



THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW CHURCH
CONFERENCE COUNCIL MEETING
held on Thursday 16th May 2024 at Purley Chase Centre

Trustees Present:	Mrs M L Cowie	Chair
	Mr N K Sutton.	Vice-Chair
	Mrs S Chesworth	
	Revd B R Jarvis	
	Mr B Friend	Co-opted Council Member
Also in attendance:	Ms N Welch	Company Secretary
	Mr P Mehew	Company Accountant
	Revd J Dunion	Spiritual Leader
	Revd R Jarratt	Deputy Spiritual Leader
	Mr C Chambers	President, New Church College
	Mr T Millar	Invited Guest
	Ms N Ramsay	Invited Guest – Via Zoom

Start time: 14.00pm
Finish Time: 21.05pm

	Opening Revd Jack Dunion opened the meeting with readings from Exodus 20:25, P.S 127:1 and Arcana Celestia 10406(11), followed by a short prayer.	
48	Welcome Margaret Cowie introduced and welcomed Trevor Millar and Nicky Ramsay to the Council meeting, both of whom had been invited to the meeting to see if they would be interested in joining the Council.	
49	Minutes Confirmation of the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 15th March 2024 The minutes of the last meeting were approved as corrected by all present with Sue Chesworth proposing and Bruce Jarvis seconding. Matters arising from the minutes. Correction to Minute 38 Bournemouth. Citygate, the organisation interested in purchasing the building, have made an offer of £525,000 which is more than the original independent valuation, therefore Conference Council intend to instruct our solicitors to accept.	

50	Annual Conference 2024 <i>Conference Programme</i> – The final version of the programme was presented, and this was approved by all present. <i>Meet the Trustees</i> – A meeting was held on 26th April 2024 to give members considering joining the Council an opportunity to meet current Trustees and ask questions they may have. Sadly, only one person took this opportunity. <i>Conference Report</i>- The Council discussed the draft Council report to finalise the details so it will be ready to be sent 6 weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting. <i>Trustees' Report</i> - The Council discussed the Trustees Report to finalise details so it will be ready to submit to Charities Commission and Companies House together with the End of Year Financial Statement.	
	<i>Paul Mehew joined the meeting</i>	
51	Company Accountant Margaret Cowie introduced Paul Mehew to the meeting and welcomed him to the organisation as a new employee. Finance Update Paul Mehew updated the Council with the current position of the audit and year end accounts which are currently with the auditors, Bates Weston. Media and Marketing Budget The budget for the Media and Marketing co-ordinator was discussed as clarity was needed. The budget is currently £10,000.00 per financial year which will be reviewed annually. The Media and Marketing Co Ordinator can use this at her discretion with approval from the Line Manager. The Council would like the Media and Marketing Co Ordinator to send a report alongside the figures of the expenditure and income in March each year so the budget can be reviewed annually. <i>Action: The Purley Programme Team, Company Accountant and Nigel Sutton are to look at the leaders' fees for Purley events and confirm what is to be charged against the Purely Marketing Budget.</i>	NS/PM
	<i>Paul Mehew left the meeting</i>	
52	Constitution Revision Group <i>Proxy Voting Forms</i> –The Council were made aware that the current proxy voting form has certain anomalies which do not sit comfortably with our Articles of Association so the Constitution Revision Group have updated the form for 2025. All present approved the revised form.	
53	Youth and Family Team Sue Chesworth gave an update on the Youth & Family Team. <i>Easter Rally</i> – This was a great success this year. It was made more comfortable and easier to organise because, following suggestions from Youth and Family Team leaders, SOLCe have purchased some bunk beds. Previously leaders have had to prepare inflatable beds which is time	

