

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW CHURCH

COUNCIL

Year 2015/2016

Friday 4th March and Saturday 5th March 2016

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

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

49	COUNCIL MEETING A meeting of the Council was held at Purley Chase Centre, Purley Chase Lane, Mancetter, Atherstone, Warwickshire on Friday 4th March and Saturday 5th March 2016.	
50	OPENING The Revd Christine Bank opened the meeting by reading Ezekiel Chapter 36 verses 22-29, emphasising the heart of stone changed to a heart of flesh and the need for us to allow the Lord's love to guide our thinking.	
51	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Mr M J Hindley and Mrs P M Russell.	
52	MINUTES 52.1 Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting The Minutes of the last meeting of the Council November 2015 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. 52.2 Matters arising from the Minutes 52.2.1 Signatories for Investment managers [see Minute 26.2.1] Mr Richard Cunningham has obtained the documentation necessary for his name to be added as a signatory to the Rathbones and Newton accounts. 52.2.2 Burnley Flats [see Minute 26.2.2] We are still waiting for the Management Company to be restored. It was agreed that this item would not appear on the agenda again until some progress was made. 52.2.3 Technology Manager [see Minute 5.2.3] The Council was pleased that following the interviews on 13 February Miss Gemma McLean had been appointed with effect from 1 March 2016, giving one month's overlap with Mr David Glover, whom the Council is sorry to be	SGF

	<p>losing after nearly 13 years of excellent service. It was agreed that Mr Richard Cunningham would inform all those to whom Miss McLean would provide services and that Mrs Judith Wilson would include the information in her report for <i>Lifeline</i>.</p> <p>52.2.4 Possible Merger of NENCH and SOLCe [see Minute 26.2.6] Mr David Haseler attended a recent meeting as the Council's representative and he gave a verbal report. Arrangements for the merger of the SOLCe Council and the NENCH Board were discussed, together with the eligibility for becoming a member of the merged Council. At present there is a requirement for those who are on the SOLCe Council to be Members of Conference. The SOLCe/NENCH feeling is that a diluted 'friends' group who had not made a formal commitment might be eligible to sit on the new Council. The Council of Conference felt that membership of Conference was an essential requirement for anyone on the SOLCe/NENCH Council if Conference were to continue as Trustee of the merged charity. SOLCe/NENCH are at present on draft nine of its objectives and this is given below. “The object of the charity shall be the promotion of education and life based upon the spiritual teachings in the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg; and the training of suitable persons for ministry, leadership and service in accordance with this object; in all or any of the following ways, or in such other ways as shall be thought fit:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The provision of educational resources, services or facilities calculated to further the said object; 2. The provision and maintenance of premises for use in furthering the said object; 3. The assistance in cases of need of persons whose education is being promoted under the said object; 4. The assistance of other charitable organisations or institutions having similar objects.” <p>There was a question as to whether 'assistance' should mean financial assistance and the feeling of the Council of Conference was that probably it should not. The Council of Conference was also concerned that the primary purpose of training Ministers seemed to getting moved down the list of priorities.</p> <p>52.2.5 Youth Leaders [see Minute 26.2.7] Mr Robert Clark was appointed to work 10 hours a week from 5 December 2015. Details of the future events being planned were noted.</p> <p>52.2.6 Conference Programme [see Minute 26.2.9] The draft programme still needed some amendment by the Ministry. Mrs Wilson agreed to print 100 copies in colour to send to Ms Brooks.</p> <p>52.2.7 South Africa Fund [see Minute 26.2.10] Referring the decision about this fund to the Charity Commission had been delayed as it had been necessary to resolve a technical question first. Ms</p>	<p>RHC JMW</p> <p>MDH</p> <p>MDH</p> <p>CB JMW</p>
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	<p>Brooks said that she and Mrs Field would not have time to progress this matter before Conference and the Council agreed that no further reports would be made until there was some progress.</p> <p>52.2.8 Broadfield Memorial Benevolent Fund [see Minute 26.2.11] Resolved: that Mrs Erica Cunningham and Mrs Liz Regan be appointed to serve on the Committee. Resolved: that a new General Conference bank account be opened for this fund with Mrs J Wilson and Mrs E Cunningham as the signatories. Other signatories can be added later if necessary.</p> <p>52.2.9 Brightlingsea Church [see Minute 26.2.12] It was noted that the church intends to close in September, with the final service being held on 24 September in the afternoon.</p> <p>52.2.10 Amendment to articles [see Minute 26.2.13] It was noted that the proposed amendment to the wording of Article 45 regarding Honorary Life Members has been approved by our solicitor.</p> <p>52.2.11 Mauritius [see Minute 27.2] The Council, having received a comprehensive report from the Revd Bruce Jarvis and other information about the situation in Mauritius, decided to reverse the decision it made at its November meeting. Resolved: that the decision to approach the Charity Commission for permission to transfer the total capital of the de Chazal fund from Conference to the New Church in Mauritius be reversed.</p> <p>52.2.12 The Norwich Trust [see Minute 34] Referring the decision about this fund to the Charity Commission had been delayed as it had been necessary to resolve a technical question first. Ms Brooks said that she and Mrs Field would not have time to progress this matter before Conference and the Council agreed that no further reports would be made until there was some progress.</p>	JMW
53	<p>CONFIRMATION OF DECISIONS MADE BY EMAIL</p> <p>53.1 Decision confirmed: that Ms Alison Southcombe be accepted as a sponsored ordination student. [11 December 2015] 53.2 Decision confirmed: that Ms J Zoë Brooks be re-appointed as Company Secretary for a period of three years. [11 December 2015]</p>	
54	<p>MINISTRY ISSUES</p> <p>Documents provided by Revd Christine Bank were considered.</p> <p>54.1 Robin Wooldridge The Council was made aware that the Australian New Church College are happy Robin has completed his studies and they are going to arrange to ordain him in the UK when it is convenient. We have no details at the moment but we are content for the process to continue. We wish him well in his new ministry.</p> <p>54.2 New Church Christian Bible Study The Revd Christine Bank reported that after the Revd Steve David's visit to the Ministers' Committee the Ministry were supportive of some sort of support for the project. The Council was given details and a request for funding of £10,000 was put.</p>	

