

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW CHURCH

COUNCIL

Year 2016/2017

Friday 16 September 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]
 Mrs S G Field [Company Accountant]
 Mrs A Gaffney [Purley Chase Manager][Part only]

1	COUNCIL MEETING A meeting of the Council was held at Purley Chase Centre, Purley Chase Lane, Mancetter, Atherstone, Warwickshire on Friday 16 September 2016.	
2	OPENING Revd Christine Bank opened the meeting by reading John 8: 1-11 and asking us to reflect on 'let the one without sin cast the first stone'.	
3	WELCOME AND APOLOGIES The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.	
4	MINUTES 4.1 Confirmation of the Minutes of the last meeting The Minutes of the last meeting of the Council July 2016 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. 4.2 Matters arising from the Minutes 4.2.1 Brightlingsea Church [see Minute 98.2.1] The registration of the land has now been completed. Nobody visited the church by the closing date for offers of 25 August. An advertisement is being placed in a newspaper for a different area and the date for offers is now 6 October. The closing service is on Saturday 24 September and Mrs Judith Wilson will attend. 4.2.2 Library and Archives [see Minute 98.2.4] Resolved: that Ms Zoë Brooks contact Mr Gordon Kuphal with the Council's version of the agreement to be made with the Swedenborg Society and that it was not necessary to use a solicitor as we are dealing with a friendly organisation. Papers at Brightlingsea date from the time Mr Gordon Kuphal and Mr Michael Hindley	JMW JZB

	<p>held positions on the Council. There are some documents that are clearly appropriate for transfer to safekeeping at Swedenborg House and arrangements will be made for that to be done. There are other papers that need ‘weeding’ before being either stored at Purley Chase or sent to Swedenborg House. The Council is reluctant to bring those to Purley to allow them to be sorted at leisure and urges that the process be completed locally to avoid unnecessary transportation costs. Mr Michael Hindley agreed to speak to Mr Gordon Kuphal about this and Mrs Judith Wilson will be able to see the problem for herself and speak with those on site when she is there for the closing service.</p> <p>4.2.3 Common Investment Fund [see Minute 101]</p> <p>A question was asked at Conference regarding the Common Investment Fund and a considerable amount of information was produced by Mrs Sally Field for consideration by the Council. A report will be issued to unit holders when the situation is finalised but it was felt that there is no information that can usefully be given at this stage.</p> <p>Resolved: that Mrs Field arrange a meeting between Messrs Bates Weston, herself and Ms Zoë Brooks and that Mr David Thomas be invited to attend, as he had raised questions regarding the fund and the Council felt that his presence would reassure people on the question of transparency.</p> <p>Resolved: that Mrs Field produce quarterly statements for the fund for presentation at Council meetings and annual accounts.</p> <p>4.2.4 Other Organisations at Conference [see Confidential Minute 113]</p> <p>Concern was expressed about people coming on site at Hayes who were not booked in to attend Conference. Everyone coming to the Hayes should complete a booking form even if they are taking no refreshments.</p> <p>The Hayes provides Conference with a main hall and rooms for its various activities. The AGM of another charity is not part of Conference activities. Therefore any other charity wishing to hold its AGM there should make a separate booking arrangement directly with the Hayes.</p> <p>Resolved: that other registered charities should not be allowed to hold their AGM's at the Hayes as part of Conference.</p>	<p>MJH JMW</p> <p>SGF</p> <p>SGF</p>
5	<p>CONFIRMATION OF DECISIONS MADE BY E-MAIL</p> <p>5.1 Decision confirmed: that the Annual Return to the Charity Commission be approved. [26 July 2016]</p> <p>5.2 Decision confirmed: that we appoint Mr Grant Brackley to be the Chairman of the Purley Management Team. [12 August 2016]</p>	
6	<p>MINISTRY ISSUES</p> <p>There were no issues to discuss at this time.</p>	
7	<p>COMPANY ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT</p> <p>The quarterly Income and Expenditure Account for April to June 2016 and the five year forecast had been circulated to Council. The operational surplus was in line with the same period last year but the forecast for the year to 31 March 2017 was a deficit of £56,000. The deficit increases each year to reach £122,000 by the year to 31 March 2021. However, there was some very good news. The Bournemouth Church is to make a donation of £1,000 a month for three years for the purpose of training people for the ministry. This is not taken into account in the figures provided as the information was received after the accounts were produced. The Council is very grateful to Bournemouth for their generosity and a suitable letter of thanks will be sent.</p>	<p>MDH</p>

