

**THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW CHURCH**

**CONFERENCE COUNCIL**

**Year 2017/2018**

**Friday 15 September 2017**

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

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

<b>1</b>	<b>COUNCIL MEETING</b> A meeting of the Conference Council was held at Purley Chase Centre, Purley Chase Lane, Mancetter, Atherstone, Warwickshire on Friday 15 September 2017.	
<b>2</b>	<b>OPENING</b> The Revd Christine Bank opened the meeting by reading Leviticus 26: 1-13.	
<b>3</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</b> The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Mr Michael Hindley.	
<b>4</b>	<b>COMPLETE AGENDA</b> Three items were added to the agenda.	
<b>5</b>	<b>MINUTES</b> <b>5.1 Confirmation of the Minutes of the last meeting</b> The Minutes of the last meeting of the Council July 2017 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting. <b>5.2 Matters arising from the Minutes</b> 5.2.1 Burnley Society Closure [see Minute 114.2.2] The sale was set for 7 August but then moved to 18 August and from there to 4 September but still did not take place. As a result the Company Secretary, after consulting Mr John Ford, instructed Conference's solicitor on 5 September to write to the buyer's solicitor saying that unless exchange took place by Wednesday 20 September, with completion no more than a month after exchange, Conference would seek an alternative purchaser. The sale for £180,000 was subsequently completed on 13 September. Our solicitor has responded to questions raised by the Charity Commission regarding the request made regarding the removal of the 20 year restriction on the use of the funds. The process to sell the freehold of the flats continues. 5.2.2 Asbestos, Legionella and Electrical Installations [see Minute 114.2.5] An updated report from Mr Wilf Woodhouse was considered and Mr Richard Cunningham reported orally.	

	<p>All Asbestos checks have now been carried out and all Societies have completed the Statement of Intent form. Two Societies have still to carry out electrical inspections and two have outstanding issues to deal with. Two churches have not reported that they have been risk assessed for Legionella and two have not addressed matters raised by assessments. The question of alternative contacts for Accrington was discussed.</p> <p>5.2.3 Future Length and Format of Conference [see Minute 124]</p> <p>The various suggestions made were considered. It was apparent from discussions at the 2017 Conference that there was a desire for more free time and some felt a longer Conference would be a benefit. Ms Zoë Brooks said that as the matter had been raised because filling the programme had become somewhat burdensome she could not understand how spreading the same number of items over five days was seen as a way of solving the problem.</p> <p>There was a suggestion that as the Ministers' Seminar had been so well received perhaps some of the work from there could be part of Conference. Another idea was that there might be a jam session for musicians. In 2018 there is a tree planting ceremony to be included in the programme.</p> <p>Those are all ideas. Only the tree planting actually needs to happen from the above list as it is arranged with The Hayes. Hopefully choir practice and the meetings and rehearsals that happen during Conference will be able to be fitted in and not seem as squashed.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the following are the changes to the programme that will be worked towards from comments and suggestions received:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Tuesday night will be left free as some who had travelled felt it would be good to have a relaxing first night. (The New Church Children's Society to be informed of this as it could affect the timing of their AGM)</li> <li>2) on Wednesday there should be free time after lunch, i.e. the first session should be cancelled</li> <li>3) on Thursday the possibility of having some free time should be borne in mind</li> <li>4) on Friday sessions should start at 10.00am to allow people more time to pack and vacate rooms</li> <li>5) on Friday the young people should have time to present or lead a short session</li> <li>6) to accommodate the request of the younger people for a longer Conference young families should be invited to arrive on Monday afternoon (as the advance party of Council members and some other people do now, as all attendees have always been free to arrive on Monday if they so wish) with a subsidy on the same basis as for the rest of the week, with the formal meeting still being programmed from Tuesday. (This would mean that children and young people would be the sole responsibility of their parents for Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning and that they would need to be able to amuse themselves.)</li> </ol>	<p>RHC</p> <p>JZB</p> <p>RHC</p>
6	<p><b>CONFIRMATION OF DECISIONS MADE BY E-MAIL</b></p> <p><b>Decision confirmed:</b> Confirm decision of 8 August that a letter as drafted be sent to the Secretary of the Kensington Society to clarify matters.</p>	
7	<p><b>MINISTRY ISSUES</b></p> <p>A request from the General Church in the USA has been received. They are compiling a new edition of a hymn book and sought permission to include a Brian Kingslake hymn (383 in blue hymn book). Copyright lies with General Conference.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that with the usual acknowledgements the General Church in the USA may print the words and sheet music of the hymn The Lord God Jesus Christ Reigns! in the book that</p>	<p>JZB</p>