	<p>After some discussion there was one view that some funds should be given to support this project and the opposite view that when people gave monies to us they expected them to be used by us not passed on to another charity.</p> <p>It was suggested that the site was really for adults and that any donation made might be ring fenced for something suitable for children.</p> <p>Resolved: that the Council would make a donation to match any amount raised by the Ministry, subject to a maximum of £5,000.</p>	CB
55	<p>COMPANY ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT</p> <p>The Conference Income and Expenditure Account for April - December 2015 had been circulated to Council. This showed an operational surplus of £51,000 compared with £54,000 for the same period last year. Forecasts showed that the expected operational surpluses would decrease from £46,000 for 2015/16 to £14,000 for 2019/20.</p> <p>Mrs Field drew attention to the fact that income from Societies was declining and that this trend was likely to continue.</p> <p>Mrs Field reported that the new pensions legislation meant that we had had to purchase a new package and that from 25 April RBS was going to charge us £80 a year for transactions whereas we had free banking at present. The Council did not consider it to be worth considering changing our banking arrangements for this amount.</p>	
56	<p>SALARY/PENSIONS/SELF-EMPLOYED FEES INCREASE FROM 1 APRIL 2016.</p> <p>The figure for increase in average earnings is 2%. The Council determined an increase of 2% in accordance with its current policy.</p> <p>Resolved: that salaries and pensions be increased by 2% and that a 2% increase in fees be offered to self-employed workers.</p> <p>The Council noted that for workers aged 25 and over the living wage of £7.20 is payable from April 2016. Mrs Field stated that we had no workers of that age who received less than £7.20.</p>	SGF JZB
57	<p>BOOK ALLOWANCE</p> <p>The annual review of this allowance was now due and the Council decided not to alter the amount.</p> <p>Resolved: that the book allowance be £140 for the year to 31 March 2017.</p>	
58	<p>YOUTH LEADERS' BUDGET</p> <p>The budget for the year to 31 March 2016 was £10,000, of which £4,400 had been used by the middle of February. Mrs Nicholls said that more was likely to be spent in the future. Mrs Nicholls also raised the question of whether the Youth Leaders' travelling expenses should come out of this budget and was told that they did not.</p> <p>Resolved: that the Youth Leaders' budget be £10,000 for the year to 31 March 2017.</p>	LKN
59	<p>PRE-CONFERENCE COUNCIL MEETING</p> <p>Resolved: that the pre-Conference Council meeting be held at 10.30 am at the Hayes Conference Centre on July 26th 2016.</p>	JZB
60	<p>RETIRING COUNCIL MEMBER</p> <p>Mr Haseler is the only retiree in 2016. He informed the Council that he was</p>	