	<p>Mrs Field requested that any queries on accounting matters be sent to her.</p> <p>Mrs Field reported that a total of £4,560 had been received for the New Christian Bible Study appeal. The Council had agreed to match up to £5,000 and it was felt that further time should be allowed to see if £5,000 could be raised.</p> <p>Resolved: that up to the end of October should be allowed for further donations to be made and that the arrangements for transfer of funds would therefore be finalised at the November Council meeting.</p>	CAB
8	<p>RESIGNATION OF THE DEPUTY MANAGER OF PURLEY CHASE</p> <p>Mrs Anne Gaffney joined the meeting for this item.</p> <p>Mrs Jane Harbord has resigned. It appears her family commitments and her place of residence being about 90 minutes away were significant factors in her decision.</p> <p>It was confirmed that a future appointment would be made for 18 months initially and that the working pattern would be flexible so as to suit Mrs Gaffney and the new person appointed, with Ms Zoë Brooks being kept in the picture so that she could word the contract accordingly. It was agreed that any applicants would be told that the position could become permanent.</p> <p>Mrs Gaffney provided a copy of a CV she had received from a Mr G Harding in response to an advertisement for a cook. She felt this person might well be suited to the position of Deputy Manager and had spoken to him informally before the meeting and shown him around Purley. He had already applied for another job but he nevertheless expressed an interest in pursuing the position at Purley. The Council felt that it would be sensible to interview Mr Harding as soon as possible, as if he proved to be suitable it would mean that the post could be filled quickly.</p> <p>Resolved: that Mr Harding be interviewed without delay.</p> <p>Resolved: that as before the interview team be Mrs Rachel Turner, Mrs Anne Gaffney and Mrs Sally Field.</p> <p>Resolved: that should Mr Harding not be appointed the post be advertised with Mr David Haseler being responsible for this.</p>	RFT AG SGF MDH
9	<p>THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF PURLEY CHASE</p> <p>There was a general debate about the working arrangements at Purley Chase, with the idea of it not being necessary always to have a manager on site being discussed in particular, but it was felt that no changes should be made to the present arrangements.</p>	
10	<p>LENGTH OF THE APPOINTMENT OF THE DEPUTY MANAGER AT PURLEY CHASE</p> <p>The Purley Team wanted to know why the appointment was for only 18 months. The reason was that the Council might wish to change the working arrangements after that period.</p>	MDH
11	<p>THE NEW CHURCH WOMEN'S LEAGUE BENEVOLENT FUND</p> <p>The Council had previously advised the Women's League that their best course of action was to find a similar organisation which would be willing to take over the administration of the benevolent fund. It was therefore surprised to learn that the charity had been closed and the funds transferred to Conference for its general purposes. This means that previous beneficiaries will lose out as Conference does not operate a benevolent fund and in any event cannot benefit individual members financially. The Council hopes that the Women's League has informed its previous beneficiaries of the situation. The capital transferred consists of cash, Common Investment Fund holdings and Treasury Stock and amounts to</p>	

	some £136,000. Mrs Sally Field will look into how best to invest the funds in future.	SGF
12	INSURANCE In future all insurance matters previously dealt with by Mr Ian Hayes will be dealt with by Mrs Sally Field. Mrs Field will notify Societies.	SGF
13	CONFERENCE REVIEW AND PLANS FOR CONFERENCE 2017 The Council felt that it had been an uplifting Conference and found the part played by the younger people very encouraging for the future. Mrs Judith Wilson agreed to be responsible for the programme again but she would be happy to step down if someone else were to volunteer to do it. Anyone wanting a slot at Conference should apply to her, or to the Ministers' Committee for items of a spiritual nature. It is not considered proper for sessions to be offered from the floor of Conference. The Council noted that the Hayes has altered their pricing structure for 2017 with the result that it will be relatively more expensive for day visitors. Ms Zoë Brooks will draw attention to this in her letter inviting members to attend Conference. The council considered the proposal made at Conference that there should be a fund-raising team and felt that this was a good idea. Resolved: that Mrs Sally Field set up a fund-raising team. Resolved: that the subsidies for attendance at the Annual Meeting of Conference will continue to apply in 2017.	JZB SGF JZB
14	VISION The Council expressed appreciation for the contribution made by the Revd Becky Jarratt. They recognised the need to continue to support green shoots. They decided that the under 64's should be asked if they wanted a slot at Conference next year.	JMW
15	MEMORIAL TREE/PLAQUE AT HAYES It is anticipated that in 2018 Conference will have its 25 th meeting at Swanwick. Mr John Ford has suggested that we should plant a tree with a plaque by it to mark the occasion. He has a Rowan tree that would be suitable. Resolved: that the Hayes be approached with a view to doing this and that Mr Ford's offer to supply the tree be accepted with many thanks.	JZB
16	JENNIFER SARAH JONES Mrs Jones has now been employed by Conference for nearly a year and her probation period is therefore at an end. Resolved: that Mrs Jones' appointment be confirmed.	JZB
17	AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND LINKS WITH MINISTRY Resolved: that the areas of responsibility and links with ministry remain unchanged.	
18	RENAMING THE COUNCIL Ms Zoë Brooks drew attention to the fact that 'the Council' was proving to be an unsatisfactory name. It made the wording of sentences where other councils were also mentioned very difficult at times and some people had started referring to the Conference Council again. Resolved: that a motion be put at Conference 2017 to revert to the Conference Council.	JZB
19	POTENTIAL COUNCIL MEMBERS The idea of changing meetings to all day Saturday to accommodate potential new Council members was discussed. This arrangement was considered unsatisfactory for a number of reasons including the need for most members to stay overnight on Friday and Saturday, compromising church attendance, the lack of certainty that the work could always be	

