**Local Churches are requested to:**

**R53 Make opportunities to try things out and make a commitment to receive things that are different without reshaping them to fit past expectations. This applies to worship and preaching but also to other aspects of church life such as church meetings.**

Discussed 13 June 2024 – and accepted

We felt that the church is already undergoing a change in its expectations of ministry and traditional ministry roles.

We recognised that the vast majority of visiting preachers are white, male and retired. (Their calling to preach was not in question). But we would like a greater diversity. We acknowledged that it is not easy to find preachers and in order to do that we should look further afield and be prepared for higher costs regarding travelling. We acknowledged it might be a little risky in hearing new voices but we should be prepared to give them a chance.

**R51 formally review their position regarding ministry prior to entering settlement and if the ministry of women is not accepted to make the resolution of the church meeting known on their website.**

Discussed 11 July 2024 – and accepted

We affirmed our position on women in ministry and acknowledged that we had called a woman minister in 2016 and would be happy to do so again.

**R41 give a platform for leadership in the church to under-represented groups/individuals.**

Discussed 11 July 2024 and 25 July 2024 – and accepted

We challenged the minister and each other as to how 'different-sized' voices could be heard in church meetings, recognising that many lack confidence in speaking up. We spoke about the need for each of us to be encouraged, to be prompted to speak, to receive a personal invitation even to attend sometimes.

We want to challenge and give opportunity to others to preach (and this need not necessarily be in the morning service). The minister should enable and equip others to do so. The two Bible study groups should be given the opportunity to take an afternoon service. It would be good to hear one another speak.



In all of this we need to continue to consider physical barriers to participation.

During this discussion we agreed it would be helpful to have the Bible reading projected on the screen (as long as the version shown on the screen matches the version being read!)

**R48 develop slow wisdom in the church meeting**

Discussed 1 August 2024 – and accepted

We agreed that we needed to take time to listen to one another. Building trust and enabling each other to be honest takes time but is important.

We plan to use and hope to benefit from the learning resource created by Ruth Moriarty on 'Slow wisdom as a practice for local church meetings. The comment was made that we don't want to be so slow that we never make a decision!

**R05 be confident in advocating on behalf of ministers and ministers-in-training when witnessing sexist, racist or ableist language, behaviour or treatment.**

Discussed 8 August 2024 – and accepted

We were saddened to read of the experiences of a number of women particularly in regard to gender, race and/or physical ability particularly those that resulted in ministers leaving a church or even the Baptist denomination. We acknowledged that we all have blind spots and can lack awareness of our own prejudices. We wanted to learn how to proactively be more inclusive and supportive.

**R44 embrace a resource that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice in enabling the full participation of people with a disability**

Discussed 15 August 2024 – and accepted

We found Rev. Susan Myatt's testimony very moving (she is deaf) and were challenged to think about how we can make our services and buildings even more inclusive. (We all wanted to learn sign-language!) We want to challenge any assumptions that are easily made which can stop us from thinking fully about the needs of others. We also want to avoid an attitude that decides what others need without their input.

**R56 use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life**

Discussed 29 August 2024 – and accepted

We looked briefly at a Baptist Union video resource (made originally for ministers) called "I am because you are". We felt it would be helpful for the church to watch the second of the six videos: "What does discrimination look like?" to help us recognise any issues we might have. Part of the video contains an interview with Rev. Jane Day, one of the leaders of Project Violet.

We want the church to examine the resources we use and make sure that they reflect the diversity

of society whenever that is helpful.

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Prepared by the PV group on Thursday 12 September 2024, amended slightly and accepted (after 40 minutes' discussion) by the Church Meeting on Sunday 22 September 2024.



## Project Violet – Commitment to Action Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Union Street Baptist Church , Crewe
<b>Association you belong to</b>	NWBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	<p>Yes, Transitional Minister and Deacons. We are small church, so our resources are already stretched. We have recently appointed our third woman minister (Transitional in this case). Those who grew up in the church cannot recall a time (in over fifty years) when there were not women leaders, preachers, etc.</p> <p>We have long-standing commitment to inclusion and diversity, as can be evidenced by our congregation, our building and the wide range of weekly activities. Whilst we are always wanting to do even better, especially with respect to our black and brown/ GMH Members and Friends, we feel we begin from a good baseline.</p>

