

**THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW CHURCH**

**COUNCIL**

**Year 2016/2017**

**Friday 11 November 2016**

Trustees Present:      Mrs J M Wilson      [Chairman]  
                                 Mr M J Hindley      [Vice Chairman]  
                                 Ms J Z Brooks      [Company Secretary]  
                                 Mr R H Cunningham  
                                 Mr M D Haseler  
                                 Mrs L K Nicholls

Also in attendance:    Revd D E Gaffney    [Spiritual Leader]  
                                 Revd C A Bank      [Secretary of Ministers' Committee]  
                                 Mrs S G Field      [Company Accountant]

<b>37</b>	<b>COUNCIL MEETING</b> A meeting of the Council was held at Purley Chase Centre, Purley Chase Lane, Mancetter, Atherstone, Warwickshire on Friday 11 November 2016.	
<b>38</b>	<b>OPENING</b> The Revd Christine Bank opened the meeting by acknowledging that changes in the world are unpredictable and the fact that today (11 <sup>th</sup> November) we remember those who gave us the freedoms we now have. She opened the Word and read Psalm 107:1 "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good: his word endures forever"	
<b>39</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</b> The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mrs Rachel Turner sent apologies for absence, which was due to ill health.	
<b>40</b>	<b>COMPLETE AGENDA</b> Papers that were received late were added to the agenda. A request was made that all papers circulated contain the date and the name of the author. A request was also made that where the circulation list for an email included people not on the Council attention was drawn to this in the text.	
<b>41</b>	<b>MINUTES</b> <b>41.1 Confirmation of the Minutes of the last meeting</b> The Minutes of the last meeting of the Council September 2016 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.  <b>41.2 Matters arising from the Minutes</b> 41.2.1 Brightlingsea Church [see Minute4.2.1] A final service attended by over 100 people was held on 24 September. The Chairman of the Council was present. The premises were marketed for offers over £200,000 and an offer of £237,000 has been accepted from someone who appears to be in a position to proceed quickly.	

