

**MINUTES OF THE TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTEETH
ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW CHURCH**

Company Number 00006039

Tuesday 25th July 2023

1. In accordance with Minute 25 of the last Annual Meeting, the Conference assembled, as arranged by the Council, at 3.00 p.m. at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire, on Tuesday, 25th July 2023.

2. The Revd Brian Talbot led a family service of worship, during which the Pledge of Commitment was repeated as follows:

“I promise to honour the Lord Jesus Christ as the One God of heaven and earth, who is love itself and in whom is the Divine Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I will endeavour to follow the teaching of His Holy Word, contained in the Bible and revealed anew in the theological books of Emanuel Swedenborg.

I will seek to overcome all evils in thought, word and action, and strive to do what is good as if of myself, whilst acknowledging that the saving power to do so comes from the Lord alone.”

3. Mrs Margaret Cowie, the Chairman of the Council, took the chair and welcomed members to the 216th Annual Meeting of the Conference. She announced that she had invited Mrs Jan Millar and Miss Gwendolen Rowe to check the credentials of Voting Members and to supervise the signing of the Conference Roll.

4. The Roll when completed contained the following names:-

COUNCIL

Chairman	M Cowie
Vice Chairman	N Sutton
Members	Revd B R Jarvis
	S Chesworth
	P Grimshaw
	R Taylor
Company Secretary	N Welch
Officer	R Jaggs

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

M Clubb
G Kuphal

MINISTERS

C A Bank
H T Brown - Joint Spiritual Leader
C Curry
M Duckworth
J Dunion - Joint Spiritual Leader

D Gaffney
R Jarratt
M Stanley
B Talbot
R Wooldridge

AREA COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Yorkshire and North-East G Rowe, J Millar

SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES

Accrington	A Walton, J Walton
Bournemouth	L Habgood, S Thomas
Bradford	P Blomfield
Dalton	J Mrozek
Derby	B Clubb
Kearsley	C Kennion
Keighley	P Brooks
Seaburn Dene	N Ramsay
West Wickham	D Brooks

SOCIETY MEMBERS WHO ARE NOT REPRESENTATIVES

Bournemouth	M Curry
Bradford	J Millar
Dalton	T Millar
Derby	J Jones, S Jones, R Kennion
Kearsley	A Presland, M Presland, J Ford
Keighley	A Clarkson
Seaburn Dene	T Jarvis, G Nicholls, L Griffiths

CENTRAL REGISTER MEMBERS

C Chambers
S Fitzgerald
B Friend
A Gaffney
M Haseler
M Hawkins
L Jones
M Morgan
P Morgan
A Ramsey
J Ramsey
S Griffiths

5. Ms Natalie Welch, Company Secretary, read out messages received from the Revd John and Mrs Jenny Sutton, Mr David and Mrs Susan Friend, Mrs Linda Wells and Mrs Ruth Ogden and pointed out that they are displayed on the notice board. She stated that she had received apologies from the Revd Robert Gill.

Resolved: That the Conference, through the Chairman, sends greetings and best wishes at her discretion to those named above

6. The Revd Brian Talbot spoke about Mrs Mary Pulsford, Mrs Frances Mary Burnley, Mrs Madeleine Taylor, the Revd Geoffrey Clarkson, Mr Maurice Garnett and Mrs Barbara Stanley, all of whom had passed into the spiritual world during the past year.

Resolved: That the Conference expresses its high regard for these friends and their various services to the Lord's Church, and requests that a copy of the Memorial Notice be forwarded to the families, with the sympathy and goodwill of the Members of Conference.

7. At 4.15 p.m. there was an opportunity to look at the stalls in the Conference hall displaying the work of the Ministers' Committee, the Committee for Auxiliary Ministry, SOLCe, the New Church Youth Association and the Youth and Family Team.

8. The Revd Jack Dunion presented a certificate and medallion to Accredited Worship Leader Mr Jonathan Millar. The Revd Robin Wooldridge presented SOLCe certificates to Mrs Jenny Jones, Mr Robert Clark, the Revd Jack Dunion and the Revd Becky Jarratt. Mrs Sue Chesworth was not present at the time to receive her certificate.

