



THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW CHURCH

CONFERENCE COUNCIL MEETING

**held on Wednesday 18th January 2023
Via Zoom**

Trustees Present Via Zoom: Mrs M L Cowie Chairman
Mr N K Sutton Vice - Chair
Mrs P Grimshaw
Mrs S Chesworth
Mr R Taylor
Revd R A Gill
Revd B R Jarvis

Also in attendance Via Zoom: Ms N Welch Company Secretary
Mrs R Jaggs Company Accountant
Mr C Chambers President New Church College
Revd H Brown Spiritual Leader
Revd J Dunion Spiritual Leader
Revd B Talbot Secretary to the Committee of Ministers

18th January 2023 Start: 19.00 - 21.00
19th January 2023 Start: 19.00 - 21.00

44	Opening The Revd Jack Dunion opened the meeting with a reading from John 9:24,25 and offered a prayer.	
45	Welcome The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies	
46	Minutes 46.1 Confirmation of the Minutes of the last meeting held on 18th November 2022. The minutes of the last meeting were approved by all present with Robert Gill proposing and Pauline Grimshaw seconding. 46.2 Matters arising from the Minutes. 46.2.1 Revision of Articles and Rules – Constitution Revision Group Revd Robert Gill explained that the CRG had set up a direct contact with Anna Hay, a specialist solicitor in Company Law from Harris and Harris solicitors to help updating the Articles of Association and Memorandum. Robert and Anna had a meeting by 'phone to go through the Memorandum and Articles of Association and have identified a number of specific	

	<p>issues. They would like to simplify the documents where possible and make it easier for people to understand. <i>Action: Revd Robert Gill will continue to work with Anna Hay and report back to the Council with suggestions</i></p> <p>46.2.2 Conference Programme 2023 Margaret Cowie explained that the subgroup are still working on the Conference programme for July 2023 and more information will be available after the Ministers' Committee meeting which will be held from 27th February to 1st March 2023 at Purley Chase. Margaret did explain that the group now consists of Margaret Cowie, Revd Jack Dunion and Becky Jarrett. The subgroup will continue to work on the Conference programme and will update the Council at the next meeting in March.</p> <p>46.2.3 Document Editing Via Google Docs (see minute 39) Natalie Welch explained that she and Robert Taylor had a zoom meeting at which Robert Taylor gave a demonstration via screen sharing on Zoom explaining the step-by-step process using Google Docs. Both agreed it would be a great idea to suggest a training session to the Council to help them understand how to use Google Docs. Robert will organise a Zoom group meeting to go through the step-by-step process of using Google Docs with the Council and for anyone who would rather have an individual Zoom meeting, Robert would be happy to organise this. <i>Action: Robert Taylor will send suggested dates to the Council to have the training session via Zoom.</i></p> <p>46.2.4 Review voting by email - Outlook Voting System (see minute 34) The Council tested the process of online voting on outlook which allows voting on mail to see if it would be an option for members to use at the AGM. The Council agreed that this process would not be suitable for the General Conference and that therefore it should not be introduced.</p>	RT
47	<p>AGM 47.1 AGM Notification Letter. The Council had a draft copy of the AGM notification letter that will be sent out at the end of January to members along with the relevant booking forms to approve. All present were happy with the format.</p> <p>47.2 Notice of Motions. The Council had discussions regarding alternative names for 'Honorary Life Members'. Alternatives to the name 'Honorary Life Member' have been suggested and after consideration the Council proposes the name 'Elder'. 'Elder' has strong biblical provenance and is affirmed in the Heavenly Doctrines as meaning, <i>"the chief characteristics of wisdom and intelligence that accord with truth and good"</i> [Arcana Caelestia 7912]. This name seems to fit well with the role and uses envisaged for this group of long serving and experienced lay members. <i>Action: Revd Robert Gill, Revd Bruce Jarvis and Pauline Grimshaw will work together to put the Notice of motions in a format ready to be sent out with the AGM notification letter.</i></p>	Revd RG Revd BJ
48	<p>Valuation Reports for Bournemouth This is still ongoing, and Margaret Cowie and Philip Brooks are communicating regularly with the solicitors and will inform the Council of any progress.</p>	

