

**YEARBOOK OF
THE GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF THE NEW CHURCH: 2024-2025**

**INCLUDING THE MINUTES
OF THE 217th ANNUAL MEETING**

**Held at the Hayes Conference Centre,
Swanwick, Derbyshire
from Tuesday 23rd July to Friday 26th July 2024**

The Deeds of Conference were enrolled,
in the High Court of Chancery, on 14th February 1822

The General Conference was incorporated,
under the Companies Acts 1862 and 1867, on 16th February 1872

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THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW CHURCH

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to express, share and experience with others in life an inclusive, non-judgmental vision of God's kingdom.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is of a network of individuals and groups interacting together to share spiritual insight and understanding in an open and non-judgmental way, in order to promote spiritual growth through the application to life of the Word, and the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg.

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CONFERENCE COUNCIL

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(Voluntary Workers are shown in *italics*)

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* In the meantime, queries should be addressed to the Company Secretary.

SPIRITUAL LEADER'S ADDRESS
Rev'd Jack Dunion General Conference AGM July 2024

Help in articulating and facilitating a vision

Over the last several Conferences, during my Spiritual Leader's talk, I have begun by presenting a potted history of the Church on earth, according to the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg. In doing so, I have also tried to point out that there is a significant difference between what many have come to believe the "New Church" to be, and what Swedenborg himself said a New Church would be. One thing I have discovered through the process of delivering these talks is that my expectation of what might happen after such talks has been completely different from what actually happened. I have to admit to having been rather naïve in thinking that because it was crystal clear in my own head, it would automatically become crystal clear in the heads of those whom I spoke it to about it. Gayle-Anne, our Conference facilitator, was I think quoting the late Bishop Desmond Tutu when she said: *The only way you can eat an elephant, is one slice at a time*". To borrow from that analogy then, I was presenting you with a whole elephant and wondering why no one was eating it!

But, because I felt in my heart of hearts that what I was trying to articulate was given to me by the Lord, I was left in a state of confusion. I simply hadn't anticipated that there would be some who wouldn't show the same level of enthusiasm for it as me. I guess we can all be naïve at times. Actually, when I say no one, I don't mean everyone. It happens that the Lord had provided that some people, those whom I had been working with very closely, made an extra effort to hear what I was trying to say, and were then able to help me understand that the problem wasn't to do with what I was saying, it was more to do with the way in which I was presenting it. Those same people then began to support me and help me find a way in which I could effectively present what I felt our church needed to do, before we could even begin to progress any vision we have for the future. I simply could not have found a way to do that on my own.

My grateful thanks

So, before I go any further in this year's SL address, I want to pay tribute to Becky Jarratt, our Deputy Spiritual Leader, and Margaret Cowie, Chair of Conference Council. These are the two people who from the outset, have believed in what I was saying. And, perhaps more importantly, they have stuck with me through thick and thin. There are others, of course, who have been supporting and with their help too, I think we have made very significant progress in taking these things forward. Not least among those who have been

a support are members of the Ministers' Committee, members of the Conference Council, including Natalie, our new Company Secretary. Also, some members of New Church College Council who have taken the time to listen and understand what was being proposed. And other hard-working volunteers too. Becky and Margaret, though, have been particularly instrumental in bringing in the professional help we have had. People such as Gayle-Anne Drury and Emma Daniels, who, I am delighted to say, will be here with us at Conference for the facilitated sessions. I can tell you that they have also put in many hours of hard work to get us to where we are today, and I'm sure you will be glad to hear they will also be helping us get to wherever we need to go in the future, based of course on the feedback that we have already had from you, and what you will pass on during this year's conference.

So, although it is myself who has been given the huge honour of being able to stand here and address all of you in this hall today, I want you to know that everything that has happened thus far, and all that is still to come, will be the result of a great team effort, spanning years of work and preparation.

The building site analogy

I mentioned that one of the problems I have encountered in the past has been articulating a vision and strategy. Asking people to eat a whole elephant as it were. An additional difficulty that resulted from this was that people were still asking, "Where is the vision?" - even though, in my own mind, I had already stood up here and talked about what I thought needed to happen before any vision could be implemented. Even now, I hear people asking, what is all this work that has been going on, why can't we see anything happening? Why are we not seeing all this progress that has been made? Well, please permit me to use the following illustration:

I wonder if you have ever had occasion to be regularly driving along a route that takes you past a building site. The first few times you pass along the route you may see lorries, diggers, and other earth moving equipment. But, then suddenly nothing! For such a long time after that, it looks as if very little is happening on the site. You may see some construction traffic occasionally come and go. Perhaps some lorries will pass here and there. But for the most part, you could be forgiven for thinking that the building work had somehow stalled. Eventually you may even get to thinking, when on earth are they going to start building these houses? Then, suddenly, at last, you begin to see some brickwork rising just above the ground, and before you know it, houses are going up all over the place at breakneck speed. Soon enough, a whole housing scheme has been built and people are moving in.

What was really happening, of course, was that while the site looked dormant from the outside, lots of stuff was going on below ground level. Digging out and shaping of the foundation trenches, concrete was being poured and left to set. There was the laying and connection of water pipes, plumbing infrastructure, live cables connecting the scheme to the main grid, the installation of underground cables and electrical wiring, gas pipes and pipes for sewerage works being fitted, and so on. The actual building of the houses is the easy part! It's all the groundwork that takes the most time. It's crucial that all the stuff we don't get to see is all in place before the houses can even begin to go up. So please, trust us, when we say that there has been a heap of groundwork going on over the last couple of years. Work which has led us to the point we are at today. The good news is that we are beginning to reach that stage where we will soon begin to see the houses going up, as it were.

History and the gist of the problem

For more than two hundred years, our organisation has been pouring time and resources into outreach programs. Yet, over the last hundred years, our numbers have continued to decline, relentlessly! Since all our outreach efforts have been very well funded, well planned and well executed, it has become evident that a completely different approach was needed. As Albert Einstein put it *"the definition of insanity is to keep doing things the same way, and expect different results"*.

Swedenborg tells us that there have been four churches on earth: The Most Ancient, the Ancient, the Representative & the Christian Church, and that all of them would die out, yes, including the Christian Church, The Christian Church like all those before it, had to die out, at least in the form it was in 1. That old Christian church was then to be replaced with a New Church, which was to be the crown of all the previous four Churches on earth. Although the old Christian Church has indeed all but died out, as Swedenborg predicted, our own church organisation retained many of the traditions and customs of the previous Church. Particularly relevant here, I think, is that we managed to carry over and preserve from the old Christian Church certain attitudes and expectations. It seems that many of these attitudes and expectations, particularly perhaps with how worship was to be carried out and practised, were actually part of what needed to die out with the demise of the old Christian Church. Yet they stayed on, as though they belonged to the New Church! This has led to our own Church, perhaps inevitably, going down with the "sinking ship" as it were. This has caused great confusion and tested many people's faith over the years. Many people had thought, and some still do think, that our own church organisation was to become the New Church that Swedenborg writes about! Yet Swedenborg himself never founded this nor any other church, at least not in the form in which we have perceived that a Church should take.

For example

Let me give you just one example here concerning the remnants of the old church that we brought over to this New Church. If there was one thing all the old Christian denominations had in common, it was that THEY, and THEY alone had the truth. It doesn't matter whether it was the Baptists, the Methodists, the Evangelicals or the Church of the Latter-Day-Saints, they all had the truth. So, in the end, everyone was speaking a different language and insisting that everyone else be converted to their interpretation of the Word. It's this idea that has been brought over from the old church. I am sure my colleagues would agree, it's historically what happens within our ministry too, whenever there is room for different interpretations of what the Writings are saying, there is disagreement. If we are waiting for a unified view to come out of the Ministry on issues that are open to interpretation, then I'm afraid it is going to be a long wait. What you could possibly get, though, is a divided view presented as a unified view. We need to be honest about these things. Not least, because the Lord tells us in Luke 12:3 *What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs.*"

Fixing the vehicle

One of the reasons I suggest that we have not been able to grow and progress our vision of a New Church is because we have brought many of the broken parts of the old Church into our vision of the New Church which then hinder any progress. Yet, again, didn't the Lord say in Mark 2:22 *"No one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins"*. In describing this problem then within our church, allow me to use the following analogy:

For a minute or two, let's think of our church as being like a vehicle, with the potential to take us forward in our quest to form a New Church on earth. In our analogy, the Lord's love is like the oil for the vehicle's engine, and the Lord's truth like the petrol that propels the vehicle forward. On the Lord's side, there is no shortage of oil (love) nor petrol (truth) provided for us to progress. However, if the vehicle is broken, then no amount of oil nor petrol will allow the vehicle to take us forward. The fairly obvious conclusion here, at least from the above perspective, is that before we can move anywhere, we need to fix the vehicle. It's the same with any outreach efforts within our church.

No outreach work could possibly be effective in the longer term until we have fixed the vehicle, the vehicle being the church and how it operates. This, I think, is basically what I have been speaking about – the process, including the facilitation day, a process that is currently well under way. That’s to say, we have been fixing the vehicle, albeit behind the scenes; getting our own house in order first, before we can begin to look at any vision we may have for the future.

Change is difficult

This process of “fixing the vehicle” was never going to be easy, because it is requiring us to change some very long-standing traditions and attitudes, some of which have become so embedded in the organisation that people have come to imagine that they are actually an essential part of the teaching for a New Church. But once properly considered, some of these turn out to be mere interpretations of the doctrines for a New Church and I would go as far as to say that some are actually contrary to what the doctrines for a New Church say! The problem with interpretations is that due to us all being undeniably different, there will invariably be just about as many interpretations as there are people interpreting them. The question then becomes, whose interpretation should we adopt? The idea within the ministry has been, up till now, that we discuss the issue and try to come to a consensus, so that we can then present a unified view to you, the members of our church. But, since one person can feel as strongly as the next one that their particular interpretation is the right one, no agreement can be reached. So, either we don’t present a view at all, and simply keep kicking the can down the road, or we present what is a divided view as if it’s a unified view, because, in reality, we can’t all agree on whatever view is to be presented. This is precisely why the ministry has not been able to give guidance on many of the contemporary issues presenting themselves today. It’s because what the Writings of our Church have to say about these things are open to interpretation, and this is why we have been unable to give you an answer. This then, is just one example of how barriers that have been carried over from the old church, in this case everyone believing what they believe is what all should believe, can hold us back. They are barriers which have historically become embedded in our Church traditions, our attitudes and routines, as though they were of the “New Church”. Yet, in reality, they are simply remnants of the old church. This also being an example then of just one of the parts of the vehicle that need fixing.