<p>41.2.2 Library and Archives [see Minute 4.2.2]  The Swedenborg Society accepted the Council's amendments to the agreement with the exception of item 13, where it proposed its own wording.  <b>Resolved:</b> that the revision put forward by the Swedenborg Society be accepted.</p> <p>41.2.3 Common Investment Fund [see Minute 4.2.3]  In order to clarify the position regarding the Common Investment Fund Mrs Sally Field and Ms Zoë Brooks met with Mr Wayne Thomas and Mr Sean Douglass of Bates Weston on 27 October 2016. Mr David Thomas, Treasurer of the New Church Children's Society which is a unit holder, also attended by invitation.</p> <p>Mr Wayne Thomas explained how changes in legislation triggered the inclusion of the Common Investment Fund (CIF) in Conference accounts from the year ended 31 March 2012. As a result no separate accounts were prepared for the CIF as there was no legal need for such accounts. However, it was recognised that this made it more difficult to understand the CIF position and BW were asked to provide accounts for CIF for the years ended 31 March 2012 to 31 March 2016. They were also asked to provide a separate account each year in the future. These accounts will not include an audit report as the audit will be included as part of the audit of Conference's accounts. Bates Weston admitted that some of the information given in note 12 to the Conference accounts was wrong. However, as there was no statutory requirement to provide this information there is no need for any amendment to be made and the Conference accounts are therefore correct. It was agreed that the final section of note 12 will be removed from the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2017 onwards as the information will be in the CIF accounts themselves.</p> <p>A matter of concern to the Trustees was that the amount of dividend distributed to the CIF unit holders exceeded the amount of income received. Mr Wayne Thomas said there was nothing wrong in distributing part of the capital increase if this was Conference's policy. The valuation of the units is not affected as this is the actual market value as shown by the portfolios. Confusion seems to have arisen because until the Trustees passed a resolution at their July meeting there was no stated policy. It was agreed that a policy document was necessary and the suggestion was made that a paragraph could be included in the Financial Procedures document. It was agreed that it was desirable for the dividend in excess of the income received to be put against the revaluation reserve and that Mr Douglass would prepare a pro forma for the future CIF accounts, to make them clearer, for the Council to approve.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the Council's policy be incorporated in the Financial Procedures document.  <b>Resolved:</b> that in future accounts be prepared for the Common Investment Fund and that copies be distributed to CIF unit holders by the Company Accountant and that copies also be made available at Conference.  <b>Resolved:</b> that a letter be sent now to all CIF unit holders explaining the position.</p> <p>41.2.4 New Christian Bible Study Appeal [see Minute 7]  The total collected was £4,587.15, bringing the total to £9174.30 if matched by the Council.  <b>Resolved:</b> that £9,200 be sent to the New Christian Bible Study Appeal.</p>	<p><b>JZB</b></p> <p><b>JZB</b>  <b>SGF</b>  <b>SGF</b>  <b>JMW</b></p> <p><b>SGF</b></p>
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	<p>41.2.5 The Deputy Manager at Purley Chase [see Minute 8] Mr Graeme Harding has been appointed and he commenced employment on 20 October.</p> <p>41.2.6 Burnley Society Closure [see Minute 20] Our solicitor has prepared a letter to send to the leaseholders offering them first refusal regarding the purchase of the freehold of the flats, as this is something that we are required by law to do. He is going to approach the Charity Commission informally regarding the removal of the 20 year restriction on the use of the funds to see what information they ask for, before we make a formal request for a scheme.</p> <p>41.2.7 Merger of NENCH and SOLCe [see Minute 24] There was a meeting of the College Council on 1<sup>st</sup> October at which they agreed to make the amendments that we requested. The new amended schedule was sent to the Charity Commission on 20<sup>th</sup> October. Prior to this the Charity Commission had been notified of the proposed merger. The Charity Commission has confirmed that the merger has been registered with a transfer date of 31 October 2016 and that the North of England New Church House has been removed from the Register of Charities. Acknowledgement of the letter dealing the changes in the schedule of the New Church College is awaited.</p> <p>41.2.8 College Council Minutes [see Minute 27] No minutes have been received since the meeting in October 2015. A letter will be sent requesting minutes in respect of later meetings.</p> <p>41.2.9 Legal Advice [See Confidential Minute 36] The Council is contemplating taking legal advice in connection with a Society that is not complying with Rule L7 whereby any Society having the use of a Conference building needs to comply with such conditions as the Council determines.</p>	<p>JZB</p> <p>MDH</p> <p>JZB</p>
42	<p><b>CONFIRMATION OF DECISIONS MADE BY E-MAIL</b> <b>Decision confirmed:</b> that the Programme Director and the Deputy Manager at Purley Chase Centre be given debit cards.</p>	SGF
43	<p><b>MINISTRY ISSUES</b> The Council was informed that the Ministers' Committee had nominated the Revd David Gaffney to be Spiritual Leader for a further two years from July 2017. <b>Resolved:</b> that the Revd David Gaffney be appointed Spiritual Leader for a further two years from July 2017. Attention was drawn to the fact that the orderly way for items to go on the Conference programme was either via the Ministers' Committee or by a request to the Conference Programme Secretary, Mr Richard Cunningham. The Ministers' Committee felt that the Home Worship programme previously administered by the Revd Norman Ryder needed to continue and that it was something they wished to support. They asked if any employee's time could be available to assist but the Council confirmed there was nobody who had any spare capacity. The Ministers' Committee will take this forward and seek volunteers and try to clarify exactly how the work is currently organised and produced.</p>	

44	<p><b>COMPANY ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT</b></p> <p>The Company Accountant produced four sets of figures for the Council to consider. These were the Conference Income and Expenditure Account for April to September 2016, the Conference five year forecast, the Purley Chase Account for April to September 2016 and the Common Investment Fund Income and Expenditure Accounts for the quarters to June 2016 and September 2016.</p> <p>Mrs Sally Field said that Conference had inherited some small investments which she would like to incorporate into the main funds</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that small investment holdings should be disposed of and the funds invested with either Newton's or Rathbones.</p>	SGF
45	<p><b>Council Meeting Dates for 2018</b></p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the dates for the 2018 meetings would be: 2/3 March, 11/12 May, 14/15 September and 16/17 November</p>	JZB
46	<p><b>BANK ACCOUNT SIGNATORIES</b></p> <p>Mrs Sally Field Explained that as there was no longer an HSBC branch in Atherstone there was no point in having accounts with HSBC. She also said that the RBS CIF Deposit Account and the RBS Central Pay Deposit accounts were no longer needed.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the two HSBC accounts and the RBS CIF Deposit Account and the RBS Central Pay Deposit Accounts be closed.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the schedule of signatories is approved, subject to the deletion of the New Church College Account and note 2 referring to this account and the reference to debit cards.</p>	SGF MDH
47	<p><b>INVESTMENT POLICY</b></p> <p>Information and recommendations from the Finance Advisory Committee were considered.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that regarding Newton's the cash income is sufficient (see bullet point one) and that the recommendations given with the summary are accepted.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the FAC's commendations in Mr David Haseler's memo of 24 October 2016 be accepted.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that regarding Rathbone's Mrs Sally Field obtain more information concerning the investment mentioned at bullet point four.</p>	MDH MDH SGF
48	<p><b>RE-APPOINTMENT OF THE FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b></p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> That Mr Andrew Bentley, Mr David Sharrock and Mr David Haseler be re-appointed.</p>	JMW
49	<p><b>ANNUAL ALLOCATION OF FUNDS</b></p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the income from all funds requiring the Council's instructions be allocated to the interest at the disposal of Conference.</p>	SGF
50	<p><b>REVD REBECCA MARY JARRATT AND MR ROBERT CLARK</b></p> <p>These two employees are now at the end of their probationary periods.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the Revd Rebecca Mary Jarratt's appointment be confirmed.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that Mr Robert Clark's appointment be confirmed.</p>	JZB JZB
51	<p><b>SPIRITUAL FRIENDS WEBSITE</b></p> <p>People are using the Spiritual Friends Facebook page rather than the website.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the Spiritual Friends website be closed.</p>	SGF
52	<p><b>DOG POLICY AT PURLEY</b></p> <p>A policy was suggested whereby visitors are not allowed to bring dogs onto the premises.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that visitors are not allowed to bring dogs onto the premises at Purley Chase.</p>	MDH

