

**THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW CHURCH**

**COUNCIL**

**Year 2015/2016**

**Friday 13 May and Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May 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  
                                 Mrs R F Turner

Also in attendance:    Revd D E Gaffney    [Spiritual Leader]  
                                 Revd C A Bank      [Secretary of Ministers' Committee]

<b>74</b>	<b>COUNCIL MEETING</b> A meeting of the Council was held at Purley Chase Centre, Purley Chase Lane, Mancetter, Atherstone, Warwickshire on Friday 13th May and Saturday 14th May 2016.	
<b>75</b>	<b>OPENING</b> The Revd Christine Bank opened the meeting by reading from Isaiah Chapter 43: 1-3a and Psalm 9 and we kept in mind our dear friend Mrs Patricia Russell during these readings.	
<b>76</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</b> The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.	
<b>77</b>	<b>MINUTES</b> <b>77.1 Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting</b> The Minutes of the last meeting of the Council March 2016 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. <b>77.2 Matters arising from the Minutes</b> <b>77.2.1 Signatories for Investment Managers [see minute 52.2.1]</b> The Council was informed that Mr Richard Cunningham's details have now been sent to Rathbones and Newtons for him to be added as a signatory on their accounts. <b>77.2.2 Possible Merger of NENCH and SOLCe [see Minute 52.2.4]</b> Minutes of a Collaborative Meeting on 11 April were before the Council, who wished it to be recorded that it was in favour of these talks continuing. <b>77.2.3 Youth Leaders [see Minute 52.2.5]</b> The Council noted that Mrs Jen Pickard handed in her notice on 1 <sup>st</sup> April and that her last day of service was 13 <sup>th</sup> May, the remainder of the notice period of	

	<p>three months having been waived.</p> <p>Mrs Lara Nicholls reported on the activities of the Youth Leaders. Our most recent recruit to this post, Mr Robert Clark, will shortly be starting a SOLCe course. He has helped at the Calshott Activity day and has organised one himself for 9<sup>th</sup> July. He will also be attending the Young Family event in May and in addition will attend Conference, where he will be free to be part of the main sessions in order to familiarise himself with the workings of Conference.</p> <p>77.2.4 Conference Programme 2016 [see Minute 52.2.6] After the addition of a further choice session around the future of Purley Chase the programme was approved.</p> <p>77.2.5 Brightlingsea Church [see Minute 52.2.9] It was noted that the church intends to close in September, with the final service being held on 24 September in the afternoon. The Council expressed its sadness at this news.</p> <p>77.2.6 The Appointment of a Deputy Manager at Purley Chase [see Minute 68] The Revd David Gaffney withdrew from the meeting for this part of the discussion. It was decided that this would initially be an 18 month appointment. After some discussion a job description and the wording of an advertisement for this post was agreed. Ms Zoë Brooks was charged with producing the final version of the job description and circulating it to the rest of the Council and Mr David Haseler was charged with producing the final version of the advertisement for agreement before placing it on our websites and in local papers.</p> <p>It was decided that the interview panel for the Deputy Manager position should consist of Mrs Anne Gaffney, Mrs Rachel Turner and Mrs Sally Field. It having been decided that Mrs Sally Field would work from home the question of telephones was discussed. The Council considered a system whereby an extension of the existing telephone system at Purley could be installed at Mrs Field's home but rejected this as it relied on the internet. <b>Resolved:</b> that a separate number would be used by the Company Accountant and that this could be either her existing telephone number or a new number that would require the installation of a second telephone line at her home, whichever she preferred.</p> <p>The question of membership of the Purley Team was also discussed <b>Resolved:</b> that Ms Alison Southcombe and the Deputy Manager, when appointed, be members of the Purley Team.</p> <p>77.2.7 Ms Alison Southcombe (Minute 73) Ms Southcombe wishes to set up a 're-visioning team' with people of her own choosing to explore future ideas for Purley when she takes over from the Revd David Gaffney. <b>Resolved:</b> that Ms Alison Southcombe be authorised to set up a project team of her own choice which will report back to the Council in due course.</p>	<p>JMW</p> <p>JZB MDH</p> <p>JZB SGF</p> <p>MDH</p>
78	<p><b>CONFIRMATION OF DECISIONS MADE BY EMAIL</b> There were no decisions made by email.</p>	