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	<p>Make opportunities to listen to new voices We already have a good range of voices, women and men, with several who lead worship, preach, exercise music ministry, lead small groups etc. We are working to increase the participation of our black and brown/GMH members and friends, who form around half of our regular worshipping community.</p>	Yes		
R51	<p>Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement We have a long-standing commitment to women's ministry, with three of our most recent appointments being women. For at least fifty years, women have regularly</p>	Yes		

	undertaken leadership roles including preaching, teaching and leading worship.			
R41	<p>Role models</p> <p>We have a range of women and men able to act as role models. We are working to increase the visibility of our black and brown/GMH members and friends</p>	Yes		
R48	<p>Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting</p> <p>Our church meetings are usually well attended, as we hold them on a Sunday. We employ creative approaches, including small group conversations, use of 'stickers', opinion 'rainbows' etc., and recognise that good discernment can be a long process. We seek to move forward together, seeking consensus and supporting each other.</p>	Yes		
Ro5	<p>Training in advocacy</p> <p>This is an area where we would value opportunity to learn more and 'do' better/more. We are quite a 'shy' church so can lack confidence.</p>	Yes		
R44	<p>A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice</p> <p>Whilst perhaps not actively articulated, we have a lived-out theology of disability that we continue to embody and develop. Our listed building has been carefully adapted wherever possible to be accessible to people with physical disabilities. Our use of technology aims to negotiate the complexities of different needs, such as visual impairment and dyslexia, which may sometimes be incompatible. We aim to be a community where neuro-diversity is welcomed and people are valued for who they are. Similarly, we welcome and walk alongside people affected by poor mental health.</p> <p>A number of health-related support groups use our premises</p>	Yes		

R56	<p>Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life</p> <p>We try our best to reflect our own diversity, and that of others, in our choice of resources, images, films, etc. This is an area where we continue to reflect and seek to develop further.</p> <p>We are keenly aware that our leadership team is all white. We also note that it is predominantly woman, though this is reflective of the Membership as a whole.</p>	Yes		
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## Additional feedback from Union Street Baptist Church, Crewe

The website of Union Street Baptist Church states this:

*We are a friendly and informal congregation, with a wide age range, worshipping together and seeking to show the love of God in the world through Christ.*

*We are committed to searching out the meaning of our faith, exploring and questioning what it means to be Christian in our multicultural society.*

*We celebrate God's gift of diversity, and welcome people to share our journey, whatever their age, race, culture, gender, sexuality, economic status, or physical or mental ability.*

*We acknowledge with pain the injustices in our society and in the church; and want to share with all those who struggle against abuse, oppression or exploitation in any form.*

*We seek to be a community working together to grow in faith.*

These values are long-established, and we believe align well with the aims of Project Violet. We are not complacent, and will continue to reflect, review and revise our practices in order to live out our faith and values to the very best of our ability.

We are working very hard in a number of key area of ministry and mission to best serve our local community with new opportunities for all people to participate, learn and grow.

Crewe has a significant transient population, for example overseas doctors who are here for a couple of months whilst completing their GMC conversion courses, lorry-drivers and train-drivers who have 'layovers', as well as people attending events in Crewe. A number of people work in retail or caring professions, as well as many with caring responsibilities, which impacts their ability to engage as fully as they might wish. This directly affects our life as a church, with a core of committed local folk (and a few who travel to us because of our ethos) and a very variable wider community.

In September 2024, we have begun a new project, called CW2, to build on these foundations and to enable us to continue to be and to share Good News in this part of Crewe.



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Wakefield Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	YBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Leadership team meeting in Sept 2024 – brief discussion of 'requests for change' and agreement to commit to action. Church informed at church meeting Sept 2024 with intention to address actions in 2025.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		



## Project Violet – Commitment to Action

### Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Walsworth Road Baptist Church, Hitchin, Herts
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Central Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	<p>The report's release has coincided with our minister's sabbatical leave (3 months variously during 2024), and so, although we have been as a church leadership signposted to the resources, we have not been able to give as much time to considering the project and its findings as we might have liked.</p> <p>Project Violet has been included on the agenda of our church meetings in July and September 2024, and at trustees meeting in June, July and September.</p>

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	Yes		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	Yes		
R41	Role models	Yes		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	Under consideration		
R05	Training in advocacy	Yes, please!		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	Yes		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	Yes		



## Additional feedback from Walsworth Road Baptist Church, Hitchin

This narrative is partly offered to reflect the fact that the table of responses as above seems much clearer than in fact we have been able to achieve given the constraints. As explained earlier, our minister has been on sabbatical leave during three months (variously) during 2024, and although the project was brought to the attention of the leadership (including an attempt in June to offer a guided pathway through some of the key elements of what is a massive and daunting resource, if also a very helpful one, in the Project Violet website!), consideration of the project and in particular the requests for change has not been as developed and thorough as we might have wished.