End, Cause & Effect

The question then, perhaps, has to be: how do we go about fixing the vehicle from a doctrinal perspective. The part of the Heavenly Doctrines I wish to draw your attention to is the notion of end, cause and effect.

If we wish to change anything or prevent certain things from happening in this world, we will never do so by just addressing the effects. Swedenborg tells us that in everything there needs to be an end, a cause and an effect. The end ought to be celestial and from the Divine Love, the cause is spiritual from the Divine truth, and the effect is natural, proceeding from both love and truth united in deed. Is there anyone here who would disagree that this is what the Writings teach us? Swedenborg makes it explicitly clear that everything in this natural world is the effect of a spiritual cause². We live and operate in a world of effects. So, the inescapable conclusion is, that in order to fix anything in this world, we need first to address the causes, and the causes are spiritual. This is not a teaching of the Writings that is open to interpretation. If we think about that, it explains why this world is in such a mess today. Everyone is trying to fix the effects from spiritual causes using other effects. You can't stop an effect with another effect, you need to stop effects by addressing the prior causes. The governments of the world don't even know there are prior causes, let alone how to address them! No one is addressing spiritual causes, and therefore, no one is fixing the problems. This is precisely why every problem our governments try to address, just results in more problems. You can't prevent problems by addressing the effects. What they are trying to prevent, has, in one sense, already happened!

Analogy of ripples in the pond

Imagine you and lots of other people were sitting relaxing around the shoreline of a large pond on a sunny day. It would be perfectly peaceful, but for some idiot who keeps throwing large pebbles into the centre of the pond. Imagine then, if I wanted to stop the ripples from that stone disturbing the people relaxing on the shore, would it make sense for me to run around the pond trying to stop the ripples reaching the shore? No, of course not! The ripples are only an effect from a prior cause. What would be far more effective in preventing the ripples reaching the shore would be to stop the pebble from landing in the centre of the pond in the first place. That, I think, is a good example of cause and effect. In order to change anything in this world of effects, we need first to identify and eliminate the spiritual causes. Otherwise, we are wasting our time running around a pond trying to prevent the ripples, instead of addressing what is causing the ripples to happen in the first place.

Becoming self-aware

So, how then do we address the spiritual causes so we can prevent problems from arising in the first place?

Well, doesn't the Lord tell us in Luke 13:3 "*unless you repent, you too will all perish.*" The Lord teaches us that unless we self-reflect and identify the spiritual causes of our problems, we won't be able to prevent them. It's the same with the church as with the individual.

In order to fix the vehicle, we need first to identify what parts of it are causing it to be broken. Because until we identify the causes, no amount of the Lord's love and truth flowing in is going to take us to where any vision we have says we need to go. We will simply be like the blind leading the blind (Matt. 15:14), trying to fix effects using other effects, stumbling around in the dark not knowing why we can't prevent bad things from happening. Steeped in this world of effects, we all too easily forget where life truly comes from. In truth, it doesn't originate from this world at all, it flows into this natural world, where everything terminates. We, and the world around us, are merely recipient vessels into which the Lord's life of love and truth can flow ³. The work of repentance allows us to see the spiritual causes of our problems so that we can avoid falling into the same traps in the future. This is why the Lord warns us that if we don't repent we will perish. Repenting means approaching the Lord, asking him to raise our mind into the spiritual realm where we can identify causes, allowing us to "catch the pebble" as it were, even before it strikes the water. In the dim light of this world, we tend to think that life comes from ourselves. We forget that we are only recipient vessels into which, and through which, His life can flow. As the Lord Himself tells us in John 15:5: *"I am the vine, you are the branches, ...and... without me you can do nothing."*

The concept of end, cause & effect is not a new one to the human race. The most ancient people, for example, must have been just as familiar with spiritual causes, as they were with natural effects. They would have known the relationship between spiritual causes and natural effects. This is because the most ancient people had a communication with the spiritual world ⁴ which, as said already, is the world of causes. All things on this natural plane are the effects of such spiritual causes.

But why is change so difficult?

Repentance though, as is so wonderfully taught throughout the Writings of our Church, isn't only about reflecting and identifying spiritual causes, it's also about doing something about it. Identifying spiritual causes is a good first step, but there is then still work to be done. Even once we recognize and acknowledge the need for change, we still need to go through the difficulties that changing requires. There are many challenges along the road to change, and many barriers that will stand in the way of change. For example, much of what I have been saying here regarding the need for change in our Church may resonate with many of you. Perhaps you have for a long time now already been aware of much of what is being said here, but just felt you were unable to do anything about it. So, why is it so difficult to implement the changes that we know we need to make?

Story of the Caterpillar

Well, you know how much I like to use analogy! Let me use an analogy that is presented to us in nature, which I suspect would also qualify as a correspondence. In the Conference Service, Becky spoke of the wonderful correspondence between the butterfly and achieving the heavenly life, and how the Lord strengthens us spiritually through the struggles we face in this life.

But let me take us back to earlier in the process of metamorphosis, to look at the way in which the transformation from a caterpillar into a butterfly takes place. The caterpillar, as we know, wraps itself in a cocoon. Within the cocoon, the caterpillar, realizing it is dying, just like every other living organism, tries to survive, triggering an immune response, which then goes into overdrive. As part of this immune response, the caterpillar excretes a certain chemical, which is what eventually turns the caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly. If we think about that, there is a similar process happens at the end of a Church's life. As the Church is dying, it realizes it is dying, and tries to survive. The reason that making changes is so difficult, even though we know how badly changes are needed, is because in realizing that, as a church, we are dying, it triggers in us that same immune response, and we begin fighting to try and keep the old church alive! Thankfully though, the Lord is far wiser than we are, and He uses this immune response that we have as a means of turning His Church into a beautiful butterfly. So, it's not as if the resistance to change hasn't served a purpose. With such a wise and loving creator, everything serves a purpose. Even our stiff resistance to change serves a purpose. The Lord uses our efforts to frustrate the changes, to help bring about the birth of a New Church on earth. We are not dying, we are going through the process of being transformed into a butterfly!

So, what does this tell us. One thing it tells us is that we can all move forward together with great confidence. There will be resistance to change by different people in different ways and at different times; we are all guilty of doing it. But that's OK! As long as we all have a desire to fix the vehicle and help the Lord in forming His New Church on earth, then the Lord will be able to use whatever efforts we make. Given the current and growing needs of the world around us, we can and should strive to become more than just an organization. What I see arising in the world during and after these difficult times, is a diverse range of Swedenborgian organizations springing up and thriving in their own particular sphere of influence. One day, I can see a time when such a global organization of Swedenborgians, united through our loyalty to our Lord's teaching for a New Church, and also through our diversity, will be able to influence global decision making. Through our custody of the Word and the

Writings, we will be able to highlight the causes of natural problems and prevent, as it were, the pebble hitting the pond!

What is being done in the here and now?

In order for us to begin to move forward together as an organization, with a renewed vision, but not only a vision, also a step by step strategy for realizing such a vision, a whole team of us have been working behind the scenes in identifying what is wrong with the vehicle. We have arrived at some conclusions. So, with your help and support, we want to work out how we are going to fix that which we have identified as being wrong with the vehicle. I am thoroughly convinced that once we apply these fixes, things that have perhaps held us back for a very long-time, things will then begin to happen, and rather quickly. The Lord wants His New Church on earth to thrive. Goodness knows how much the world needs what we have to give! And if we have it, and they need it, then by removing the barriers that surely stand between us and them, the doors will open to a whole new way of bringing the Lord's New Church to the world. As your appointed spiritual leader and your humble servant, I ask for your support in what we are trying to achieve here at this Conference of the New Church.

I mentioned earlier that a wonderful team of people have been working on identifying what is wrong with the vehicle. Having done so, we now need to share our findings with you so that you in turn can help us fix it and get us moving once again. How do we plan to do that? As Gayle-Anne reminded us: *"The only way to eat an elephant, is one slice at a time"*. With that advice in mind, we have not only identified many of the problems mentioned above, but we have also managed to boil them down to three main tasks, which we will ask you to discuss in facilitated groups. It is you, the members of our church, whom we are here to serve, and who must ultimately decide on what a new vision will be. The group work will be facilitated by Gayle-Anne and Emma. You will be asked to discuss three proposals designed to "fix the vehicle". We are asking you to discuss and consider if we should:

- Encourage a diverse range of approaches to worship
- Allow views on non-explicit doctrine to be expressed from personal conscience
- Become a more inviting church.

These very broad headings will be explained in more detail when we are asked to discuss them later, where they will form the main subject matter in the facilitation groups. It is hoped that the collective feedback from the groups,

combined with the changes already underway, we can and will form between us a new vision, as well as a new strategy for implementing the vision, enabling us all to move forward in a way that will encourage everyone who wants to be a part of the future to feel that they have stake in the new vision for progressing the Lord's New Church on earth.

We may not, as yet, have any idea what will change nor what direction the Church may take once certain barriers have been removed and the vehicle has been fixed. The Writings would call this "influx into effort" 5. We know from personal experience how the Lord operates with such things. How many times have we been sorry we got ourself into a fix, and felt ashamed, and guilty and with our heads bowed low approached the Lord asking for His mercy? Sometimes we might think, nothing could fix this, saying, *"There is no way out, Lord. I am sorry, Lord. If there is anything you can do then please help, please forgive and restore me and I won't get into that situation again"*. What then happens? A solution or resolution to our problem appears, seemingly out of nowhere, something that no one else had even considered. If we work on removing these identified barriers, things will begin to happen. Things we are currently not even able to think about. Looking again at the analogy of the broken vehicle, we have imagined in the past that the Lord must not want us to grow our church. We have adopted a kind of "shrink mentality." After decades of unsuccessful outreach projects, and with very little to show for it, it's no wonder we are thinking only about decline. What I am saying though, is that this could all be reversed very quickly and very easily. Because it's not that the Lord has been the barrier to our progress. It's more likely that, with the best of intentions, we ourselves have been the barrier to the Lord's progress. It's we who are getting in the way of the Lord's building His New Church. Because in thinking that we are dying, instead of rising to a beautiful new future, we have triggered that immune response, when all the time, in reality, we are going through the process of being born again. Dying as to the old, so that we can rise again to the new, and live!

Facilitation at Conference

Being able to identify what the main barriers to progress within the church are isn't the main challenge. The main challenge, I think, is being able to articulate this in a way that people wouldn't just need to hear it with their ears, and be enabled to engage with the process, but also take ownership and become stakeholders in the process. Over the last few years, Conference Council, the Ministers' Committee, and representatives from SOLCe, have been working together on all of the above, which has culminated in what we hope will be solutions to the main problems that have frustrated our attempts at outreach for so many years. This has involved the re-directing of resources,

mainly from the closure of Societies and sale of properties, towards reinvesting them in, for example, the professional helpers we have with us today, who have been assisting us with administrative and facilitation initiatives.