79	<p><b>MINISTRY ISSUES</b></p> <p><b>79.1 New Church Christian Bible Study</b> A presentation will be given at Conference on Tuesday afternoon, explaining that Conference will match the sum raised by the Ministry towards this project subject to a maximum of £5,000.</p> <p><b>79.2 Ordination Training</b> The SSMG unanimously recommended that Mr Lee Differ become a sponsored ordination student. Mr Differ has been reading Swedenborg for many years and felt called to Ministry after spending much time at Purley Chase in conversation with the Revd David Gaffney.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that Mr Lee Differ become a sponsored ordination student from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016, subject to a satisfactory health check.</p> <p>The Council were very pleased to approve this sponsorship and the decision was unanimous.</p> <p><b>79.3 Pay Rise</b> The Council noted the Ministry's thanks for the recent pay rise.</p>	JZB
80	<p><b>COMPANY ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT</b></p> <p>The Conference Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2016 had been circulated to Council, together with forecasts and separate details for Purley Chase. It showed an operational deficit of £2,000 on unrestricted funds compared with a surplus of £60,000 for the previous year. Forecasts showed that the expected operational deficits would increase each year, from £57,000 for 2016/17 to £124,000 for 2020/21. The reason is that while income is seen as remaining much the same staff costs are expected to rise considerably. The main factors are the proposed appointment of a Deputy Manager at Purley Chase and an additional ordination student. It is also assumed that nobody will retire.</p> <p>Increased losses for Purley Chase contribute significantly to the overall loss position. These are due not only to the expected appointment of a Deputy Manager but also to the fact that we now have to pay pension contributions for all employees and that the rates of pay for domestic staff have increased.</p> <p>Ms Zoë Brooks reported that due to a change in the way accounts are set out that has been imposed upon us there will be a one-off additional charge for the preparation of accounts this year, as the figures for the previous year have to be re-worked in order to provide comparisons.</p>	
81	<p><b>SPONSORSHIP FOR PEOPLE WISHING TO STUDY AT SOLCE</b></p> <p>A grant of £1,000 was made available for the year from 1 September 2015 and the Council had agreed that it would review the position at its May meeting.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that a grant of £1,000 would be available from 1 September 2016.</p>	JZB
82	<p><b>EDINBURGH GROUP</b></p> <p>The Council noted with sadness that the Group was disbanded last year.</p>	
83	<p><b>BLACKPOOL GROUP</b></p> <p>The Council was very sorry to hear that this group has now been closed.</p>	
84	<p><b>CONFERENCE RECORDER</b></p> <p>The Council was extremely sad that Mrs Patricia Russell had had to resign on health grounds.</p>	

	<p>The question of her successor was considered but Ms Zoë Brooks said that since she had taken over responsibility for the minutes she had found Mrs Russell to be very efficient and helpful and that it would be difficult to find someone equally competent to replace her. Therefore Ms Brooks felt that for the time being she would prefer to do the work herself rather than try to break in someone new. Ms Brooks also said she was very grateful to Mrs Russell for her unselfishness in resigning promptly instead of risking letting anyone down in the future.</p> <p>The whole Council wished to record its thanks and appreciation for the excellent service it had received from Mrs Russell. She has a talent for unscrambling rather muddled and disjointed debate in order to record something that makes sense and will be a hard act to follow. Her smiling face at Council meetings will certainly be missed.</p>	
<b>85</b>	<p><b>THE COLLEGE</b> Mrs Patricia Russell has also had to retire as College President because of her health. In addition Mr P Wood has resigned with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> May. Therefore the Council was somewhat relieved to learn that Mr Christopher Chambers was to take over as President.</p>	
<b>86</b>	<p><b>LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES</b> The Council considered a letter dated 28 April from Mr Gordon Kuphal and a draft agreement with the Swedenborg Society regarding the transfer of books and records from Conference to the Society. The Council was broadly in agreement with the proposals but wished to clarify precisely what documents would be retained by Conference, who would have ownership of the safe and strong room, who had keys to the strong room and what arrangements there would be for members of the Historical Society to have access to records.</p>	JZB
<b>87</b>	<p><b>MEMBERSHIP OF CONFERENCE</b> A paper from Mr David Haseler concerning whether people should be encouraged to become Members of Conference was considered and it was decided that no action was necessary.</p>	
<b>88</b>	<p><b>FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING</b> Mr David Haseler's report was noted.</p>	
<b>89</b>	<p><b>JOB DESCRIPTIONS</b> It was agreed that this item should be included on the agenda each May to remind line managers and those who link with Ministry to check that the job description is still relevant. If any changes are made a copy of the revised and signed job description must be sent to the Company Secretary to keep in the employee's file. Ms Brooks agreed to supply details of present job descriptions where necessary.</p>	JZB JZB
<b>90</b>	<p><b>CLOSING</b> The Revd David Gaffney closed the whole meeting by leading the Council in the Lord's Prayer.</p>	

**The next meeting of Council will be on 26<sup>th</sup> July at the Hayes Conference Centre**

**Future meetings**

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**