Without wishing to sound complacent, we believe that there is nothing in the list of requests for change that creates significant obstacles for us, and we feel that the culture of the church is supportive and affirming of women and of women in ministry. Two of our three paid "staff" are women (and one is of Caribbean background), and whilst we acknowledge that their hours are part-time (whereas our male minister is full-time), this has been done by mutual agreement from the outset, not least reflecting the personal circumstances of both (where one has a young family, and the other has a private counselling ministry alongside her work for our church).

The staff team is happy and mutually supportive, with our youthworker in post since 2016 and our churchworker in post since 2018; our minister was called here in 2002. He has also been a mentor to newly accredited ministers (the majority of whom have been women). When in college training (30-plus years ago), there was full support for a proposal amongst the students not to visit as preachers one of the local churches who declined to allow a woman to preach. It is also remembered that more recently when *Gathering up the Crumbs* was published, there was some initial hesitation about purchasing a copy (to save the sagging bookshelves!), but as a gesture of support not least for friends who have contributed to it, a copy was bought and it is used as a helpful resource for worship and pastoral care. It hopefully won't be a surprise that our minister has signed up as an ally of women ministers and as an ally of black and brown ministers.

In terms of specifics when considering the Project Violet requests for change (the seven made of churches), we have so far reviewed the extent to which the values that we affirm are in fact lived out in practice. For instance, it has been observed that only two women have been invited to preach at our church during the periods of sabbatical leave our minister has taken this year. The responsibility to arrange the visiting preachers belongs to our Preaching Diary Coordinator, and we didn't want to criticise him for the observation, given that he is fairly new in post, and the fact that the three recognised lay-preachers within our church membership – who did bear much of the burden of preaching during the sabbatical - are all men! Perhaps a better observation is that the last three preachers invited to speak at our Church Anniversary services have all been women. We do commit to continue to create opportunities for new voices both from within our church and certainly from beyond. (R53)

In affirming the ministry of each member of our staff team (and indeed the trustees of our church where women are in a slight majority, and indeed where nearly half of trustees are from non-UK

background), we will continue to encourage each and all, seeking to support them on their journey of faith and ministry, and to develop their gifts for the good of all, whether for the contributions that they make, or as role models for others within the church. (R51/ R41)

The third area covered in our conversations and our response picks up on the justice element within the requests for change, and particularly relates to the challenging of unhelpful behaviours. We welcome the suggestion of training (although also lament the need for this *within* the church), and we will take up the resources that hopefully become available to strengthen our advocacy for all who find themselves oppressed by the attitudes, actions and words of others. (R05)

On a broader agenda, we have previously changed our approach to events like Holiday Club, recognising changes in a growing number of circumstances of children and young people (eg neuro-diversity whether formally diagnosed or simply observed), where our approach has become much less about the noisy, energetic style that we have practiced previously and much more relational and supportive. Whilst the numbers that we can include are lower than our previous holiday clubs attracted, we have as team delivering this found it less exhausting of ourselves as well as a positive feature for the children and young people; the only song sung at our last Holiday Club was Happy Birthday by request from one of the children attending, whose birthday it was! Our Sunday morning children's work and our regular youth group have been largely populated with young people with particular needs (whether modest or sometimes more acute), and we are encouraged that a local school has actually referred a couple of students to the youth group to enable them to have support and social contact in a way that suits the individual.

Whilst we don't have a formal theology of disability (R44), we have been informed in our outreach and nurture by the wonderful God-given variety that is presented in a range of individuals, and the appropriateness of a personalised approach in welcome, support and care. Many years ago there was great celebration as a young lady with Downs Syndrome was baptised, despite the other medical issues that she also had, and our church hosted a local project supporting families with a child with Downs, which has now gone on to become a county-wide charity, and still supports a local project for families where a child has a challenging health condition or life-threatening illness.