In conclusion

Swedenborg paints a wonderful vision for us of what it would have been like for the Most Ancient Church on earth. He tells us that their interiors were open all the way to the Lord 6. And that it was normal for them to converse with spirits and angels 7. We can, as a race, return to having that ability. The Writings for a New Church have given us a great light to shine upon the Word of the Lord, to reason about the Lord and His purposes. Above all, the Lord has provided for us a way back to Him. We can take that opportunity as an individual and also, if we so wish, as a Church. Let us then together embark on a new path, one which will lead us back to the wisdom of the most ancient people, so we can join with the angels of heaven in praising the Lord our God above all things, and loving our neighbour as ourselves!

1 True Christian Religion 760. 2 New Jerusalem and It's Heavenly Doctrines 48. 3 Divine Love & Wisdom 360, Arcana Coelestia 6470. 4 True Christian Religion 202. 5 Arcana Coelestia 6128, Divine Love and Wisdom 311, Interaction of the Soul and Body 7 [3] 6 Conjugal Love 355[3], 7 Arcana Coelestia 241

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

Company Number 00006039

Tuesday 23rd July 2024

1. In accordance with Minute 41 of the last Annual Meeting, the Conference assembled, as arranged by the Conference Council, at 3.00p.m. at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire, on Tuesday, 23rd July 2024.

2. The New Church Youth Association 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 Chairperson of the Conference Council, took the chair and welcomed members to the 217th 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:-

CONFERENCE COUNCIL

Chairperson	M Cowie
Vice Chairperson	N Sutton
Members	Revd B R Jarvis
	S Chesworth
	B Friend – co opted member

OFFICERS

Company Secretary	N Welch
Company Accountant	P Mehew

IT Manager	P Crone
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HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

G Kuphal

MINISTERS

C A Bank

H T Brown

C Curry

M Duckworth

J Dunion - Spiritual Leader

R Jarratt – Deputy Spiritual Leader

D Moffat

M Stanley

B Talbot

R Wooldridge

AREA COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Yorkshire and North-East G Rowe

SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES

Accrington A Walton, J Walton

Bournemouth M Curry

Bradford P Blomfield, S Fitzgerald

Dalton J Millar

Derby E Nicholls

Kearsley J Ford, C Kennion

Keighley P Brooks, A Clarkson

Seaburn Dene N Ramsay

SOCIETY MEMBERS WHO ARE NOT REPRESENTATIVES

Bournemouth L Habgood

Bradford J Millar

Dalton T Millar, J Mrozek

Derby J Jones, S Jones, L Jones

Kearsley A Presland, M Presland, S Kennion

Seaburn Dene T Jarvis, L Griffiths, S Griffiths, A Ramsay, J Ramsay

CENTRAL REGISTER MEMBERS

C Chambers

MD Hasler

R Ogden

L Wells

S Wilson

S Wooldridge

5. Ms Natalie Welch, Company Secretary, read out messages received from the Revd Ian Arnold, the Revd Robert Gill, Mr David and Mrs Susan Friend, Mrs Isabel Hindley and the Revd John and Mrs Jenny Sutton and pointed out that they are displayed on the notice board. She also read out apologies received from Mr Stephen Thomas and Mr Michael and Mrs Betty Clubb who were unable to attend due to ill health.

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

6. The Revd Christine Bank spoke about the Revd Ian Russell, Mr Walter Richardson, Mr Howard Turner, Mrs Joy Hasler, Mrs Nellie Thomas, Mrs Brenda Slack and Mr Ernest Baxendale, 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 4.45 p.m. The Revd Jack Dunion delivered the keynote address entitled "End Cause and Effect" followed by a discussion.

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

- Circle Dancing led by Mrs Marion Curry.
- Annual General Meeting of the New Church Children's Society.
- Our answers questioned – panel of Ministers.

Wednesday 24th July 2024

9. At 9.30 a.m. a Family Holy Supper service was conducted by the Revd Christine Bank and the Revd Brian Talbot.

10. At 11.15 a.m. the Revd Becky Jarratt gave an introduction to facilitated discussions on 'Vision – the future direction of the Church'. The Conference broke up into six groups, each led by a facilitator. In three sessions, one in the morning and two in the afternoon, different aspects of the subject were addressed. This was followed by a summary plenary session.

11. At 8.00 p.m. there were the following choice sessions:

- Evening of Singing and Playing led by the Revd Becky Jarratt.
- Annual General Meeting of the New Church Historical Society.
- Our answers questioned - panel of Ministers.

Thursday 25th July 2024

12. The morning session was opened at 9.30 a.m. with family worship led by the Young People's Committee.

13. Mr Paul Mehew presented the Report of the Company Accountant.

14. *Resolved:* That the Company Accountant's Report, the Balance Sheet and Accounts be adopted.

15. Mrs Margaret Cowie presented the Report of the Conference Council.

16. The Revd Bruce Jarvis, chairperson of the Constitution Revision Group appointed by the Conference Council, introduced the Special Resolution to amend the Conference's Articles of Association as follows:-

That the draft Articles of Association produced to the Meeting and signed for the purpose of identification by the Chairperson be adopted as the Articles of Association of The General Conference of the New Church with immediate effect, in the place of and in substitution for the existing Articles of Association.

The Resolution was moved by Revd Bruce Jarvis and seconded by Mr Philip Brooks and was carried as a Special Resolution by a majority of more than 75%.

17. The Revd Bruce Jarvis introduced the resolution to amend the Rules of Conference as follows:-

That the draft Rules produced to the Meeting and signed for the purpose of identification by the Chairperson be adopted as the Rules of The General Conference of the New Church with immediate effect, in the place of and in substitution for the existing Rules.

The resolution was moved by Mr Jarvis, seconded by Revd Brian Talbot and following discussion was adopted.

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

19. *Resolved:* That the Report of the Conference Council be adopted.

20. Following a ballot the Revd Bruce Jarvis was declared to be Vice-Chairperson of the Conference Council until 2028.

21. Following a ballot Mr Barry Friend and Mr Nigel Sutton were declared to be members of the Conference Council until 2027 and Mr Trevor Millar to be a member of the Conference Council until 2026.

22. At 2.00 p.m. there was Question Time. During this session there was an opportunity to ask questions about the reports of the Ministers' Committee, SOLCe, Purley Chase Centre, CAM, the New Church Youth Association and the Youth and Family Team.

During this session the Revd Robin Wooldridge presented a diploma of Swedenborgian Studies to Miss Lynne Griffiths.

23. At 2.30 p.m. there was an illustrated presentation about the Bradford Project followed by one by three members of the Young People's Committee.

24. At 3.15pm the Revd David Moffat gave an illustrated talk entitled 'News from Australia'.

25. At 5.00 p.m. the Conference Service was conducted by the Revd Jack Dunion and the Revd Becky Jarratt. During the service Revd Jack Dunion inducted Revd Becky Jarratt as Deputy Spiritual Leader.

The offertory for the Conference funds amounted to £435.00.

26. 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 26th July 2024

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

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

29. Following introductory remarks by Mr John Ford there was a review of the Annual Meeting and in particular of the Vision Facilitation session to which various speakers contributed.

30. *Resolved:* That, in accordance with the Conference Council's proposal, the 218th Annual Meeting be held at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, starting on Tuesday 22nd July 2025.

31. *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); Ms Natalie Welch (the Bookings Secretary); the Revd Becky Jarratt and the Revd Jack Dunion for the planning of Conference; Mr Paul Crone, for Information Communication Technology arrangements; Mrs Jenny Jones and all those involved in enabling and planning for families to be present at the Meeting; Mrs Jan Millar and Miss Gwendolen Rowe for acting as the Credentials Committee; Mr Gordon Kuphal and Mr John Ford for acting as scrutineers; Mr John Ford, Mrs Hazel Nicholls, Mr Michael Clubb and Mrs Betty Clubb for arrangements for the Holy Supper service; Mrs Ruth Friend for making arrangements for the music and the Revd Becky Jarratt for taking over at short notice, the musicians and the choir; Mrs Jenny and Mr Steve Jones for the Social Evening.

32. *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, plus many others who keep the Societies and institutions of the church running.

33. *Resolved:* That the warm thanks of the Conference be accorded to the Chairperson of the Conference Council, Mrs Margaret Cowie, and to the chairpersons 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. To the Company Secretary, Ms Natalie Welch, for her work throughout the year and also the Purley Chase Centre Manager, Mrs Rachel Gilseman, her staff and the Purley Chase Management Team, the Company Accountant, Mr Paul Mehew, and to Mr Colin Skinner who continues in his role as Payroll and Pensions Manager.

34. The session concluded with closing remarks from the Chairperson, Mrs Margaret Cowie.

35. At 12 noon a closing service of family worship was conducted by the Revd Robin Wooldridge and Miss Lynne Griffiths.

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

Report of the Conference Council – Year to 31st March 2024

The Conference Council held twelve meetings during the year, ten of which were held via Zoom and two in person. Details of attendances are as follows:

Chairperson	Mrs M L Cowie	12
Vice-Chairperson	Mr N K Sutton	11
Trustees:	Mrs S Chesworth	12
	Revd R A Gill	4 (possible 4)
	Mrs P Grimshaw	6
	Revd B R Jarvis	12
	Mr R Taylor	4 (possible 4)
	Mr B Friend	6 (possible 6) Co opt
In attendance were:		
Company Secretary:	Ms Natalie Welch	12
Company Accountant:	Mrs Rachael Jaggs	7 (possible 7)
Ministers' CoM. Secretary:	Revd B Talbot	8
President New Church College	Mr C Chambers	5
Spiritual Leader	Revd Jack Dunion	8
Attended by invitation:	Miss J Walton	1
	Revd. C Bank	2
	Revd. R Jarratt	3
	Miss L Jones	1

1. Revd. Robert Gill's term of office was completed in July 2023, and he did not seek re-election. Revd Bruce Jarvis and Mr Nigel Sutton's terms of office end in July 2024 both intend to seek re-election. Mr Robert Taylor resigned for personal reasons in July 2023. Mrs R Jaggs employment terminated in November 2023.