	consuming, and the beds are not very comfortable. There are plans to purchase some more beds in preparation for 9-13 year old camp in August 2024. <i>Photo Consent Forms and Storage of Data</i>– Sue, Becky, Natalie and Paul Crone have had discussions on the current photo consent forms which need updating. They have also looked at the storage of information in multiple locations regarding young people. This work is ongoing. <i>New Church Camps</i> – Revd. Becky Jarratt is currently developing a new website for the New Church Camps.	
54	Young People’s Committee Sue Chesworth is still supporting the Young People Committee.	
55	Training and Development There was a training event on 22nd April 2024 at Purley Chase. The focus of the training was general management, line management and organising efficient meetings. Twelve people attended the training. These were people who currently have management responsibilities within the church or may have those responsibilities in the future. The training was delivered by an external provider from the Baobab Centre based in York. Following the training at Purley, Becky and Sue are currently working on an action plan, will present it to the Council at a later date.	SC/RJ
56	Spiritual Leader’s Update. Jack Dunion explained that trying to change what was assumed to be essential in the management of a long-established organisation is never going to be easy. Although both Council and Committee of Ministers have achieved much progress in this area, steering the ministry towards new ways of doing things has proved to be very challenging. However, making the necessary changes within the Committee of Ministers seems crucial if we are expecting the organisation as a whole to embrace the changes needed. As barriers have been removed, new things appear to be emerging! Our church organization, along with the Christian church as a whole, has been in a mindset of decline for decades and this has also presented many challenges. However, having made the changes necessary, our next major challenge could well be coping with the volume of new opportunities that could be unleashed as a result! The professional advice and support from Gayle-Anne Dury and Emma Daniels is proving to be transformative and has already highlighted some major problems in the way the ministry are working. Solving these problems should be a priority if we are to build maximum efficiency into the way we work, saving time, energy and resources, allowing the ministry to focus more on the spiritual health of our members as well as looking after one another. Jack and Becky are working with Gayle-Anne and Emma Daniels putting together a plan for articulating a new vision for the church. This work involves more efficient use of line management structures and appraisals with consistent and task orientated supports being put in place within the Ministry. It is hoped these will link with our facilitation day at Conference this year, during which we will generate discussion between our representatives on the main changes being currently proposed and implemented. Three basic aims: 1. Open our doors to others. 2. Application of doctrine based on personal conscience.	

	3. Encourage and support varied and diverse approaches to worship We are also aware that the Council are working tirelessly in restructuring and organising the way things are being run and also facilitating and empowering groups and individuals in their various roles within the church organisation.	
57	Policies The following policies were all reviewed and approved by the Council. • Legionella • Asbestos • Investment policy • Safer Recruitment Policy • Data Protection Policy • Risk Management • Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption • Bullying and Harassment • Health & Safety is being reviewed on 4th June 2024 • Financial policy is currently still be reviewed. The safeguarding policy is due for review in August 2024.	
58	Property Update <i>Bournemouth</i> - Citygate, the organisation interested in purchasing the building, have at last obtained a mortgage, so the sale process is getting closer to the final stages. <i>Chester</i> - This is still ongoing. <i>Radcliffe</i> - Still ongoing although getting close to the final stages.	
59	Bradford New Church Shannon Fitzgerald sent in a PowerPoint presentation for the Council meeting showing what she has achieved and been working on at Bradford. It was agreed that Bradford would be asked to present the accounts for the Bradford Project so the Council can review the grant at the Council meeting in June.	
60	Pay Policy Update (see minute 20) The Council discussed the final version of the Pay Policy prepared by the Task and Finish Group which has been agreed and approved by the Council. <i>Action: The Pay Policy will be sent to all employees.</i>	NW
61	Paisley New Church The Council expressed their thanks and appreciation to Paisley New Church for their great generosity in donating a total of £17,655 to cover the cost of a major upgrade of the telephone system at Purley Chase Centre, involving the installation of a fibre optic cable with associated benefits. This amount consisted of £15,000 in July 2022 and a further £2,655 in April 2024 when Wi-Fi was connected. A thank you letter had been sent to Paisley, and a similar message would appear shortly in E-News.	
62	Purley Programme Director This vital role is still under consideration. Further discussion will continue after the annual Conference in July 2024.	

63	Index to Minutes Natalie was thanked for producing an index of the Minutes for Trustees.	
	Meeting closed at 21.05pm with a short prayer from Revd Bruce Jarvis.	
	Fix Council meeting dates for year ahead 2024 June 28 th 2024 (Zoom) 10am – 12pm July 23 rd – 26 th 2024 Annual Meeting at Hayes Conference Centre September 6 th 2024 (Zoom Meeting) November 22 nd 2024 (Zoom Meeting)	