

**THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW CHURCH**

**COUNCIL**

**Year 2017/2018**

**Friday 5 May 2017**

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]

<b>93</b>	<b>COUNCIL MEETING</b> A meeting of the Council was held at Purley Chase Centre, Purley Chase Lane, Mancetter, Atherstone, Warwickshire on Friday 5 May 2017.	
<b>94</b>	<b>OPENING</b> The Revd Christine Bank opened the meeting by reading Luke 24: 36-53 followed immediately by John 1: 1-5.	
<b>95</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</b> The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies.	
<b>96</b>	<b>COMPLETE AGENDA</b> Two items were added to the agenda.	
<b>97</b>	<b>MINUTES</b> <b>97.1 Confirmation of the Minutes of the last meeting</b> The Minutes of the last meeting of the Council March 2017 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.  <b>97.2 Matters arising from the Minutes</b> <b>97.2.1 Brightlingsea Church [see Minute 70.2.1]</b> An offer of £237,000 for the purchase of the church was accepted in October 2016 and pre-contract enquiries were dealt with before the end of the year. Unfortunately it proved impossible to obtain a response to a request to agree dates for exchange of contracts and completion. In order to move things along our solicitor wrote to the buyer's solicitor on 24 March 2017 saying that unless contracts were exchanged within three weeks Conference would withdraw from the transaction. The buyer's solicitor responded by saying that his client now wanted to make the offer conditional on his obtaining planning permission for residential use. As a result the property is being re-marketed as it was felt that this was	

<p>unacceptable. The estate agent has approached the others who made offers but has heard nothing from them yet. If he receives no response in the next few days he is going to let us have his proposals for further action.</p> <p>97.2.2 Burnley Society Closure [see Minute 70.2.4] An offer of £180,000 was accepted on 2 February and it was hoped to complete on 2 May, i.e. immediately after the closure of the Society on 30 April. However, pre-contract enquiries have not yet been received and our solicitor has been asked to ascertain the reason for the lack of progress. Mr David Haseler attended the closing service to represent the Council and it was also attended by many friends from other Societies. As required by law a letter was sent to the leaseholders offering them first refusal regarding the purchase of the freehold of the flats. The amount they were invited to offer was £15,000. On 29 March an offer of £9,000 was received. The estate agent considered this to be inadequate and he is trying to get them to increase their offer to £12,000 which he feels is an acceptable figure. No reply has been received yet to the request made to the Charity Commission regarding the removal of the 20 year restriction on the use of the funds.</p>	JZB
<p>97.2.3 Purley Chase Centre [see Minute 70.2.9 and Confidential Minute 88] It was felt that an inclusive vision is needed for Purley as its position within the church is unique. This will be of help to the Company Accountant. The Purley Management Team will be asked to draft it. There was considerable discussion about the managerial needs at Purley, the provision of accommodation, the wording of contracts and security arrangements during holiday periods.</p>	PMT
<p><b>Resolved:</b> that a manager and a deputy were required and that interviews should be held as soon as possible for the position of manager, the interview panel to be Mr Grant Brackley (provided he was willing), Mr David Haseler, Mrs Anne Gaffney and Mrs Sally Field.</p>	MDH
<p><b>Resolved:</b> that the question of planning permission be resolved so that the division of the existing accommodation into two flats could proceed.</p>	PMT
<p><b>Resolved:</b> that where a manager's home was elsewhere and he/she merely stayed overnight at Purley as required then all costs relating to the flat would be met by Conference. <b>Resolved:</b> that where the manager's home was Purley and he/she was a representative occupier then Conference would meet all the expenses it could without there being a charge to income tax, namely Council tax, building's insurance and water and sewage charges. In addition it would meet the costs of heat and light, although there would be a taxable benefit in respect of these items. The manager would be responsible for cleaning, decoration and the provision of furniture.</p>	JZB
<p><b>Resolved:</b> that certain items needed to be included in the Purley managerial contracts that were not needed in the contracts of other employees. These were in connection with the keeping of pets, the agreement to a medical examination, sickness and sick pay, hours of work, a requirement to take some holiday in the winter months and the need for a driving licence.</p>	JZB
<p>It was recognised that minor amendments to the Staff Handbook would be needed to accommodate the difference in contracts.</p>	