2. LINK MEMBERS

Details of the links between the Conference Council and those engaged in ministerial work are:

Purley Chase Centre	Mr N Sutton and Revd H Brown
Finance	Mr N Sutton and Revd C Curry
Youth	Mrs S Chesworth and Revd R Jarratt
Human Resources	Ms N Welch and Revd B Talbot
Training and Development	Mrs S Chesworth and Revd R Jarratt
CAM and Local Churches	Mrs M Cowie and Revd C Bank

3. STAFF & REMUNERATION

In 2023/24 the total of stipends paid to ministers was £154262.54. In the same year the total of salaries and wages paid to lay employees was £321004.11. These figures include people employed for part of the year.

The Council approved a 4% increase from 1 May 2023 for all employees, because of the increased costs of living.

4. VOLUNTEERS

The Council wishes to express its gratitude to the many people who have willingly taken on voluntary roles. Year after year they give generously of their time and energy, helping to maintain the church and its uses. We recognise that the Conference would be unable to continue its work without their contribution.

5. CONFERENCE'S MEDIA PRESENCE - Rise & Shine on Lomondradio.co.uk
People can tune into Revd Jack Dunion's radio show, "Rise & Shine", every Sunday morning between 9 and 10am. It began during lockdown in 2020 and has now been running for just over 4 years and has attracted people from far and wide. It has proven particularly popular among our isolated members, but others enjoy listening before heading off to their local church. With hymns/songs and some words in between, based on the Word and the Writings of our church, the hour long show usually presents on a specific spiritual topic. Anyone wishing to listen to back-dated issues of "Rise and Shine" can download them from mixcloud.com/revjack

6. SPONSORED ORDINATION STUDENT

6.1 Lynne Griffiths is well into her second year of study and is enjoying the work, some of which is provided from external sources, though all her third-year modules will be provided by SOLCe. We look forward to Lynne's ordination during the Conference in 2025.

6.2 Paul Morgan, after 5 years of study, withdrew from the ordination course he was undertaking with SOLCe in March 2024. We wish him well whatever path he chooses to follow.

7. POLICIES

Health and Safety

The Company Secretary, Natalie Welch, is currently liaising with Croner (employment law specialists) to update the Health & Safety Management Systems.

8. NOMINATIONS AND MOTIONS

1. **NOMINATIONS** - The Council proposes that Messrs Bates Weston Business Services Ltd of Derby be re- appointed auditors for the Conference.

2. **MOTIONS** - These are available to view on the website, [www.generalconference.org.uk/resources/key info](http://www.generalconference.org.uk/resources/key%20info)

9. CONSTITUTION REVISION GROUP

During the past year the Group has been very busy and has met seven times via Zoom. We were sorry both Mr David Friend and Mrs Pauline Grimshaw resigned due to health problems. We thank them both for their invaluable contributions to our work, and we wish them well for the future. We are grateful that our numbers have been bolstered by the addition of Mrs Margaret Cowie, and it is proving helpful to have the input of the Chairman of the Council into our work. The other continuing members of the Group are Revd Robert Gill, Revd Bruce Jarvis and Mr Gordon Kuphal.

The Group has spent many hours in detailed examination of the Articles of Association and Rules of Conference. Numerous changes have been drafted in order to meet the requirements of recent Companies Acts and also to accommodate the changing needs of the Conference. In addition, we have tried to bring the use of language up-to-date and ensure consistency throughout. The work has required very many drafts, constant cross-checking, and an eye for the smallest detail. The Group has prepared for the 2024 AGM one omnibus Special Resolution for the adoption of the revised Articles, together with one omnibus Resolution for the adoption of the revised Rules. In addition, a set of Explanatory Notes has been prepared and these will be circulated together with the proposed Resolutions.

The ramifications of proxy voting have been discussed at length. The Group, in consultation with the Conference solicitor, is currently seeking to resolve some apparent contradictions between the requirements of the Companies Act and those of our Articles of Association. The matter is far from simple and will require some further work by the Group in order to prepare additional changes for presentation to the 2025 AGM. We also concluded that it would not be possible to bring forward any proposals on the matter of Honorary Life Members this year, both because of lack of time and because of pressure on the Conference timetable. It is the intention to raise it again at the 2025 Conference.

A “User-Friendly Guide to the Conference Constitution” is almost complete but will need some final adjustments once the outcomes of the 2024 AGM are known. We look forward to completing the revision project next year.

10. FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Company Accountant's employment was terminated in November as it became apparent during the annual audit that she was unfamiliar with the accounting software, giving rise to anomalies with the accounts. The Council dealt with this swiftly and the issues arising from this have been resolved, and the auditors are content.

The surplus for the year has risen by £3,046k from a deficit of £900k to a surplus of £2,146k.

This has been driven largely by an investment gain of £2,421k (2023: £897k loss) as a result of the outperformance of the US markets, particularly in the Technology and Health sectors, plus a return to growth in the UK market following the economic shock experienced in Financial Year 2023. Other income highlights include an increase in dividends of £174k, reflective of market performance, plus an increase in Purley Chase income of £48k negated by a reduction in legacies of £43k.

Expenditure, excluding CIF movements, has risen by 27% which has been driven largely by an increase in payroll costs of 25%, high inflationary increases on direct costs such as fuel and food plus the planned maintenance work undertaken during the year.

10.2. PAY POLICY

The pay policy is currently being reviewed and will be made available when completed.

10.3. LEGACIES

Two legacies were received: £20,000 from the estate of Mr Reginald Palmer, who we believe had been a member of the New Church in Bath; and £63,000 from the estate of Revd Gudmund and Mrs Laura Boolsen.

11. THE MINISTRY

Revd. Helen Brown stepped down as Joint Spiritual Leader in July 2023. We thank her for her willingness to take on the role of Interim Spiritual Leader in 2021, and then to support the Spiritual Leader, Revd Jack Dunion, as Joint Spiritual Leader. We thank Helen, also for her pastoral care. Revd. Becky Jarratt was appointed Deputy Spiritual Leader in March 2024.

12. CONFERENCE PROPERTIES

Bournemouth - Citygate, the organisation interested in purchasing the building have finally offered £525,000. As this amount is above the independent valuation, Conference Council intends to instruct our solicitors to accept. However, Citygate are seeking to raise a mortgage to purchase the property, which could possibly introduce another valuation by a lender, plus more discussions. As we were never likely to find a cash buyer, these protracted negotiations are unavoidable.

Bradford – The church roof was in a dangerous condition and had to be completely renewed. Tenders were sought, and a local firm, Bradford Roofing Contractors Ltd. won the contract. The total cost amounted to £72,982.14. The original stone slates were utilised wherever possible. The funds for the work came from the Radcliffe society's investment in the Common Investment Fund. Parts of the flooring and some stairs on the interior of the building were also in a poor state of repair. Following a successful application to the Edward Jeggins Trust repairs were made.

Chester - On the advice of Conference's solicitor, the Council prepared an application for a Cy-près scheme for the building, which was sent to the Chester Society for approval. If agreed it will be sent to the Charity Commission, who will hopefully grant the scheme, thereby permitting the sale of the building.

Clayton - le - Moors - Completion of the sale is imminent.

Radcliffe – All problems with the registration of the land were resolved with the Land Registry in March and we consider there are now no reasons why the buyers should not complete the contract.

13. PURLEY CHASE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

The post of Programme Director at Purley Chase Centre remains vacant. Interviews were held in June 2023 with an unsuccessful outcome. The Conference Council and the Purley Chase Centre Management Team both acknowledge the need to appoint a Programme Director but are aware of difficulties in finding suitable candidates.

14. THE BRADFORD COMMUNITY PROJECT

The project came into being during the first Covid lockdown in 2020 and has gone from strength to strength since then. An application was made to Conference Council for help with funding, and in August 2023 a grant of £31,600 was awarded on the basis of a 12-month pilot scheme. Joint meetings are held each quarter to keep the Conference Council updated on progress. Grant payments are also made quarterly. The funds are coming from the Embsay Fund which is designated specifically for this purpose - "education, outreach, and development" in Yorkshire and North East Area.

15. IT MANAGER

At the conclusion of the 2023 Conference and AGM we bade a sad farewell to the IT Manager, Gemma McLean, who left to study for a Master's degree in Advanced Computer Science at Leicester University. She was heartily thanked for her seven years of excellent service and wished well for her future endeavours.

A new IT Manager, Mr Paul Crone, was appointed and began work on 12th September 2023.

16. YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE

At the conclusion of the 2023 Conference and Annual Meeting, the wonderful news was announced that four of our young people, Sharmaine Fitzgerald, Lucy Friend, Libby Jones, and Jack Ramsay intended to form a youth committee.

With the guidance of Mrs Sue Chesworth, and practical help from Mrs Jan Millar, their committee, to be known as the Young People's Committee (YPC), came into being during the autumn. Their aims, among others are a) to increase retention of over-18s; b) to increase intergenerational links between their age group, and others; c) to be a voice from their age group to the rest of church.

17. RAAC

Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) is a lightweight form of precast concrete frequently used in public sector buildings in the UK from the mid-1960s to the 1990s, and is unsafe. It has been so far established that three churches, Ac-crington, Kearsley, and West Wickham are free of this material

On behalf of the Conference Council:

Mrs Margaret L Cowie, Chairperson

Ms Natalie Welch, Company Secretary

18. PURLEY CHASE MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Team

Chris Woodhouse

Rachel Gilsenan

Dawn Scaife

Charlotte Gilsenan

Paul Mehew

Nigel Sutton

Muriel Morgan

Chair

Manager

Deputy Manager

Bookings Manager

Accountant

Conference Trustee

Media & Marketing Co Ordinator

This year has been another busy one for the Purley Chase Centre, we had a Garden Party which brought together the church and the local community in such a vibrant and welcoming way that it may become a regular event. We have had Karin Baynes leave the PMT but immediately replaced by Muriel Morgan who works with Purley on web pages and advertisements of retreats that go on here.

Events - 2024 is full and requests are still coming in for events at the centre, at this point we are taking details in case we have any cancellations in the upcoming year. As for 2025 the calendar is booked for every weekend and 2026 is currently being structured so church groups and our regular groups can be accommodated at their requested times, some are already scheduled into the 2030's.

We are exploring our event options here at Purley and are attempting more day events and evening events for example the Christmas wreath making workshop and the more recent hanging basket workshop were given a great response and as always, the cream teas are always a popular option. We currently have many other day events planned such as numerology, sewing class and an evening event scheduled for October that has meals and adult storytelling from a Bard, this was getting booked in February and looks to be quite a popular choice.

We continue to have support and help from the ministers who are taking the Sunday services where possible and we are very grateful for everyone's continued support.

Staff - All staff have completed their mandatory training and as suggested by our safety auditors have completed an in-person training day that was held at Purley Chase. This will continue with other training being suggested for 2024.