	accompanies Jacob's Ladder Level 3.	
8	<p><b>COMPANY ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT</b></p> <p>The Company Accountant produced five sets of figures for the Council to consider. These were the Conference Income and Expenditure Account for the period April to June 2017 (with comparative figures for the same period last year), the Conference five year forecast, which showed operating deficits of £44K, £40K, £57K, £73K and £99K, the Purley Chase Account for the period April to June 2017 (with comparative figures for the same period last year and a forecast for the whole of the year to 31 March 2018), the Common Investment Fund Income and Expenditure Account for the period April to June 2017 and information on the Youth Leader fund, the Ministers' Fund and the Publishing Fund. As usual Mrs Field provided comprehensive notes with these accounts.</p> <p>Ms Zoë Brooks drew attention to the fact that many people seemed to think that the closure of societies meant that Conference had money to spare. The deficits would suggest otherwise. Ms Brooks went on to mention that with three Societies closing and one Society which had previously contributed £6,000 a year withdrawing its support she calculated that there would be a reduction of £18K a year in Society contributions. Closed Societies did not always give all their financial assets to Conference and the trust deeds of some Societies meant the proceeds of sale of the churches could not be used for a number of years.</p> <p>The usefulness of designated accounts was discussed.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that for Purley Chase a Programme Leader Fund of £10,000 be set up for the year to 30 November 2018.</p>	SGF
9	<p><b>ORDINATION OF Ms ALISON SOUTHCOMBE</b></p> <p>Ms Southcombe, Mrs Anne Gaffney and Mr Geoff Nicholls attended this part of the meeting.</p> <p>The ceremony will be at 12.30pm on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at Purley Chase with the Revd David Gaffney leading the service.</p> <p>Refreshments on arrival and a buffet lunch at approximately 2.00pm will be provided. These will be free of charge with donations welcome and appreciated. Numbers are needed to help with catering and also car parking arrangements as it is known that there are plans to have minibus transport from some areas.</p> <p>Rooms for overnight stays are available but these are going fast. Bookings should be made via the website.</p> <p>Mrs Judith Wilson will organise communicating this to the wider church.</p> <p>The service at Purley will be the ordination but something to recognise this also needs to be part of the next Conference.</p>	DEG AG/GN  JMW DEG
10	<p><b>COST OF CONFERENCE 2018</b></p> <p>The question of the cost for an additional day at the beginning of Conference was considered.</p> <p>The booking forms already have a provision for people to book to attend from Monday afternoon but this additional time is not subsidised.</p> <p>The Company Secretary raised the question of who was responsible for the design of booking forms.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the reductions in charges will continue to apply in 2018 and families attending for the extra day before Conference will enjoy the same subsidy on that day as for the other days. The Company Secretary will detail the two sets of charges on the booking form for families.</p>	JZB

	<b>Resolved:</b> that the design of booking forms was part of the Company Secretary's job.	
<b>11</b>	<p><b>DATES OF FUTURE CONFERENCES</b></p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that dates will be as follows, assuming we commence the programme on Tuesday:</p> <p>2018: July 24-27  2019: July 23-26  2020: July 28-31  2021: July 27-30  2022: July 26-29</p>	JZB
<b>12</b>	<p><b>EVENTS CALENDAR</b></p> <p>There was a request from the floor of Conference for a central events calendar. It was felt that the calendar should be set up as part of the Conference website, with Google being prevented from having access if possible, and that selected individuals would have access to make updates. Purley events will continue to be shown on the Purley website as at present but a header could direct users to check the Purley events web pages. This will be an information only calendar, with no facility for booking or contacting event leaders.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that Mr Richard Cunningham and Miss Gemma Mclean set up a framework for an events calendar.</p>	RHC
<b>13</b>	<p><b>MEMORIAL NOTICES</b></p> <p>The Company Secretary pointed out that the cost of postage for the information packs to Conference delegates is a significant expense and that it should be possible to keep within the 100 gram weight limit if the memorial notices were to be made available at Conference in the room envelopes on arrival instead of being posted. This would also help with the pressure to complete such documents before the postage cut-off date.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the memorial notices be made available at Conference in the room envelopes on arrival.</p>	JZB
<b>14</b>	<p><b>MINUTES COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>This year the Company Secretary approached new people to join the Committee but her efforts were unsuccessful. Mr Gordon Kuphal does not wish to be on the Committee in future. They were both of the opinion that in view of this situation the best course of action would be to abolish the Committee. Mr Kuphal said he would be happy to check the minutes after Conference.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the Minutes Committee be abolished and that a motion to do this should be put to Conference in 2018.</p>	JZB
<b>15</b>	<p><b>PROCEDURE FOR MAKING DECISIONS BY EMAIL</b></p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that details of how each Council member had voted should be circulated to Council members. This is a change from current procedure for the sake of openness.</p>	
<b>16</b>	<p><b>REPORT OF THE FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>Various recommendations and queries from the FAC were discussed. The Company Secretary reported that she did not have a copy of Conference's Investment Policy. She had asked Mr Michael Hindley if he had a copy but had not yet received a reply as he was on holiday. She asked Mr David Haseler if he would ascertain at the forthcoming FAC meeting if anyone had a copy.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that separate designations by Newtons under the Conference umbrella should not be made, that a third fund manager was not required and that it would like the FAC's advice as to how much it was possible to withdraw from the UBS Alpes 2008 fund without risk of</p>	