	willing to stand for re-election.	
61	<p>POLICIES</p> <p>61.1 Risk Management, Bribery and Financial Procedures policies were reviewed. Minor amendments were required to bring the wording up to date. The need to ensure that the Risk Management policy was being adhered to was considered and it was decided that Mrs Field should have a copy of the appropriate risk assessment form to supply to people leading events at Purley as necessary. It was also decided that the whole safeguarding package should be issued/re-issued to appropriate people.</p> <p>The need to think of risks other than physical risks was discussed. Examples were risks of a reputational nature and the risks associated with the sudden loss of key personnel.</p> <p>Resolved: that the existing policies be approved subject to minor language adjustments and that they be reviewed again next March.</p> <p>61.2 Mr Wilf Woodhouse had made minor amendments to the Asbestos and Legionella policies and had updated the Health and Safety policy to make reference to the other two policies.</p> <p>Resolved: that the three revised policies be approved and that they be reviewed again next March.</p> <p>61.1 and 61.2 It was also agreed that on all policies the dates they were adopted amended and reviewed should be shown on the policy.</p>	<p>SGF JZB</p> <p>RHC JZB</p>
62	<p>SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS IN PROPERTY OCCUPIED RENT-FREE</p> <p>Attention had been drawn to the fact that Conference has a duty of care to the occupants of rent-free accommodation and that it might be found liable in tort should any mishap occur. It had therefore been suggested that it should treat these properties in the same way as those that fall within the legislation.</p> <p>Resolved: that properties that are occupied rent-free be treated in the same way as those that fall within the legislation for properties that are let.</p>	RHC
63	<p>ENERGY EFFICIENCY REGULATIONS - 2015</p> <p>It would appear that Mr Wilf Woodhouse should be asked to make Societies aware of these regulations, if he has not already done so, as some of them let properties.</p> <p>Resolved: that details of the legislation be passed to Mr Wilf Woodhouse to circulate to Societies.</p>	RHC
64	<p>RULES COMMITTEE</p> <p>Mr David Friend has resigned as a member of the Rules Committee. He will however, continue to produce the A5 version of the Rules for those who have a booklet.</p> <p>Resolved: that a letter of thanks should be sent to Mr Friend for all his work on the Committee.</p>	JMW
65	<p>BLACKPOOL GROUP</p> <p>The Blackpool Group has decided to close. There was little support and only a few journeys were made to Accrington by two members. Also the bank informed them that as their account was not being used they were going to put the money into a fund for people who did not make sufficient use of their</p>	

	accounts. Upon receipt of this information the Group decided to close down and transfer the funds to Conference.	
66	SPIRITUAL WISDOM BANK ACCOUNT Council considered a request to open a new account. Mrs Field said that what they needed to do was to make the existing account into an internet banking account to meet their requirements. Resolved: that Mrs Field tell the M & R Group what was required.	SGF
67	THE FUTURE OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE Papers from Mrs Judith Wilson and Mr David Haseler were considered. After some discussion it was decided to look at this question again after Conference when the views of the under 64's were known.	
68	THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ASSISTANT MANAGER AT PURLEY CHASE A paper from the Purley Team was considered. Various scenarios were discussed. The Council recognised the pressing need for the Manager to be relieved of a 24/7 responsibility. Resolved: that the Purley Team be asked to prepare one or more proposals for a job description and salary for a Deputy Manager for Purley Chase for the Council to consider at its May meeting.	MDH
69	CLOSING The Revd Christine Bank closed the whole meeting with a reading from Revelation Chapter 21 verses 1-4 and a prayer.	

The next meeting of Council will be 13th – 14th May 2016 at Purley Chase Centre

Future meetings

July 26th 2016 - pre-Conference at 10.30

July 26th-29th **2016** Annual Meeting

September 16th-17th **2016**

November 11th-12th **2016**

March 10th-11th **2017**

May 5th-6th **2017**

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

September 15th-16th **2017**

November 17th-18th **2017**