Buildings and Grounds - Unfortunately, due to age and weather some of the old trees on the grounds have had to be removed or fell on their own which is a great loss to the centre. We are at the moment sourcing new semi mature trees with help from a church trust and though the autumn we are getting some mature trees planted and will hopefully restart the cycle again for the next hundred years.

As always with a centre as large and old as Purley Chase we have continued maintenance throughout the year this includes replacing and making good the old wooden playground as most of the planks around the tree and the balancing beams were rotten Also after last year painting the ground floor sash windows and making new sills Chris Woodhouse has started painting and replacing the sills on the second floor.

We have had a very busy and exciting year and have had over 2617 occupied bedrooms from April 2023 to 31st March 2024 and we hope for many more throughout 2024 and beyond.

REPORTS FROM AROUND THE CHURCHES YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2024

1. BROADFIELD MEMORIAL BENEVOLENT FUND

The Secretary-Treasurer, Mr Nick Skinner, reports:

All those who it is believed may be entitled to request assistance from the Fund were contacted. Payments totalling £17178 were made to 16 recipients. The balance on the bank account was £4009 as at 31st March 2024. The Fund also holds 7360 units in the Common Investment Fund on which quarterly dividends are received.

A summary of transactions for the year ending 31st March 2024 is as follows;

	£	£
Balance at Bank as 1st April 2023		2641
Donation—Homelands Trust	17000	
Dividends—CIF	1556	18556
		21197
Payments to Recipients	17178	
Bank Transaction fees	10	17188
Balance at bank as at 31st March 2024.		4009

2. THE EDWARD JEGGINS TRUST

The Secretary, Revd Robert Gill, reports:

As a matter of courtesy, the trustees report that The Edward Jeggins Trust continues to give sympathetic consideration to requests for financial help towards the repair or improvement of New Church premises. We are especially keen to help where issues of public safety and accessibility are concerned. In line with these priorities, during the year 2023/24, the trustees made grants totalling £5812 to the Kearsley, Bradford and Seaburn Dene churches.

Twelve months ago, we reported that we had sought legal advice with a view to changing the terms under which The Edward Jeggins Trust operates. It had become increasingly evident that, with the closure of many New Church Societies in Great Britain, the Trust was in danger of becoming superfluous to requirement and redundant. We therefore wished to add New Church Residential Centres to the list of our potential beneficiaries as they are clearly of growing importance. However, the legal advice which we received was that such a change could not be made without the consent of the Charities Commission.

We therefore prepared and presented our case to the Charities Commission, and we were advised by them that we must submit a Section 275 resolution applying for a change of wording to our Charitable Objects. A special meeting of the trustees had to be convened at which a proposed change of wording was unanimously approved. The Section 275 resolution was then submitted to the Charities Commission and we are happy to report that, after careful consideration, the Commission approved our submission and authorised our proposed changes. The new Objects of The Edward Jeggins Trust became effective as from the 3rd November 2023. This means that, for the first time, we are now able to include Purley Chase Centre, Wellspring House, and Kildwick New Church Centre among our potential beneficiaries. We hope that this important change ensures the continued relevance of the Trust to the work of the New Church in Great Britain.

3. HOME WORSHIP

The Revd Gillian Gordon, reports:

The Home Worship team consists of Paul Crone, who sends them out, Linda Wells, who reminds contributors when their session is due and myself for checking theological accuracy and requesting sessions to be written by church people. We were late for just one session in January due to a changeover of personnel and I had two worried receivers anxious to ensure the home worship would still be arriving. So, I guess they are important to those at home unable to get to church.

We are grateful to all contributors who send an amazing variety of interesting sessions.

I also send home made cards from all the Ministers to isolated members in the hopes they know they are neither forgotten nor overlooked

4. KILDWICK CENTRE

The Secretary, Mr Keith Sandiford, reports:

The Centre opened at Easter with a new electric fan heater in the dining room to replace the old gas convector heater. The main advantage of the new system is that it is positioned much higher up the wall than the old heater and hopefully above any flood level. All the decorating work in the dining room and the small back dormitory had been completed and a new door fitted to the outside storage room.

Bookings were slightly down on last year's but two bookings had to be

cancelled because of bad weather e.g. storm Babet. The total number was 17 on 80 days (19 on 82 days in 2022). Of these 12 on 47 days were church groups (13 on 68). Outside bookings were 5 on 33 days (6 on 14) and included 2 visitors from the U.S.A. who were visiting relatives in the area.

There have been no major problems during the season and the storms which caused the cancellations did not result in any damage to the property. Two minor upsets were the return of the moles and some plaster falling from the ceiling in the small front dormitory. Both problems were quickly dealt with but the dormitory ceiling will need painting.

The cost of running and maintaining the Centre has increased. Obviously, energy prices have risen and servicing, repairs etc are also more expensive. However, the premises have been kept in good order, but a period of price stability would be helpful.

5. THE LIBRARY & ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Mrs Maeve Hawkins reports:

The Committee has met only once during the past year. Since the end of the Covid-19 pandemic there has been a reduction in the number of enquiries and it has been possible to deal with them without the need to visit Swedenborg House. Some assistance was provided to Susanna Buchanan, who was writing a book on the Sheffield poets. One of these was the father of the Revd J G Dufty. The Committee has also helped Mrs Sarah Odhner of the General Church in London, who in 2024 was awarded a Ph.D. on the Swedenborg-influenced ideas of Samuel Wilderspin about the theory of infant school education in the early nineteenth century.

It seems unlikely that the Committee will meet again at Swedenborg House but, as in the past, Gordon Kuphal intends to make occasional trips to London to work on the archives. Alex Murray continues to work on the cataloguing of the Conference's archives. Enquiries will still be welcomed by Maeve Hawkins and Gordon Kuphal.

6. NEW CHURCH MARKETING & RESOURCES GROUP

Mr Stephen Russell-Lacy reports:

During the last 12 months, we have continued to promote our teachings to the general public through readable material on the spiritualwisdom.org.uk, and spiritualquestions.org.uk websites. We ran a stall at the Purley Chase Centre Garden Party and we have published one further booklet in the Great Questions of Life series available in print and in e-book format. The new title is 'How Can I Have A Better Life'?

7. THE NEW CHURCH YOUTH ASSOCIATION

The Secretary, Miss Gwendolen Rowe, reports:

Two Council Meetings have been held on Zoom during the last year and one meeting held in person. We were delighted to welcome Miss Joanne Walton formally as our Treasurer.

NCYA Conference: This year's Conference was held at the New Church College and we had 19 children attend a happy but busy creative session looking at Jesus calming the storm. We were delighted to welcome a coach of children and their families from Bradford New Church.

Home Sunday Club: Currently Home Sunday Club is posted or emailed to 34 children and 2 adults every month. Members range in age from 5 to 18 years. Judith Taylor continues to write the Starters letters with Alison Presland writing the Junior letters. In addition to receiving a letter and Bible story leaflets, members also received birthday greetings, Christmas cards and letters to parents, Children's Day leaflets, Sunrise Magazines and exhibition materials.

Creative Exhibition The Bible passage from this year's Conference – 'I will fulfil my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people (Psalm 116 v 18), and on the theme, Faithfulness, has been used as the exhibition theme this year. We have chosen to look at the story of Daniel in the Lion's Den as Daniel remained faithful to the Lord. Children and adults were invited to colour the pictures provided, write a short prayer or create or do something useful to reflect the theme. Entries will be displayed at Conference, in E-news and Sunrise Magazine and all children who enter will receive a small 'prize'.

Sunrise Magazine: 110 Sunrise Magazines are sent out 3 times a year. We are now able to send out copies to those abroad as we use electronic production for adults whilst still posting copies to children and Churches. This has had some positive feedback.

Children's Day: This was held on the third Sunday in January and Ministers, Worship Leaders and HSC families were invited to focus on children & young people. Our council member, Alison Presland, produced a useful leaflet, looking at the story of The Prodigal Son, with a short talk and some prayers for those who wanted it.

Links with other organisations: We continue to endeavor to improve our connection with other organisations working with children and young people.

Grants and Loans: We continue to offer financial assistance where appropriate when needed.

Website: Our website continues and has been used more this year by Home Sunday Club parents to communicate with us. Keith Dunbar is being supported by other members of the Council to endeavour to keep it up to date with news of recent and forthcoming events.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks and appreciation to all those who work so hard with the children and young people in our organisation.

9. THE COMMITTEE FOR AUXILIARY MINISTRY

The CAM co-ordinator, Mrs Jan Millar, reports:

General - It has again been a fairly quiet year for CAM, but I still continue to support lay people who work voluntarily for the Church. This includes keeping in touch with people who are no longer active in the Church but who have served Conference well in the past.

Leaders United - In view of the fact that the vast majority of the attendees come from the North of England, it was decided that Leaders United would no longer meet at Purley Chase. A venue in the North of England will be used instead. It is hoped that there will be one such meeting each year plus another held via Zoom. I hope this will enable more people to be able to attend these events. Members of Leaders United attended a Zoom meeting with representatives of the Council and the Ministry to discuss their ideas and expectations for the future of the Church, especially with regard to the support of young adults. Some of these ideas have now been taken up.

Celebrants - Jonathan Millar has undergone the necessary study and training arranged by CAM and has been approved by the Ministry as a Holy Supper celebrant.

Young People's Committee - CAM is offering support to the new Young People's Committee. On 16th January 2024 CAM delivered a workshop on 'Help! I'm on the Committee' which was attended by the four young people who are forming the Committee. I was impressed by their enthusiasm and commitment.

Resources - CAM continues to hold a variety of resources which are available to anyone who may find them useful. These are obtainable free of charge either electronically or in hard copy. Several of the sermons have been sent to a variety of people this year as well as other service material.

Finally, CAM would like to thank the Conference Council and the Committee of Ministers for their continuing support for the work of all lay people

within the Church. The committee would also like to thank all the Auxiliary Ministers who give so much to the life of the Church. Their dedication and commitment are greatly appreciated.

10. THE YOUTH AND FAMILY TEAM

Mrs Jenny Jones reports:

The Youth and Family Team consisting of Robert Clark, Jenny Jones, Rev Becky Jarratt and Rev Jack Dunion continue to work to spread the teachings of our church and a sense of community and fellowship to the children, young adults and families who attend our events and receive the information we produce. Sue Chesworth also acts as our link to the Conference Council and as line manager to Jenny and Robert. She is the designated Safeguarding Lead for the church and Jenny has recently taken on the role of Deputy.

We continue to run a full program of events around the country for children, young adults, and families. These include family bunkhouse weekends, activity fun days, all age family weekends at Purley Chase Centre, Walk and Talk get togethers, weekends at Wellspring House for 18 plus, Outdoor pursuit weekends and Easter Rally. We also run the 9-12 Summer Camp for 9-13 year olds and assist with the administration running of the Purley Summer Camp.

