

1. The church leadership and members discuss the advantages, disadvantages, responsibilities and privileges of Association membership with their Regional Minister (RM) and, if appropriate, other Baptist fellowships locally. The conversation with the RM includes:
  - The degree and nature of the support and fellowship the church can access through membership;
  - The degree and nature of the support and fellowship that other churches and The Association would like to receive from the member church, including through the church's giving and participation.
2. Material the RM will give to the church.
  - Articles and Rules of SCBA;
  - access/links to SCBA and BUGB websites;
  - information/leaflets about up-and-coming events and
  - anything else deemed appropriate to the church in question.
3. Information needed from the church.
  - names and contact details of church leaders,
  - the church's Constitution and Rules, last annual report and accounts.
  - other information about the life and work of the church including company or charity registration and trusteeship of any property.
4. Applications for membership come from the Church Members Meeting and are made in writing to the trustees in the form of a letter. Applications can be made at any time via the Regional Minister Team Leaders.
5. Depending on relationships that already exist between the applicant church and other Baptist fellowships/RM/the Association, visitors from local churches may be appointed by the Association. The purpose of their visit is to explore and assess the applicant church's understanding of what it means to be Baptist, a member of the Association etc. Why do they want to join us, what are their views on things that might be contentious e.g. ministry of women, the nature of church leadership etc?
6. The trustees will consider what the visitors (if appointed) and RM report about the applying church and exercise prayerful discernment in deciding whether to:
  - admit the church to membership;
  - ask for further information/clarification or
  - or decline to admit the church.
7. The result of the trustees' deliberation is reported to the church.
8. If accepted into membership, the fellowship is invited to send representatives to the next Association Gathering, where the church can be formally welcomed into the Association.
9. The Association Administrator will update the Association records, including the Membership Roll, and ensure that accurate records of the church minister, officers and appropriate others are taken and kept in accordance with the Association Data Protection and Privacy policies.
10. If deferred or declined, reasons will be given and further conversation with the RM may be necessary.
11. If accepted into membership, the Association will advise the BUGB of a new member.