53	<p><b>REVD DAVID GAFFNEY</b></p> <p>The Revd David Gaffney informed the Council that from 1 February 2018 he would like to reduce his hours to either a third or a quarter. It is anticipated that the Spiritual Leader role will take up most of this time but the details were not discussed.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the Revd David Gaffney's request to reduce his hours to either a third or a quarter of 40 hours a week from 1 February 2018 be granted.</p>	
54	<p><b>CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT</b></p> <p>Ms Zoë Brooks asked for permission to arrange for Conference's solicitors to check our employment contracts to ensure that they are compliant with current law and to obtain their advice regarding a health declaration form for new employees.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that Ms Brooks could do as she requested.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> when a person was employed for the first time the job description or allocation of duties should be agreed by the Council. Thereafter any amendments that were not substantial could be made by the line manager. All signed amendments should be forwarded to Ms Brooks to retain in the employee's file. The revised job description or allocation of duties should be circulated to all the Council for information.</p>	JZB
55	<p><b>SOUTHEND-ON-SEA SOCIETY</b></p> <p>The Society held a Special General Meeting on Sunday 16 October at which it decided to close. The date will be decided upon later as they wish to keep services going until the sale of the premises is in sight. Instructions for the voluntary first registration of the land were sent to our solicitors at the end of June, so this should be accomplished before any sale is imminent.</p> <p>The Council was saddened by this news.</p>	
56	<p><b>LEGIONELLA AND ASBESTOS AND ELECTRICAL INSPECTIONS</b></p> <p>Two reports on Legionella and Asbestos surveys were received from Mr Wilf Woodhouse. Mr Woodhouse sought confirmation that one Society should proceed with a survey. Mr Richard Cunningham will liaise with Mr Woodhouse on the matter of five year electrical surveys.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that Mr Woodhouse be asked to tell the Society about which he had enquired that a Legionella risk assessment must be done.</p>	RHC
57	<p><b>CONFERENCE 2017</b></p> <p>The first draft of the programme was discussed. The Council was informed that 'Heaven' will be the theme for 2017. Mr Richard Cunningham is the Conference Programme Secretary this year.</p>	
58	<p><b>DEATH IN SERVICE AND AUTOMATIC ENROLMENT</b></p> <p>A comprehensive letter from Mr Colin Skinner, the Payroll and Pensions Manager, detailing savings he felt could be made, was discussed.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the use of LCP and BPS be dispensed with as suggested.</p> <p>The Council is very grateful for the work that Mr Skinner has done.</p>	SGF
59	<p><b>YOUTH</b></p> <p>Mrs Lara Nicholls reported that Mr Robert Clark was now beginning a course of study <i>Insights into Swedenborg</i>.</p> <p>Family weekends had been held at Foxlease and Purley. Ms Alison Southcombe will be attending the 2017 Easter Rally.</p>	
60	<p><b>CLOSING</b></p> <p>The Revd Christine Bank closed the meeting on Friday evening by leading the Council in</p>	

the Lord's Prayer.	
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**The next meeting of Council will be March 10th-11th 2017 at Purley Chase Centre**  
**Future meetings**

May 5th-6th **2017**

July 25th-28th **2017** Annual Meeting

September 15th-16th **2017**

November 17th-18th **2017**

March 2nd - 3rd 2018

May 11th - 12th 2018

July 24th - 27th 2018 Annual Meeting

September 14th - 15th 2018

November 16th - 17th 2018