We continue to run the Facebook Group, Purley People which is used for advertising and reporting on our events. It is also used by church members generally to let the online community know what is happening in their own areas. Each member of the team worked through an online course provided by the Youth Ministry University and as a result of this, we have changed areas of our practice.

We are developing a website to make the information about our residential more easily accessible to the outside world. The address is <https://newchurchcamps.org.uk> and we hope it will be “live” before the annual meeting.

11. YORKSHIRE AND NORTH-EAST AREA COUNCIL

The Secretary, Miss Gwendolen Rowe, reports:

In the last year the Yorkshire Area has lost 2 of its members.

Bradford - Bradford continues to support the Community Project. It is still very much needed in the area. Bradford now has a group of families attending services and taking part in the life of the Church. They hold services twice a month. In May the church were excited to see installed a new noticeboard, bought by a grant given from the Area Council to which they are enormously grateful.

Last summer Bradford members and friends arranged an event at Purley Chase which was very successful. They have been busy planning their Centenary Celebration due to take place in June.

Dalton New Church - Dalton manage to hold services each week and meet for Fellowship twice a month. They have had a slight increase in attendance. They lost a long serving member this year which has been a great loss.

Seaburn Dene - Seaburn Dene have continued to hold regular worship over the last year and have had a wide variety of services. In March they celebrated 50 years in their current building with over 50 members and friends attending. This year they have a community cupboard and collect items which can then be given to those who need it. With a grant from the Council they have been able to get some much needed work in the downstairs rooms.

Keighley New Church - At Keighley services continue on a weekly basis, sometimes led by Worship Leaders alongside their Minister. They have started a lively discussion group and coffee mornings which are both well attended. Christmas and Easter cards are distributed to the locality.

As ever we are very grateful to our Ministers, Retired Ministers and Worship Leaders who lead our services and to all those who work hard to maintain the life of the church.

12. COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

The Secretary, Revd Brian Talbot, reports:

1. Meetings: The Committee met at Ministers' Seminar on Monday 16th October, on Tuesday 14th to Wednesday 15th November 2023 and held their Annual Meeting from Wednesday 28th February to Thursday 29th February 2024. There were ten, eight and ten ministers respectively at our meetings. Six members attended a hybrid meeting at Wellspring House on Wednesday 17th May with four members on Zoom, but the Zoom component was abandoned due to limited band-width. Twelve members attend a Zoom meeting on Thursday 6th July. In addition to meetings in person at Purley Chase, we are planning to have a number of Zoom Meetings to tackle specific issues.

2. Spiritual Leadership: Revd Jack Dunion reported that the needs of the organisation have changed. With the agreement of Conference Council, Emma Daniels of Tempus Fugit Solutions, has been brought in as a consultant to give administrative and secretarial help to the Ministers for an initial 6 months' period. The ministry, having appointed Rev. Becky Jarratt as Deputy Spiritual Leader until Conference 2026, passed the motion to Conference Council for agreement prior to it being made public. A document clarifying responsibilities has been drawn up.

The Ministers are looking at the issue of Junior Membership of Conference.

3. Facilitation: The Ministers, facilitated by Mrs Gayle-Anne Drury, have been considering whether or not to allow those who feel able to marry homosexual couples to proceed from their own conscience. Accepting that there is a variety of opinion regarding this and related topics, we all agreed to work together in love, respect and fellowship, by listening carefully and prayerfully as each minister shared their journey so far. Following each facilitation the Ministers' have produced statements for the consideration of the church. We look forward to answering some questions during two Conference evening sessions.

4. Zoom Services: Under the leadership of Revd Becky Jarratt, a Zoom service is held every 2nd and 4th Sundays, as well as extra services at Christmas and Easter. We thank those who have looked after the technical side of the services, and Mrs Muriel Morgan for all of her work in this area. A Methodist pianist, local to Revd Becky Jarratt, will be employed to record additional hymns for Zoom.

5. Link Ministers: The Ministers endeavour to keep in touch with all part of the Conference organisation. We have appointed the following:

Youth	Becky Jarratt
Purley Chase	Helen Brown
Finance	Clifford Curry
Human Resources	Brian Talbot
CAM and Local Churches	Christine Bank
Training and Development	Becky Jarratt

6. Transition: Revd Ian Russell, our dear and valued colleague, passed into the higher life before Christmas 2023. He served our congregation in Derby, tutored at the College and was our Senior Minister from 2001 to 2006. The title of "Senior Minister" replaced the title of "President of Conference" in 2001.

7. Isolated Members: Revd Gill Gordon reports cards have been sent to over 30 isolated members and churches which do not have their own Ministers at church festivals. Easter, New Church Day, Harvest and Christmas. Her work is much appreciated by recipients. We thank the Revd Gillian Gordon for her work in keeping in touch with those who are isolated from church societies.

8. Home Worship: We thank Revd Gillian Gordon, and her team of Linda Wells and Paul Crone for producing material for use at home. These form the basis of most Zoom services and are written by ministers and lay people. Podcasts were recorded for December and February, and are available on the Conference website.

9. Committee for Auxiliary Ministry: The Ministers work closely with CAM. We appreciate all the work that lay worship leaders and group leaders do for Conference and individual societies. We have affirmed Jonathan Millar as a licensed Holy Supper Celebrant.

10. SOLCe: We have regular updates from Revd Robin Wooldridge on the work of SOLCe and the progress of our ordination student.

11. Ordination Student: We are delighted to hear about the progress Lynne Griffiths is making with her courses.

12. Apocalypse Awakening: Revd Becky Jarratt and Revd Jack Dunion continue to work on the Apocalypse Awakening material, based on the work of the Apocalypse Study Group. The address of the website is: <https://apocalypseawakening.org.uk/>. They welcome your comments.

13. Retired Colleagues: The Committee wishes to acknowledge the work of retired colleagues and thank them.

14. New Christian Bible Study website: We were delighted that Steve David was able to meet us in February via Zoom and update us about the work of the website. There is now an AI "chatbot" on the NCBS website which aids searches into specific questions.

15. Logopraxis: Several ministers and laity are involved in this practice-based approach to the Writings.

16. Index to our Minutes: We would like to again record our thanks to Mr Gordon Kuphal for indexing our minutes.

17. Stipend Rates: We thank the Council for their decision to increase the salaries of employed ministers and the fees of self-employed retired ministers by 4% from 1st April 2024. The Ministerial stipend currently stands at £42,288.00 per annum.

18. The Edward Jeggins Trust: Thanks were expressed to Revd Robert Gill for his outstanding work on obtaining permission from the Charity Commission to use the funds from the Edward Jeggins Trust for SOLCe, Purley Chase and Kildwick.

REPORT OF THE COMPANY ACCOUNTANT YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2024

The Company Accountant, Mr Paul Mehew, reports:

During the year the Company experienced an increase in the net movement in funds of £3,083k. This was largely due to the following;

- An increase in gains on investments of £3,318k driven by US market out performance and UK market recovery.
- An increase in dividends received of £57k broadly in line with market performance.
- A reduction in legacies received of £43k following the receipt of a Danish Legacy of £63k in FY23.
- An increase in Purley Chase income of £48k driven largely by additional group bookings.
- An increase in Purley Chase costs of £89k largely due to an expected increase in headcount post-Covid plus the high inflation experienced on food and fuel costs.
- An increase in Ministerial costs of £89k partly due to the appointment of a new minister.
- An increase in management and administration costs largely due to the movements in headcount as anticipated.
- An increase in CIF movements of £57k following the sale of the Radcliffe units.

During the year the Company also experienced an increase in the CIF market value per unit from £10.48 to £11.43. This increase was largely driven by the US market outperformance and UK market recovery as referred to above.

Income and Expenditure Accounts

For year ended March 31st 2024

	£k	£k	£k
Income	2024	2023	2022
Donations	85	98	59
Government Grants	0	0	24
Legacies	20	63	0
Trust	60	68	68
Society Contributions	113	111	106
Purley Chase Centre	130	81	81
Property Sales	0	0	29
Rents	1	1	0
Dividends	745	688	611
Interest	43	12	1
	1,197	1,121	979
Expenditure			
Investment Management Fees	(154)	(147)	(139)
Publishing	(4)	(2)	(1)
Purley Chase Centre	(403)	(314)	(259)
Ministerial	(284)	(195)	(218)
Outreach and Education	(45)	(34)	(27)
Management and Administration	(337)	(282)	(204)
Societies Income on CIF	(127)	(130)	(112)
Societies Withdrawals from CIF	(80)	(20)	(54)
	(1,435)	(1,124)	(1,014)
Investment gains/(losses)	2,421	(897)	2,615
Net Movement in Funds	2,183	(900)	2,580

Balance Sheet as at March 31st

	£k	£k	£k
	2024	2023	2022
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible Assets	1,917	1,974	2,028
Investment Assets	32,085	29,819	30,863
	34,002	31,793	32,891

CURRENT ASSETS /(liabilities)

Cash at bank and in hand	941	838	758
Other current assets/(liabilities)	(17)	112	(6)
	924	950	752

34,926	32,743	33,643
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CHARITY FUNDS

Endowment Funds	2,256	1,946	1,902
Restricted Funds	24,008	22,575	23,048
Unrestricted Funds	8,662	8,222	8,693

34,926	32,743	33,643
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CIF Market Value Per Unit	11.43	10.48	10.73
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STATISTICAL TABLE

	Society Members	Non-resident	Total new members	Deceased	Removed	Increase	Decrease	Members of Conference
Accrington	27	7	0	2	0	0	2	20
Bournemouth	25	4	0	1	0	0	1	#27
Bradford	10	0	0	1	0	0	1	#13
Dalton	33	2	0	0	0	0	0	11
Derby	#46	#24	#0	#2	#0	#0	#1	#32
Kearsley	26	4	0	1	1	0	2	15
Keighley	27	11	0	1	0	0	1	15
Paisley	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	#12
Seaburn Dene	27	4	4	0	0	4	0	17
West Wickham	23	10	0	0	0	0	0	#17
Total 2023/24	262	66	4	8	1	4	8	179
Totals 2022/23	271	72	1	13	5	1	17	274

Last year's figures, as no details were provided.