9. Mrs Carolyn Kennion presented gift-cards to six children in acknowledgement of their entries to the New Church Youth Association creative exhibition.

10. The Revd Brian Talbot presented a card to the Revd Clifford Curry signed by the Ministers, marking the fortieth anniversary of his ordination.

11. *Resolved:* That the Report of the Ministers' Committee be adopted.

12. At 8.00 p.m. there was a choice of free time or the following session:

- Circle Dancing led by Mrs Marion Curry.

Wednesday 26th July 2023

13. At 9.30 a.m. a Family Holy Supper service was conducted by the Revd Helen Brown and the Revd Christine Bank.

14. The Revd Jack Dunion delivered the keynote address entitled "Rediscovering Our Purpose" followed by a discussion

15. At 2.30 p.m. there were the following choice sessions:

- "Nothing off Limits" Question and Answer Session led by the Revd Mary Duckworth, the Revd Jack Dunion and the Revd Brian Talbot.
- Prayer led by the Revd Helen Brown.
- Reflective Taizé-style Worship led by the Revd Becky Jarratt and the Revd Bruce Jarvis.
- Colouring.

16. At 4.15 p.m. there were the following choice sessions:
- “Nothing off Limits” Question and Answer Session led by the Revd Christine Bank, the Revd Michael Stanley and the Revd Robin Wooldridge.
 - Prayer led by the Revd Helen Brown.
 - Psalm 91 led by the Revd Brian Talbot.
 - Nature Walk.
 - Colouring.
17. The Revd Helen Brown gave an illustrated presentation about the Purley Chase Centre and the garden party at which the summerhouse built in memory of the Revd Alison Southcombe was dedicated.
18. At 8.00 p.m. there were the following choice sessions:
- Evening of Singing and Playing led by Mrs Ruth Friend.
 - Annual General Meeting of the New Church Historical Society.

Thursday 27th July 2023

19. The morning session was opened at 9.30 a.m. with family worship led by the Revd Becky Jarratt.
20. Mrs Rachael Jaggs presented the Report of the Company Accountant.
21. *Resolved:* That the Company Accountant’s Report, the Balance Sheet and Accounts be adopted.
22. Mrs Margaret Cowie presented the Report of the Council.
23. The Revd Bruce Jarvis, chairman of the Constitution Revision Group appointed by the Conference Council, introduced the following proposed amendments to the Articles and Rules of Conference.
24. *Resolved by special resolution:* That a new sub-clause (l) be added to Article 11: “the representative of the New Church College”.
25. *Resolved by special resolution:* That in the second sentence of Article 25 “four calendar months” be substituted for “eight calendar months” and that in the last sentence “in the Circular distributed by the Company Secretary not less than six weeks before such General Meeting” be substituted for “in the notice convening such General Meeting”.
26. The Revd Bruce Jarvis explained that the following motion regarding an addition to Article 33 had been submitted to the 2021 Annual Meeting and had been rejected. Nonetheless, the Council considered that the proposed change was a wise provision and urged Conference to approve it. Mr Jarvis pointed out that this addition to Article 33 had been erroneously included in the Amendments to the Rule Book circulated after the 2021 Annual Meeting.
27. *Resolved by special resolution:* That a new sub-clause (g) be added to Article 33: “When for any reason it is not possible to hold a ballot at an Annual General Meeting any Council Member whose term of office should come to an

end at that Annual General Meeting shall remain in office until the following Annual General Meeting.”

28. The Revd Bruce Jarvis explained that at the 2022 Annual Meeting the question had been raised whether the appointment of Honorary Life Members should be reinstated. Accordingly, the Council had submitted a special resolution to this effect for the consideration of the Conference. The proposal included changing the name from “Honorary Life Member” to “Elder”. In discussion it was clear that the name “Elder” did not meet with universal approval.

The special resolution to change Article 45 was defeated, but the Council would review the matter and consider bringing forward a revised proposal to the next Annual Meeting.