49	Company Accounts Report The Company Accountant produced figures for the Conference Income and Expenditure Account up to the end of December. The Council discussed the figures, and Rachael Jaggs will bring the full detailed accounts to the finance meeting which will be held on 12 th April 2023 for the Council to discuss and approve.	RJ
50	Trustees of the General Conference on New Church Website In response to a query from the Conference solicitor, the Council had a discussion to see if there was a need to publish the names of all the current Trustees on the General Conference website. It was decided that, since the names of all the Trustees are published on the Companies House and Charities Commission website and are available for all to see, there was no need to add this information to the Council Website.	
51	Ordination Student- Information Sheet Sue Chesworth explained to the Council that the handbook and instruction manual that is issued to new students needs updating. Swedenborg Open Learning Centre (SOLCe) are the ones who update the handbook so Sue will contact them. Meanwhile, Sue has updated the Information Sheet that students receive, and this now needs to be approved so that our sponsored ordination student, Lynne Griffiths, can receive a copy. The fact sheet mentions that a laptop is provided to the student and Sue Chesworth proposed to the Council that a new laptop is purchased for Lynne Griffiths The Council agreed that the Information Sheet Sue Chesworth had updated could be sent to Lynne Griffiths from the Company Secretary.	SC/NW
52	Purley Programme Director Position. Revd Helen Brown explained that the committee had been working hard through the job description and criteria for the Programme Director position at Purley Chase. The committee wanted to suggest and get approval from the Council that they advertise for the position in the UK and abroad in the hope that the right person, who meets the set criteria, might apply for the role. All present approved the advertising of the position both overseas and in the UK. The committee will continue to work on the job description and look into the best places to advertise the position and the elements to consider when employing someone from overseas and update the Council on the progress.	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Meeting Closed at 21.00pm on 18th January 2023 with a prayer from Revd Helen Brown</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Meeting continued Thursday 19th January 2023 at 19.00pm with Revd Jack Dunion opening the meeting with a reading from Psalm 80:1-3</p>	
	Apologies: Apologies were received from Nigel Sutton, Revd Helen Brown and Robert Taylor who were unable to attend the meeting on Thursday 19 th January 2023.	

53	<p>Email received requesting more information in the Year Book</p> <p>The Council has received a request to include basic information of other New Church bodies around the UK and the rest of the World in the Year Book. The Year Book did have this information until recently but due to the new General Data Protection Regulation it can no longer be included. The Council discussed this and one suggestion was to see if we are able to use a link to the map that is currently on the New Christian Bible Study website which has pinpoints showing where all New Churches are around the world. When you click on a pinpoint on the map it gives you the contact details for that New Church.</p> <p><i>Action: Natalie Welch will discuss this with Gemma Mclean (IT manager) and see how this might be added to the General Conference of the New Church website.</i></p>	NW
	<i>Revd Bruce Jarvis left the meeting</i>	
54	<p>Bike Mileage</p> <p>The Council looked at the current rates suggested on the HMRC Government website which is currently 20p per mile. It was discussed and agreed by all present to increase the rate to 20p per mile for bicycles. The Council felt this may encourage others to cycle rather than use a car where possible.</p>	
	<i>Revd Bruce Jarvis re-joined the meeting</i>	
55	<p>Company Secretary Hours</p> <p>Natalie Welch explained to the Council that her current employment contract is 20 hours per week. Having been in position now since the beginning of November it is apparent that 20 hours per week is not adequate to complete and carry out necessary work required. Natalie asked the Council to review and increase the contracted hours.</p> <p><i>Natalie Welch left the conversation so the Council could discuss.</i></p> <p>The Council agreed to increase the contracted hours to 30 hours per week which will take affect from Monday 23rd January 2023. A new contract would be issued for signing.</p>	
56	<p>Email received from Kurt Fekete</p> <p>The Council received an email from the Director of the Swedenborgian Church of North America Youth League, requesting permission to revive and use the cover art of “The Strange One” a graphic novelette produced by Conference in 1982. The use they envisaged is to produce merchandise (such as key chains, mugs, t-shirts, magnets, etc.) to raise funds, with all profits going to the Swedenborgian Church Youth League for the promotion of youth work in the Church and to assist with travel and scholarships for their Church youth and leaders. The Council discussed this and it was recognised that the copyright of the artwork needs to be investigated before any decisions are made.</p> <p><i>Action: Natalie will contact the Swedenborg Society to see if anyone is able to help.</i></p>	NW
	<p>Meeting closed at 21.00pm on Thursday 19th January 2023</p> <p>with a short reading and a prayer from Revd Robert Gill</p>	

	<p style="text-align: center;">Fix Council meeting dates for year ahead</p> <p>2023 March 22nd & 23rd 2023 (Zoom) April 12th (Finance Meeting via Zoom) May 12th 2023 (Purely Chase) July 25th – 28th 2023 Annual Meeting September 8th 2023 November 24th 2023 (Zoom Meeting)</p> <p>2024 March 15th 2024 May 17th 2024 July 23rd – 26th 2024 Annual Meeting September 6th 2024 November 22nd 2024 (Zoom Meeting)</p>	
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