<p><b>Resolved:</b> that overnight cover during managerial holiday periods be left for the manager to arrange.</p>	JZB
<p>97.2.4 Southend-on-Sea Society [see Minute 70.2.10] We have responded to pre-contract enquiries regarding the accepted offer of £375,000 and are now waiting to hear further from the purchaser's solicitors.</p>	
<p>97.2.5 Asbestos Legionella and Electrical Installations [see Minute 70.2.11 and Confidential Minute 89] The Society which had the bad electrical survey has now had remedial work done. Following the Council meeting on 13 November 2015 Mr Wilf Woodhouse sent a letter to each Society saying that it was required by the Council to have a Legionella Report and an Asbestos Survey prepared in respect of its church premises. Following receipt of the Asbestos survey it was then asked to complete a Statement of Intent regarding future action in connection with the Asbestos Survey. Immediately prior to the Council's meeting on 10 March 2017 Mr Woodhouse informed the Council that Accrington Society had not replied to a request for its Statement of Intent following its Asbestos Survey or to his request for a Legionella Report. As a result Mr Richard Cunningham wrote to Accrington on behalf of the Council saying that unless they responded to Mr Woodhouse on these matters the Council would tell them to cease to use the premises because they had failed to comply with Rule L7. Mr Woodhouse reports that he has not received any information from Accrington since this letter was sent.</p>	
<p><b>Resolved:</b> that Mr Cunningham write to the Society informing them that they must not allow the premises to be used for any purposes until they have, in accordance with Rule L7, supplied the information the Council required to Mr Wilf Woodhouse.</p>	RHC
<p>97.2.6 Conference 2017 [see Minute 70.2.12] The programme was approved and Mr Richard Cunningham was thanked for his work. He volunteered to prepare the programme again next year and his offer was accepted.</p>	
<p>97.2.7 Retiring Members of Council [see Minute 79] Mr Michael Hindley will offer his services as an Elected Member of the Council. As Mrs Turner is not standing for re-election she will not attend the Council meeting on July 25<sup>th</sup>. Mrs Turner was thanked for her work on the Council.</p>	RHC
<p>97.2.8 The New Church Women's League [see Minute 83] The Council considered representations made by four people for the benevolent fund formerly operated by the Women's League to be continued. Although it was not unsympathetic to the idea of a benevolent fund the Council remained of the opinion that it was not the body to administer such a fund. One suggestion it had received was that the Broadfield Memorial Benevolent Fund could undertake this work. The Broadfield Fund does not in fact hold any capital investments. It receives a sum each year from a source that wishes to remain anonymous and has to distribute the money received within a year. Therefore in the future if nobody is willing to undertake this work the receipt of funds could be refused and the donor would then be left to deal with the distribution. Its situation is thus very different from that of the former</p>	