	<p>accomplished in one day and the loss of existing Council members for whom this arrangement was unsatisfactory.</p> <p>Resolved: that the existing arrangements for Council meetings stand.</p> <p>Councillors are acutely aware of the need for members with accountancy and legal skills and will again try to think of ways of obtaining such people.</p>	
20	<p>BURNLEY SOCIETY</p> <p>The church is going to close in May 2017. Their trust deed specifies a 20 year period for funds from the sale of the property to be ring fenced to allow for future church needs in the area but the Society is content for this to be waived. Conference's solicitor has been asked to approach the Charity Commission about this.</p> <p>An estate agent has been engaged with a remit to sell the freehold of the flats as well as the church building.</p>	
21	<p>UNREGISTERED LAND</p> <p>Some of Conference properties are unregistered. A first registration takes months and can be a problem when it comes to selling as there is a danger of the sale being delayed.</p> <p>Resolved: that the Company Secretary proceed with the systematic registration of all Conference properties.</p>	JZB
22	<p>0845 TELEPHONE NUMBER</p> <p>Miss Gemma McLean suggested that we discontinue this number as it is hardly ever used and costs us £72 a year.</p> <p>Resolved: that the 0845 number be discontinued and that the Purley Chase number be used as our general contact number.</p>	JZB
23	<p>YOUTH AND FAMILY TEAM</p> <p>Mrs Lara Nicholls reported that she had received an email from the Revd Jack Dunion in which he had said that they had a meeting scheduled for November 26th at Purley, during which they hoped to take stock. They will be looking at the budget to see what has given best value for money and will be reviewing what they have achieved during the past year. They will also, hopefully, look at phase two of their plan to grow the youth and family element of the church.</p> <p>Mrs Jenny and Mr Steve Jones have been involved in planning an international Easter Rally in 2018. The Team is looking at inviting people from both the US and Canada.</p> <p>At Conference and both summer camps there was a record attendances (23 at 13+ and over 20 at 9+).</p> <p>The Team has also been working on delegation and bringing in new volunteers. Miss Steph Whittle, Miss Emily Bank and Miss Shannon Fitzgerald have all come on board and the Revd Becky Jarratt has now joined the Team. Mr Keith Dunbar is also showing an interest in being involved.</p> <p>Mr Robert Clark is in the process of choosing a course of study. It will probably be 'An Introduction to Swedenborg'.</p>	
24	<p>MERGER OF NENCH AND SOLCe</p> <p>The Council was asked to formally approve the merger of the two charities and the amendment to Sections 2,7 and 15 of the Charity Commissioners' Scheme dated 13 July 1977 in respect of the New Church College</p> <p>Resolved: that the merger of the two charities be approved but the proposed amendments to the Charity Commissioners' Scheme be altered to read at Section 2 first sentence 'Ministry of the New Church' instead of 'ministry' and at Section 7 second sentence 'as used by The</p>	

	General Conference of the New Church' rather than 'as used by the Conference of the New Church'.	JZB
25	CIRCULATION OF PAPERS FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS The Council agreed to Ms Brooks' request that papers received by her less than two weeks before the meeting date should not be circulated immediately but just be sent out with the agenda.	
26	SEPTEMBER 2017 MEETING DATE A Councillor asked if the date of the meeting could be changed but no alternative that was satisfactory to all members could be found.	
27	COLLEGE COUNCIL MINUTES Mr David Haseler said that he had been unable to obtain any minutes since those for the meeting in October 2015. It was suggested that he ask Mr Chris Chambers to arrange for later minutes to be sent to Ms Zoë Brooks.	MDH
28	CLOSING Revd Christine Bank closed the meeting on Friday evening with a prayer.	

The next meeting of Council will be Nov 11th-12th 2016 at Purley Chase Centre

Future meetings

March 10th-11th 2017

May 5th-6th 2017

July 25th-28th 2017 Annual Meeting

September 15th-16th 2017

November 17th-18th 2017