This commitment has been expressed in the multicultural context too, where we have provided care (and funds) for:

- a Sri Lankan family seeking leave to remain in the UK (primarily on the grounds of the health of their daughter, with special needs) - this couple were also baptized and are church members;

- a couple originally from the Caribbean (who were caught up in the Windrush 'scandal') – now church members;

- a single mother living locally with four children.

We, like others, have offered a welcome to a number of Ukrainians (since 2022), where two ladies are regular attendance at worship, and another is now seeking baptism, and where others attend events arranged (including two memorable and moving occasions with a specific Ukrainian angle/ flavour), alongside what has been our regular Prayers for Peace gathering since February 2022.

Most recently we have supported an Iranian family who are seeking leave to remain in the UK, and are collecting furniture and other household items for the flat that they have just been offered.

We recognise that the Project Violet research has contributed substantially to a greater understanding of the story of women in ministry and in particular to the challenges (and injustices) that have been faced. We are thankful for the project in its thorough and careful work, and will look to further developments arising from it for the good of women as ministers and in the life of the church more widely, and indeed for the other arenas that Project Violet has also touched upon (eg disability and racial justice).



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

### Feedback from Wendover Free Church

Thank you for your request for our consideration of the Project Violet movement.

We have considered the information at Council and through the Church meeting and would like to feed back as follows:

**1) Make opportunities to listen to new voices** - we have a range of women who are willing and able to lead services and reflections. The women are from a wide range of backgrounds and demographics so we get to hear a variety of women's voices in our church life.

**2) Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement** - our church is very open to women's ministry, of the 7 ministers there have been since our church started two of them have been women. Our history reflects our position, maybe more convincingly than mere words would do.

**3) Role models** - see the response to point one. We have several women would regularly minister in our church life. This can be through leading services or through leading pastoral groups. They provide excellent role models for everyone else in our church.

**4) Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting** - we try to give people the opportunity to talk in small groups about any topics we are discussing before feeding back to the main meeting so that the same voices are not dominating the meeting. This is a challenge for us and a work in progress. The challenge is engaging people in wanting to discuss the matters seriously or in any detail.

**5) Training in advocacy** - this is also something we are working on. We had a training session where we considered racism and that silence is as much a fault as active racism. The same ideas could be transferred to the challenging and calling out of sexist attitudes and behaviours.

**6) A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice** - we are in the process of updating our website and considered the information a disabled person would need before visiting us and whether or not that was readily accessible. We need to reflect more deeply on what we believe about disability to become a more inclusive church.

**7) Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life** - we have a variety of resources on display in our church and Christian centre and they reflect the diversity of Baptist life. We need to be mindful that that continues with any resources that we use.

We hope this information is helpful.

Michelle White: Secretary - Wendover Free Church



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	West Craven Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	YBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	<p>Project Violet has been mentioned in sermons, church meetings, in our newsletter and on our social media posts.</p> <p>The Local Church Report was circulated to deacons, church and congregation members, with an invitation to a meeting to discuss Project Violet on 22<sup>nd</sup> July (8 women and 2 men attended). At the meeting, we talked about wider issues and then considered the 7 requests for churches, and made recommendations to the deacons.</p> <p>We also noticed that support R52 relates to local churches, although it isn't included in the Local Church Report? So we have added that to our list of responses.</p> <p>Deacons were asked to read the Local Church Report. At a meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> August, they considered the recommendations from the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July and approved them to the church. The church meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> September supported the responses below.</p> <p>The minister and another church member will be attending the PV day at Blackley Baptist Church on 27<sup>th</sup> September.</p>

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	Yes		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	Yes		
R41	Role models	Yes		

R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	Yes		
R05	Training in advocacy		Yes	
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	Yes		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	Yes		
R52	Make training on EDI available for deacons and trustees	Yes		

## Additional feedback from West Craven Baptist Church

Request Number	Narrative
R53	<p>We welcome a number of visiting preachers over the course of the year, and are intentional about gender balance.</p> <p>We have been exploring aspects of multi-voiced worship over the past few years and are encouraged to see this aspect included here.</p> <p>In church meetings we sometimes use small groups to discuss issues to try to listen to more voices.</p>
R51	<p>We already do this (and currently have a female minister)</p>
R41	
R48	<p>We are interested to find out about slow wisdom and would welcome a resource to help us learn more.</p>
R05	<p>We support this request but would like to extend it so that training in Advocacy is also offered to trustees/deacons and anyone else who is interested.</p>
R44	<p>We are committed to learning more about inclusion and would welcome this resource.</p> <p>We marked Disability Awareness Sunday (22<sup>nd</sup> September) using material from 'Through the Roof'</p>
R56	
R52	<p>We also support the request that training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion be made available for deacons and trustees.</p>





# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Whitley Bay Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Northern Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Church Leadership Team Meetings - various Church Members Meeting 26/9/24

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting			
R05	Training in advocacy			
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice			
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Whitley Bay Baptist Church

Whilst the Leadership Team at Whitley Bay Baptist Church fully supports the intent of R05 and R44 we felt unable to accept them as stated. We felt that there was nothing in these two for our church to commit to at this time. However, we are fully supportive of training in advocacy for and would look forward to a theology of disability resource which may help us reflect in the future. With regard to R48 we look forward to engaging with *Slow Wisdom* by Ruth Moriarty but once again felt that the request for change itself was not one that applied directly to the local church.



# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Woodbridge Quay Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Eastern Baptist Association
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Discussed at a full leadership team meeting – 1/7/24 Discussed in person with women in the church over lunch – 15/9/24 Sent out an online feedback form to all women in the church to respond to – 16/9/24 All responses collated and summarised and sent to the Elders for consideration in response to the 7 areas for change as set out in the Project Violet documentation – 22/9/24 Feedback discussed at Elders meeting and decision made with regards to the 7 requests for change – 23/9/24

<b>Request Number</b>	<b>Short Name</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Modified</b>	<b>Declined</b>
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	Yes		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	Yes		
R41	Role models	Yes		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	Yes		
R05	Training in advocacy	Yes		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	Yes		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	Yes		



## Project Violet – Commitment to Action

### Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Worle Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	Webnet
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	Raised at leadership meeting in June. Leaders encouraged to read about the research and findings and start to prayerfully consider response as requested. Further discussion at leadership meeting in August 2024.

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	See narrative		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	See narrative		
R41	Role models	See narrative		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	See narrative		
R05	Training in advocacy	See narrative		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	See narrative		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	See narrative		

## Additional feedback from Worle Baptist Church

### Project Violet

Worle Baptist Church Leadership Team have taken time to read and consider the findings of Project Violet. We are choosing to offer a narrative response and have found it difficult to respond within the format above.

### Settlement

Having recently been in settlement, seeking to call a new minister, our church members were involved in discerning an ethos and values statement for the church. This considered our beliefs and values and stated that with respect of calling a minister we would:

welcome a man or a woman into a role as a minister based on our Christian beliefs and values.

Our ethos and values statement was made available to ministers who were interested in exploring a calling to our church. We note that it was not explicit in our profile that we would welcome a man or a woman into the role as minister.

The ethos and values statement was discussed and agreed at members' meetings however we did note that during the settlement process some *members* asked questions to the Settlement Team and to the ministers directly (when at a preach with a squint) that we had not expected to be asked and feel were not appropriate to be asked.

We agreed that the settlement process is unsettling and a hard journey. It should not be harder for a person because of their gender.

### Leadership Team

We currently have a leadership team of 7 people. This is 2 men and 5 women. We also have a Transitional Part Time Minister who is a woman. We have called a Full Time Minister who is a woman.

Through the settlement process one person in our fellowship commented on the current male: female balance in our leadership and whether it was therefore wrong to be considering a woman as the minister at this time. Our response: that was not a reason not to call the minister.

We have reflected on this again. We have reflected on the gender ratio in our membership / fellowship at this time. Our leadership reflects this. We feel that men's and women's voices are equally heard in the church and recognise that this is important. We have reflected that both men and women lead services and preach. We reflect that we have role models of both genders within our church.

### Resources

Having read and reflected on the findings of Project Violet we are starting to think about the images we use in our services, on posters, on social media and in communications with our fellowship. We agree that it is important that we continue to ensure a variety are used, and that this variety reflects diversity of people in our local community and in Baptist family life.

**Hearing voices**

Prompted by the response you have requested we have reflected on our church members' meetings. We have thought about how decisions are made and how we encourage people to give views and opinions. We agreed that it was important to continue to ensure we offer different opportunities / ways for people to be involved so that we ensure all voices are heard.