	<p>Women's League.</p> <p>It has been said that the money given to the former Women's League should be used for the purpose for which it was intended. The Women's League was founded in 1894. Its funds were to be devoted to charitable purposes. It was not therefore set up specifically as a benevolent fund, although that seems to have been its only activity in recent years. In view of this it is impossible to say what particular purpose those who donated money expected it to be used for.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the Council will not itself operate a benevolent fund.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the Broadfield Memorial Benevolent Fund will not take over the operation of the benevolent fund previously operated by The New Church Women's League.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that if the people who are willing to become trustees of a benevolent fund get together; and</p> <p>a) Approach the Charity Commission to see if The New Church Women's League can be re-instated with themselves as new trustees; and</p> <p>b) Personally undertake to supply any information in connection with this matter that the Charity Commission may require without the involvement of the Trustees of The General Conference of the New Church; and</p> <p>c) Ascertain from the Charity Commission whether the General Conference of the New Church may legally return the funds it received from the The New Church Women's League; and</p> <p>d) Provide the Trustees of The General Conference of the New Church with written authority from the Charity Commission to transfer the funds back to The New Church Women's League.</p> <p>e) Then upon receipt of such authority the Company Accountant will effect the transfer.</p> <p>The Company Secretary will write to those who made specific enquires giving them details of this minute. The Chairman will include particulars in her report for <i>Lifeline</i>.</p>	JZB JMW
98	<p><b>CONFIRMATION OF DECISIONS MADE BY E-MAIL</b></p> <p><b>Decision confirmed:</b> that Bates Weston Audit Ltd.'s Terms of Engagement in respect of the Conference accounts be approved and that the Company Secretary be authorised to sign on behalf of the Council acknowledging agreement.</p>	
99	<p><b>MINISTRY ISSUES</b></p> <p>The Secretary of the Ministers' Committee passed on their thanks for the increase in salaries, self-employed fees and pensions.</p>	
100	<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 the year ended 31 March 2017, the Conference five year forecast, the Purley Chase Account for the year ended 31 March 2017 and the Common Investment Fund Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2017. Mrs Field was thanked for the comprehensive notes provided with these accounts.</p>	
101	<p><b>Ms ALISON SOUTHCOMBE</b></p> <p>The Council was asked to approve the Ministers' formal decision to recommend Ms Southcombe for ordination on completion of her studies and agree her allocation of duties.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the Ministers' decision to recommend Ms Southcombe for ordination, the recommendation to be made at Conference 2017, be approved.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the allocation of duties for Ms Southcombe as Programme Leader of Purley</p>	JZB JZB

	Chase Centre be approved. <b>Resolved:</b> that Ms Southcombe be employed as a Minister from 1 December 2017.	JZB
<b>102</b>	<b>JOB DESCRIPTIONS</b> The job descriptions for employed people are not in need of any amendment. The question of voluntary workers was considered and it was felt that it was important to have some record of their duties which could be passed on to a successor. <b>Resolved:</b> that voluntary workers be asked by the person to whom they report to log what they do, rather like a job description or procedures manual.	ALL
<b>103</b>	<b>SPONSORSHIP FOR PEOPLE WISHING TO STUDY AT SOLCe</b> A grant of £1,000 was made available for the year from 1 September 2016 and the Council had agreed that it would review the position at this meeting. It was noted that no use had been made of the grant for the year from September 2016. <b>Resolved:</b> that a grant of £1,000 would be available from 1 September 2017.	JZB
<b>104</b>	<b>NEW PROJECTS</b> In November 2011 £1,000 was made available to spend on new projects as and when needed. This has now been spent and the Ministry have requested a top-up. <b>Resolved:</b> that the Ministry be given an allowance of £2,000 a year from 1 April 2017. If it appears that this is going to run out before the end of the year the Company Accountant will inform the Council.	SGF
<b>105</b>	<b>STANDING ORDER NUMBER 4 - BALLOT FOR TRUSTEES</b> The Council considered whether the present 50% of votes required to be elected to the Council was adequate. It was felt that for a person to be on the Council then it was essential that Conference members really wanted that person to be a trustee. It was reasoned that it would be more appropriate for the number in favour to be the same as the number required for a special resolution. <b>Resolved:</b> that Standing Order number 4 be amended to: 'Whenever there are vacancies for the Chairman, the Vice-chairman or Elected Members and the number of nominees standing for a particular position equals or is less than the number of vacancies, a ballot will be held in which any nominee will need to obtain the votes of at least three-quarters of the Voting Members present at the Annual Meeting when the vote is taken in order to be elected.'	JZB
<b>106</b>	<b>KENSINGTON SOCIETY</b> David Friend had spoken to the Chairman voicing his concerns about the amount of work the Society's immediate neighbours were doing – digging down and possibly damaging party walls. (The church has three party walls). As this was an urgent matter she agreed to his request to obtain a specialist party wall survey. Hopefully it will be possible to get this paid for by the neighbours doing the work. <b>Resolved:</b> that this course of action be approved.	
<b>107</b>	<b>CLOSING</b> The Revd Christine Bank closed the meeting on Friday evening by reading Psalm 150.	

**The next meeting of Council will be 25 July 2017 at the Hayes Conference Centre**

### **Future meetings**

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