29. The Revd Bruce Jarvis explained that at the 2021 Annual Meeting the Council proposed an amendment to Article 41 which would have deleted any provision for inspection of the accounts by Members. This proposal was defeated at that Meeting but was erroneously included in the Amendments to the Rule Book circulated after the 2021 Annual Meeting. To avoid possible confusion Mr Jarvis pointed out that the correct wording of the Article is:-
“The books of account shall be kept by an officer duly appointed by the Council and, subject to any reasonable restrictions as to the time and manner of inspecting the same, shall be open to the inspection of Members.”

30. *Resolved:* That, in the second sentence of Rule L3, “at least one of whom must be a Trustee and at least one of whom must not be a Trustee” be deleted.

31. *Resolved:* That Bates Weston Business Services Ltd, of The Mills, Canal Street, Derby, be appointed auditors to the Conference.

32. *Resolved:* That the Report of the Council be adopted.

33. At 2.30 p.m. the Revd Becky Jarratt led a session on “The Future of the Church” during which there was discussion in small groups on many aspects of change.

34. At 4.15 p.m. the Conference Service was conducted by the Revd Jack Dunion. His theme was based on Achan’s sin (Judges, chapter 7).

The offertory for the Conference funds amounted to £553.

35. At 8.00 p.m. a social evening entitled “Party Time for Everyone” was prepared and hosted by Mr Steve Jones and Mrs Jenny Jones.

Friday 28th July 2023

36. The session opened at 9.45 a.m. with announcements

37. *Resolved:* That the best thanks of the Annual Meeting be extended to the Revd Robert Gill for his service as a Trustee of Conference.

38. The children and the young people, under the guidance of their leaders, presented the work they had undertaken during the Conference.

39. A number of speakers contributed to providing feedback on yesterday's session on The Future of the Church.

40. A number of speakers contributed to a review of the Annual Meeting.

41. *Resolved:* That, in accordance with the Council's proposal, the 217th Annual Meeting be held at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, starting on Tuesday 23rd July 2024.

42. *Resolved:* That the warm thanks of the Conference be conveyed to all those responsible for making arrangements for the Meeting, in particular Mr John Ford (the Conference Organiser); Mrs Margaret Presland (the Bookings Secretary), the Revd Becky Jarratt and the Revd Jack Dunion for the planning of Conference; Miss Gemma McLean, for Information Technology arrangements; Mrs Jenny Jones and all those involved in enabling and planning for families to be present at the Meeting; Miss Gwendolen Rowe and Mrs Jan Millar for acting as the Credentials Committee; Mr John Ford, Mrs Hazel Nicholls, Mr Michael Clubb and Mrs Betty Clubb for arrangements for the Holy Supper service; Mrs Ruth Friend (Music Director), the musicians and the choir; Mrs Jenny and Mr Steve Jones for the social evening.

43. *Resolved:* That the warm thanks of the Conference be accorded to all those unsung volunteers and church workers whose dedication to the Conference fills the 362 days of the year when the Annual Meeting is not happening. These include the members of the Conference Council, the Ministry, both active and retired, the Purley Management Team and the Company Accountant, plus many others who keep the Societies and institutions of the church running. Thanks also to Mrs Rita Russell who has stepped down after many years as Safeguarding Officer, and to Mr Colin Skinner who continues in his role as Payroll and Pensions Manager.

44. *Resolved:* That the warm thanks of the Conference be accorded to the Chairman of the Council, Mrs Margaret Cowie, and to the chairmen appointed by her, for their conduct of the Annual Meeting. Those who acted in this capacity were the Revd Bruce Jarvis and Mr Nigel Sutton.

45. The session concluded with closing remarks from the Chairman, Mrs Margaret Cowie.

46. At 12 noon a closing service of family worship was conducted by the Revd Robin Wooldridge.

47. The Annual Meeting closed at 12.30 p.m.

Signed:

Mrs Margaret L Cowie, Chairman

Ms Natalie Welch, Company Secretary