**Sharing with members**

Finally, we agreed that it was important that we share information with our members about Project Violet and continue to ensure that we reflect on these important issues in church life. We haven't yet made definite decisions about how we do this, but we are committed to doing so.

Worle Baptist Church Leadership Team August 2024



## Project Violet – Commitment to Action Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Yardley Baptist Church, Birmingham
<b>Association you belong to</b>	HEBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	<p><b>HEBA Women’s Justice Hub online ‘How to engage’ event – June 22<sup>nd</sup>.</b> This was followed up with 1-1 discussions with some of the YBC church folk who attended this.</p> <p><b>Project Violet Chat – 17<sup>th</sup> August</b> Discussion of requests for change.</p> <p><b>HEBA Project Violet – how to respond event – Sept 7<sup>th</sup></b> Yardley hosted an association-wide invitation to discuss both the requests for change for associations and for churches. As part of this, a method of engagement was shared with attendees to go back and use in their individual churches. Used the posters and the visio divina from Assembly as part of this.</p>

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women’s ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting		✓	
R05	Training in advocacy		✓	
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice		✓	
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life		✓	

## Additional feedback from Yardley Baptist Church, Birmingham

R51 - This is not a current issue for our church fellowship as we are not expecting to enter the settlement process having appointed a new minister 20 months ago, but we would consider making this clear in the future if this is accepted as necessary. It would be preferable if it was **only** the churches that **will not** accept women in ministry that had to state this fact, with the understanding that if it is not stated then all ministers, regardless of gender, are welcome to apply for advertised roles.

R48 - Further explanation/training is required regarding this. Ministerial students should receive guidance on this as part of their training. For ministers in role/leadership teams it would be helpful to provide localised group training/guidance either in person (to allow space for shared wisdom), or through online provision that could be used by both leadership teams and church memberships.

R05 - Training in this area both for ministers and congregations is essential.

R44 - The phraseology of this request is too 'academic' and definitely needs to be modified so that people understand what is being asked of them. Material to help churches reflect on this important area would be appreciated.

R56 - As a church we are doing our best to use images that authentically reflect our church family and practice, but finding worship images that aren't all 'bright lights and raised hands', or are of a person using a wheelchair and praying, or a mixed ethnicity, all-age worshipping congregation (to name just a few) is time consuming and sometimes impossible. A central database of pictures (photos and art pieces) would be very helpful here - a Baptist version of Unsplash/Pexels? As a Baptist family I'm sure that we have the skills to set up such a website to allow people search for relevant images, and there are also many gifted photographers who could authentically reflect Baptist worship and practice in all its wonderful diversity, submitting their pictures with permission of those in them for free use by everyone in Baptists Together. And this database could also include art pieces as we have many gifted artists in our congregations who would be willing for their artwork used and appreciated.





# Project Violet – Commitment to Action

## Local Churches

<b>Name of Church</b>	Yardley Wood Baptist Church
<b>Association you belong to</b>	HEBA
<b>How have you discussed the findings? For example, meetings and dates</b>	In two deacons' meetings (June and September 2024) and one church members meeting (June 2024, without a vote)

Request Number	Short Name	Accepted	Modified	Declined
R53	Make opportunities to listen to new voices	✓		
R51	Local churches make their position on women's ministry known prior to settlement	✓		
R41	Role models	✓		
R48	Developing slow wisdom in the local church meeting	✓		
R05	Training in advocacy	✓		
R44	A theology of disability that enables local churches to reflect upon their practice	✓		
R56	Use resources that reflect the diversity of Baptist life	✓		

## Additional feedback from Yardley Wood Baptist Church

We were encouraged and delighted to discuss these issues and reflect on material produced by Project Violet. As a church we were already engaged with some of the issues that Project Violet has raised and explored and will continue, for example, to make space for developments associated with R53, R51, R41. Some, such as R48 and R44, have quite technical language, and will take time to address. In terms of developing a theology of disability, we are becoming more aware of the need for a lived theology of disability that makes space for people with a range of disabilities who are valued and gifted members of the church. Similarly, we look forward to the term “slow wisdom” being unpacked in ways that impact Baptist practice of discernment. It resonates with our ongoing sense of needing to slow meetings down, and prioritise discernment over decision-making. R05 and R56 are areas that we are becoming more aware of as we seek to be an evermore inclusive community and explore what this requires. Our ministers have had some training from the Baptist Union and we look forward to our leaders and volunteers having these opportunities.