	Baptisms	Marriages	Funerals	Sunday School No. of children	Avg. attend. 16-	Holy Supper Administrations	Holy Supper Average Attendance	Overall Average Attendance
Accrington	0	0	1	0	0	4	9	9
Bournemouth	1	0	1	0	0	3	13	15
Bradford	1	0	0	24	22	12	16	20
Dalton	0	0	0	0	0.2	11	10	13
Derby	#0	#0	#0	#0	#0	#10	13	13
Kearsley	0	0	3	4	2	4	11	16
Keighley	0	1	6	0	0	11	13	17
Paisley	0	0	1	0	0	4	6	6
Seaburn Dene	0	0	0	1	2	1	9	15
West Wickham	0	0	0	0	0	10	9	9
Totals 2023/24	2	1	12	29	26.02	70	109	133
Totals 2022/23	11	4	14	27	15.4	68	113	131

THE NEW CHURCH COLLEGE REPORT OF THE COLLEGE COUNCIL 2023 - 2024

**Below is a summary of the full report.
The full report has been sent to all Governors of the New Church College
and copies are available on request from the Treasurer of the New
Church College.**

This Report covers the work of the College Council for the year ended 31 March 2024. The New Church College uses the working name of The Swedenborg Open Learning Centre [SOLCe] and is based at Wellspring House.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the College's governing document, the Charities Act 2011 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016).

1. COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

1.1 Attendance at Council Meetings

The Council met, in person for one full Council meeting and on Zoom for 2 full Council meetings making a total of 3 occasions during the year in April 2023, October 2023 and January 2024. There was also an AGM in July 2023. This was held at Wellspring House.

Membership and attendance at meetings were as follows:

Council Members	Council Meetings	AGM (July)
Mr C Chambers, President	3	1
Mr RJ Nicholls, Treasurer	3	1
Ms Gwendolen Rowe, Secretary	3	1
Revd M Duckworth	3	1
Dr P Isherwood	2	1
Mr R Kennion	3	1
Mr S Kennion	3	1
Revd MW Stanley	3	1

The Administrator, Melanie Bennett, attended 3 full Council meetings (3 possible) by standing invitation.

The Leader of Education, Revd Robin Wooldridge attended 3 full Council meetings (3 possible) by standing invitation.

Mrs Sue Chesworth (Conference Council Member) attended 2 meetings (2 possible) by standing invitation.

1.2 Attendance at the Annual Meeting

The 159th Annual Meeting of Governors of the New Church College was held at Wellspring House, on Saturday 1st July 2023 with an attendance of 12 Governors and 4 guests/friends.

2. EMPLOYEES

The New Church College currently employees 1.27 full time equivalent (FTE) staff:

2.1 Name	Job Role	Hours	FTE
Revd Robin Wooldridge	Leader of Education	20	0.5
Melanie Bennett	Administrator	35	0.87

2.2 Linda Stoney undertakes House Keeping duties on a casual basis, averaging around 2 hours a week.

2.3 The work of the Leader of Education is supported by a team of tutors who are engaged on a consultancy basis to assist with module writing and delivery.

3. EMPLOYEE REMUNERATION

It is the current policy of the Council to follow the lead of General Conference in determining salaries. In line with this, the Council an increase, to the salaries of the Leader of Education, Leader of Wellspring House and the Administrator by 4% from 1st May 2023. An increase of 4% has been agreed from approved from 1st April 2024.

4. GENERAL REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE COLLEGE

4.1 Performance of the Charity

With the building now being open more events have been taking place.

- Easter Rally – April 2023
- Committee of Ministers - May 2023
- NCYA AGM- June 2023
- 159th AGM - July 2023
- Summer Gathering -July 2023

- Summer Camp 1 - August 2023
- 18+ group - September 2023
- How are you doing? How is your Soul? - September 23
- Adventure into Lower Earth – October 23
- Youth Committee weekend – December 23
- Christmas Gathering – December 23 - held at Kearsley New Church
- 18+ weekend February 24
- Journey into Lower Earth – February 24
- Adventure into Lower Earth - March 24

4.2 Highlights of the year:

- Miss Lynne Griffiths continues full time training for the ministry and is in her second year. She is doing very well and is very enthusiastic.
- Paul Morgan has resigned from his training.
- Revd Robin Wooldridge has continued working on the Stepping Stones courses and courses continue to be taken up. There are also 3 introductory courses which are a bridge between the stepping stone courses and further study. We have had one person express interest in doing a paid course. Mr Stephen Russell-Lacy is supporting him with this.
- The college has now run two sets of workshops with some success, particularly with Revd Michael Stanley's Adventure/Journey to Lower Earth.

4.3 Future Development

The college has continued to provide online courses. Workshops have been run successfully in the Autumn and Spring and four further workshops are planned for Autumn 2024. Mrs Karin Baynes has been re-writing the Pathway to Wholeness Course which will be ready in 2025 for Miss Lynne Griffiths to do as part of her training.

4.4 Staff

Leader of Education

Robin Wooldridge is now completed his third year as Leader of Education he has continuing work to on stepping stones courses. He has continued to reach out to other organisations and we are now in partnership with the Youth Ministry University. It is an American online study site. 5 members have studied with them so far. More advanced courses are also being looked at too. He continues to update the website.

Administrator

Melanie Bennett has continued to work, on behalf of Wellspring House, from home continuing to split her time between home and Wellspring House. She provides administrative support to the college but is also working hard to

cover the college not having a Centre Leader. The college are deeply grateful for her tireless work keeping in contact with people and continuing to administer to the college, going above and beyond. In consultation with Mr Peter Isherwood she has spent a lot of time updating the Fire and Safety for the college which has demanded a tremendous amount of her time and the college is extremely grateful to her, and to Peter, for the additional work that has been put in.

Facilities Management

Due to the floods last year the decision was taken to introduce early warning systems for fire and other disasters and a new security warning system has now been deployed.

The council also approved the replacement of the roof which was in need of extensive work.

The Facilities Management team continue to work hard to maintain the fabric of the building and grounds. These continue to flourish and the college is grateful to the team who work tirelessly to ensure our beautiful building is well cared for and that the grounds stay well presented. We have continued to improve the building carrying out maintenance work as needed.

Our thanks must go to all who work in this area to ensure the building and grounds are maintained.

Support Staff

The college continues to benefit from the invaluable work Sue Chesworth does within her role supporting students in working with the youth leaders training. We sincerely thank you for her continued work in this area.

Volunteers

We value greatly from the many lay people who volunteer at the college and provide so much support to the team. We warmly thank them all for their commitment and dedication to the college.

4.5 SOLCe

Sponsored Students

In March Paul Morgan resigned as an ordination student to SOLCe. He is going to the USA in September or October to study at Bryn Athyn to do ordination training.

Miss Lynne Griffiths is now in her second year. She is doing really well and is extremely enthusiastic. She is on course with her studies. She has been doing some courses outside of SOLCe. She is set for ordination at Conference 2025.

SOLCe Students

As of March 2024, there are 38 students enrolled on SOLCe courses. This

includes students doing both Stepping Stones courses, which are self-directed and those doing paid courses. Some students are doing more than one course. Our student body comes from different countries, across five continents.

4.6 Outreach

The College advertises its open learning courses and events programme on the website www.swedenborg-openlearning.org.uk. They are also advertised on Social Media and more recently the workshops have also been advertised on colourful booklets produced by Miss Gwendolen Rowe. These are available to those in the general public and to church members. Our endeavour is to provide a welcoming sphere for people to learn, to come together and to share in spiritual matters in a safe environment, albeit this has been on Zoom for most of the time. We continue to reach out to the wider community to build networks and to establish new relationships whilst always aiming to reach a wider audience.

4.7 Related Party

The Trustee, The General Conference of the New Church, is a registered charity. The General Conference is entitled to a proportion of the net income resources from the Jersey Fund and provides payroll facilities for which the College pays a service charge. The College also relies on the support of Conference for tutors, examiners and module-writers.

4.8 Governors

There are currently:

Honorary Governors - 3

Life Governors - 5

Honorary Life Governors – 5

Annual Governors - 40

Making a total of 53 in all.

5. FINANCE

5.1 Annual Accounts

The Treasurer reported a net decrease in resources of £33,351 before capital movements for the year to 31st March 2024. (decrease of £9,651 in 2023). During the year, losses on the disposal of investments of £2,335 were realised with notional gains of £295,565 arising from the revaluation of investments.

The budget for 2023–2024 projected a deficit of £25,000 (before investment management fees) but the actual deficit for the year was lower at £19,062 before investment management fees and a deficit of £33,351 when these are included. The deficit was caused by a one-off cost relating to the replacement of the roof. The main reason for the improvement compared with the original budgeted loss was slightly lower expenditure by staff against their budgets plus reduced council and staff expenditure.

A budget for 2024-2025 projects a surplus of £7,000 before any adjustments arising on the real and notional gains and losses or charges for managing our investments

5.2 Investments

The unrestricted funds, including the Jersey Fund, are amalgamated to minimise trading costs and to form a larger portfolio. The funds continue to be separated from an accounting point-of-view.

Brewin Dolphin, continue to follow the agreed investment policy statement which provided additional flexibility to the managers around our investment categories to hopefully improve income from our investments.

TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The charity trustee is responsible for preparing an annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). This activity is managed by the Treasurer (whose nomination for the post must be approved by the Trustees) and with the College Council on behalf of the Trustees.

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the charity trustee to prepare financial statements for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the trustee is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply these consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on the ongoing concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustee is responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enables it to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act

2011 and the provisions of the charity's constitution. It is also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Structure, governance and management

The College is a charitable incorporated organisation registered with the Charity Commission, which is managed by the College Council on behalf of its trustee, The General Conference of the New Church.

The College Council who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:-

Mr C Chambers
Mr R J Nicholls
Ms G Rowe
Revd M Duckworth
Dr P Isherwood
Mr R Kennion
Mr S Kennion
Revd M W Stanley

The College Council report was approved on behalf of College Council on 6th July 2024

LEADER OF EDUCATION - ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Rev'd Robin Wooldridge, reports:

The Swedenborg Open Learning Centre (SOLCe) has witnessed remarkable growth since it transitioned to an online platform at the 2022 Conference. This shift has expanded our reach - with SOLCe students now found across the globe.

Our ordination student, Lynne Griffiths, is making excellent progress in her studies and is entering the final year of her ordination course. We look forward to her ordination at the 2025 Conference.

The SOLCe Education Committee is actively collaborating with the ministry to update the ordination curriculum. This will ensure the course we offer remains relevant and effective.

SOLCe is hosting several one day workshops at Wellspring House. These include:

- "Adventure into Lower Earth" by Michael Stanley
- "How are You Doing? How is Your Soul?" led by Stephen Russell-Lacy
- "Divine Providence – the way of the spiritual bracelet" with Robin Wooldridge.