	future calls.	MDH
17	<b>GRAEME HARDING</b> <b>Resolved:</b> that Mr Harding had successfully completed his probationary period.	JZB
18	<b>MINISTERS AS MEMBERS OF SOCIETIES</b> Ms Zoë Brooks reported that she had been informed that ministers were not allowed to be members of Societies but that she could find nothing in the Conference rules to this effect. <b>Resolved:</b> that a minister could be a member of a Society provided there was nothing in the rules of the Society that prohibited such membership.	
19	<b>SAFEGUARDING</b> Mrs Lara Nicholls reported that Paisley has not replied to her but she felt that as things are very different in Scotland this may not be a problem. Greenhill also has not replied. However, although Conference owns the building Greenhill church is in fact a separate charity with its own trustees and responsibility for safeguarding will therefore lie with them. The Kildwick building is let to different groups and their contact Keith Sandiford will be advised he should be clear that groups with children/young people are responsible for their own safeguarding arrangements. An insurance assessor has advised that details of our DBS checks should be retained on file for a period of 50 years for Public Liability Insurance purposes. The Revd Rita Russell has a database of the checks she has done in recent years and this will be updated as necessary.	LKN
20	<b>DBS CHECKS FOR PURLEY STAFF</b> <b>Resolved:</b> that DBS checks were necessary for all staff working at Purley.	MDH
21	<b>YOUTH AND FAMILY TEAM</b> Part of an email from the Revd Jack Dunion was considered. From this it appears that the team need to be reminded that it has a budget and should it have a new idea to support it is not required to seek additional approval before spending the funds in this budget. International camp next year will involve additional outlay for as yet unknown things and the team should be informed that if additional funds are required it should ask for what it needs.	LKN
22	<b>PURLEY PREMISES</b> The office/study for Ms Alison Southcombe is now almost ready for use. There has recently been a break-in and the mower and some garden equipment has been taken. It appears to have been a professional job. Review of security and storage is needed. Planning permission for the flats was agreed in July but the building regulations have proved to be somewhat problematic. The situation has not been helped by a departmental reorganisation which saw our case put in the wrong section. As a result of this fees have been refunded but there is still a need for meetings to resolve outstanding concerns.	MDH MDH
23	<b>MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR MR IAN JOHNSON</b> This will be held at Purley Chase. <b>Resolved:</b> that Mr David Haseler will attend as the Council's representative.	MDH
24	<b>SOLICITORS' FEES</b> The Company Secretary provided details of fees charged by Cripps LLP and by Harris & Harris. She reported that she had been very pleased with the work done for Conference by Harris & Harris and recommended that as their fees were so much lower all work should in future be undertaken by Messrs Harris & Harris. <b>Resolved:</b> that the contract with Cripps LLP should not be renewed and that Harris &	

	Harris be appointed to undertake all Conference's future legal work.	JZB
25	<p><b>EMAIL ADDRESSES</b></p> <p>Mr David Haseler requested that Miss Gemma McLean be asked to tell people in future when new Purley Chase email addresses were set up. He was informed that it is Ms Leonie Winson, not Miss McLean, who is the person responsible for setting up these addresses.</p>	
26	<p><b>HOW TRUSTEES ARE SELECTED</b></p> <p>A new Charity Governance Code put together by various bodies and approved by the Charity Commission was considered. Much of it did not appear to be relevant to Conference but it did highlight a weakness in our system for appointing trustees in that there is really no way in which the existing trustees can ensure that new appointees have the skills needed to carry out the duties.</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b> that the Company Secretary should include a section in the Council Report for Conference 2018 explaining the problem.</p>	JZB

### Future meetings

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