



E-NEWS



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Finding a Way Forward

In the aftermath of a particularly difficult Annual Meeting of Conference, all members and friends of our church will be anxious to hear what steps are being taken to resolve the problems that have emerged in recent months, and to restore the orderly functioning of the church's government and ministry. Over the past few weeks, a small Steering Group, formed of seven members with a wide range of skills and long years of both lay and ministerial service, have been working, in consultation with the Company Secretary, to find a workable solution to the current impasse faced by the Conference.

We are now able to announce that significant progress has been made towards the formation of an entirely new Council. The previous Chair of the Council, Mrs Judith Wilson, together with the other remaining trustee, Miss Shannon Fitzgerald, have now resigned. Under the terms of our Articles of Association they were first able to co-opt two new trustees to fill their places, namely Ms Margaret Cowie as Chair and Mr Nigel Sutton as trustee. These two new trustees now form the nucleus of the new Council.

Work is now in progress to fill the remaining vacancies on the Council, namely the position of Vice Chair and also of a further five trustees. We are delighted to announce that there is one candidate for the position of Vice Chair and also six possible candidates for the remaining five places. Although we are currently working in a very irregular

situation, we believe that the new Council needs to have a democratic mandate from the voting members of Conference, that is, those members of Conference who were entitled to vote at the recent annual meeting. We therefore plan to circulate personal statements by all the candidates, together with voting instructions, by the end of August at the latest. Voting members will be asked to return their votes by 23.59 on Friday 3rd September. The names of those forming the new Council will be announced soon afterwards. All members will need to stand for re-election at the next Conference AGM.

Readers may be aware that an agreement was reached at the annual meeting that an Extraordinary General Meeting would be convened as speedily as possible. In the event, a number of practical difficulties emerged. In particular, at least half of the Voting Members from Conference would need to gather from all over the country for a meeting that would probably last only two or so hours. Legal opinion showed that we could not hold an EGM by Zoom and so we have adopted the procedure described above.

We also have to announce that the Company Secretary, Ms Zoe Brooks, has now resigned. We are grateful to her not only for her long years of diligent service but also for her cooperation during the past few difficult weeks. An advertisement for a new Company Secretary will be placed before the church and wider public in due course.

In conclusion we extend our thanks to the retiring trustees for the many years of devoted service that they have given to the Conference. The way ahead is far from certain but we do now have people ready and willing to pick up the work of Conference Council and maintain its many uses and responsibilities. If together we place ourselves in the Lord's hands, we can surely trust Him to guide us through present difficulties and to strengthen us in the service of His New Church.

Margaret Cowie (Chair) and Nigel Sutton (Trustee)

Date: 26th August 2021