Our monthly online groups remain an important part of SOLCe. Over the past year, we have hosted:

- "Navigating Uncertainty" with Stephen Russell-Lacy
- "An Introduction to Swedenborgian Spirituality" by Robin Wooldridge
- "Roots and Wings" also led by Robin Wooldridge.

As SOLCe continues to evolve, we remain steadfast in our commitment to introducing the Teachings to a new generation of students.

The New Church College
Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted funds general
	2024
	£
<u>Income and endowments from:</u>	
Donations and legacies	16,499
Other trading activities	3,572
Investments	75,341
Other income	11,434
Total income	106,846
<u>Expenditure on:</u>	
Raising funds	11,605
Charitable activities	138,451
Total resources expended	150,056
Net gains/(losses) on investments	104,049
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers	60,839
Gross transfers between funds	20,840
Net movement in funds	81,679
Fund balances at 1 April 2023	1,178,765
Fund balances at 31 March 2024	1,260,444

Unrestricted funds Jersey	Restricted endowment funds	Totals	Totals
2024	2024	2024	2023
£	£	£	£
-	-	16,499	17,768
-	-	3,572	4,757
12,543	-	87,884	84,231
-	-	11,434	23,938
12,543	-	119,389	130,694
2,685	-	14,290	13,912
-	-	138,451	126,433
2,685	-	152,741	140,345
40,612	148,570	293,231	(225,730)
50,470	148,570	259,879	(235,381)
(12,275)	(8,565)	-	-
38,195	140,005	259,879	(235,381)
407,332	1,582,592	3,168,689	3,404,070
445,527	1,722,597	3,428,568	3,168,689

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Investments	3,400,722	3,121,608
Current Assets		
Debtors	8,421	10,775
Cash at Bank and in hand	42,270	53,229
	50,691	64,004
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(22,845)	(16,923)
Net Current Assets	27,846	47,081
Total Assets	3,428,568	3,168,689
less current liabilities		
Capital Funds		
Endowment funds	1,722,597	1,582,592
Income Funds		
Unrestricted funds - Jersey Education	445,527	407,332
Unrestricted funds - general	1,260,444	1,178,765

The accounts were approved by the College Council on 6 July 2024.

C Chambers [President]

NEW CHURCH COLLEGE

Names of people who have successfully completed accredited Courses, other than those who have been recognized as Ministers.

Certificate holders

Ruth Duckworth	1979
David Fitzjohn	1979
Margaret Presland	1989
Alan Bowie	2002
Bev Johnson	2004

Diploma holders

Raymond Kennion	1990
Paul Morgan	2024
Trevor Millar	2024
Lynne Griffiths	2024

Swedenborg Open Learning Centre

Certificate in Swedenborgian Studies (Level One)

Marion Curry	2004
Bev Johnson	2004
Lenka Machova	2004
Judith Wilson	2004
Thelma Wilson	2006
Anna Woofenden	2007
Trevor Millar	2007
Stephen Thomas	2008
Helen Newton	2009
Alan Misson	2015
Paul Morgan	2020

Graduate in Swedenborgian Studies (Level Three)

Rita Russell	2001
Alan Bowie	2006
Lee Differ	2019

LAST 40 ANNUAL MEETINGS OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

Year	Place	President/ Senior Minister/ Spiritual Leader	Preacher	Members
1983	Southampton	C.V.A.Hasler	I.P.Johnson	86
1984	Swanwick	C.V.A.Hasler	F.Clarkson	95
1985	Clacton-on-Sea	N.Ryder	N.Ryder	91
1986	Swanwick	N.Ryder	J.O.Booth	85
1987	Manchester	N.Ryder	J.C.Duckworth	91
1988	Hoddesdon	N.Ryder	J.E.Elliott	77
1989	Durham	N.Ryder	B.R.Jarvis	82
1990	Swanwick	R.A.Gill	R.A.Gill	86
1991	Birmingham	R.A.Gill	C.V.A.Hasler	82
1992	Swanwick	R.A.Gill/N.Ryder	J.D.Allsopp	80
1993	Glasgow	N.Ryder	J.M.Sutton	72
1994	Hoddesdon	N.Ryder	B.J.Presland	77
1995	Swanwick	N.Ryder	B.M.Talbot	78
1996	Lancaster	J.M.Sutton	J.M.Sutton	83
1997	Hoddesdon	J.M.Sutton	O.C.E.Jackson	81
1998	Swanwick	J.M.Sutton	N.Ryder	72
1999	Swanwick	J.M.Sutton	G.Clarkson	79
2000	Hoddesdon	J.M.Sutton	D.A.Moffat	77
2001	Swanwick	I.Russell	R.P.Brugler	83
2002	Swanwick	I.Russell	I.Russell	68
2003	Swanwick	I.Russell	C.Curry	76
2004	Hoddesdon	I.Russell	M.E.Duckworth	70
2005	Swanwick	I.Russell	R.A.Gill	79
2006	Swanwick	M.Duckworth	G.L.Gordon	86
2007	Swanwick	M.Duckworth	J.C.Duckworth	98
2008	Swanwick	M.Duckworth	R.A.Gill	87
2009	Swanwick	M.Duckworth	D. Lomax	88
2010	Swanwick	M.Duckworth	M.W.Stanley	88
2011	Swanwick	M.Duckworth	G.Gordon/D.Gaffney	82
2012	Swanwick	G.Gordon/D.Gaffney	J. Dunion	74
2013	Swanwick	G.Gordon/D.Gaffney	R.Russell	76
2014	Swanwick	D.Gaffney	C.Curry/C.Bank	72
2015	Swanwick	D.Gaffney	C.Bank	76
2016	Swanwick	D.Gaffney	J.Dunion	83
2017	Swanwick	D.Gaffney	H.Brown/J.Dunion	77
2018	Swanwick	D.Gaffney	M.E.Duckworth	69
2019	Swanwick	D.Gaffney	C.Bank/J.Dunion	67
2020	Via Zoom	J.Dunion	None	-
2021	Swanwick	-	-	52
2022	Swanwick	H.Brown/J.Dunion	M.E.Duckworth	54
2023	Swanwick	H.Brown/J.Dunion	J.Dunion	56

MINISTERS, WORSHIP LEADERS, LAY PREACHERS AND CELEBRANTS

1 MINISTERS

The following are the Ministers recognised by the Conference:

*Retired or not in active service #Overseas

Ordaining Ministers	ORDAINED	INDUCTED
* Robert Arthur Gill	June 30,1970	July 25,1990
* Mary Elizabeth Duckworth, B.A	July 10,1996	July 27,2006

Ministers	ORDAINED
* John Edward Elliott, B.A., B.D.	June 23,1954
*# John Emanuel Teed	June 23,1954
*# Ian Allan Arnold	June 30,1965
*# John Maitland Sutton, B.Ag.Sc.	June 30,1970
(served as an Ordaining Minister 1996 to 2001)	
* Michael William Stanley, M.Sc., Ph.D.	June 27,1971
*# Trevor Alexander Moffat, B.A.	July 15,1978
# Julian Clayton Duckworth	July 19,1980
* Clifford Curry, B.Sc	July 22,1983
* Bruce Roger Jarvis	July 30,1985
Brian Mark Talbot, B.A., DipEd., B.Sc.	July 26,1989
*# David Allan Moffat, B.Mus.	July 23,1997
* Gillian Lindsey Gordon	July 5,2000
* David Edward Gaffney, B.Sc	July 29,2004
Christine Anne Bank	July 31,2008
* Helen Thelma Brown	July 30,2009
Jack Dunion	July 30,2009
Rebecca Mary Jarratt	July 30,2015

(Ministers in the following categories are not entitled to vote at General Meetings of Conference by virtue of their office)

MINISTERS ORDAINED FOR SERVICE ABROAD

Ministers Ordained for Service in the Czech Republic

Martin David Krejza	April 3,1994
(Ordained in the Czech Republic)	

Ministers Ordained for Service in the Commonwealth of Independent States

Alexander Gorbenko	July 29,2004
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MINISTERS ORDAINED BY OTHER NEW CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

RECOGNISED

Patrick Duvivier	July 28,1999
(Ordained by the General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America on July 2, 1982)	
Catherine Lauber	July 31,2009
(Ordained by the Swedenborgian Church of North America on July 5, 2008)	
Robin Wooldridge	July 25,2017
(Ordained by the Revd D. Gaffney on behalf of The New Church in Australia on August 7, 2016)	

2 WORSHIP LEADERS AND LAY PREACHERS

The following are the Recognised Worship Leaders, Accredited Worship Leaders, and Lay Preachers recognised for service in Mauritius.

*Retired or not in active service

Recognised Worship Leaders

Geoffrey Charlton Bentley	1958
*Bryan Richard Smith	1962
Gordon Stanford Kuphal	1968
Stephen Russell-Lacy	1979
Jeffrey David Lomax	1982
Anne Elizabeth Clarkson	1991
Michael Clubb	1991
*Robert Joseph Kirk	1991

*David Richard Alfred Friend	1992
*Willie Huggins	1992
*Kathryn Mary Brooks	1993
Phillip Nicholas Brooks	1993
Alan Christopher Misson	1994
Recognised as a Lay Pastor	2013
*Pamela Joy Moffat	1995
*Clive Goalen	1995
*James Alan Bowie	2001
*Constance Thelma Wilson	2001
*Judith Margaret Wilson	2003
Pauline Ann Grimshaw	2004
Jan Millar	2004
Trevor Millar	2004
Recognised as a Lay Pastor	2008
Stephen Thomas	2005
Recognised as a Lay Pastor	2009
*Kittie Methuen-Jones	2006
Jean Mrozek	2006
Nigel Sutton	2006
Helen Newton	2007
David Haseler	2007
Gwendolen Rowe	2013
Richard Cunningham	2018
Jenny Jones	2020
Lynne Griffiths	2022

Accredited Worship Leaders

*Derrick Pearce	1999
*Enid Nicholls	2000
*Diane Lewin	2002
*Jonathan Armitage	2003
*George Hunt	2003
Janet Benson	2003
*Dorothy Margison	2004
*Linda Wells	2006
Grant Brackley	2006
David Brooks	2006

David Sharrock	2008
Tonia Jarvis	2012
*Susan Wilson	2012
*John Harris	2014
*Philippa Peacock	2014
Christine Mrozek	2018
Shannon Fitzgerald	2022
Jonathan Millar	2023

Lay Preachers recognised for service in Mauritius

	Authorised
Clifford Phanjoo	1991
Yves Radhanauth	2005

3 CELEBRANTS

The following are the Authorised Celebrants for the Sacraments and Ceremonies recognised by the Conference:

*Retired or not in active service

Mr Alan Misson - Baptism, Holy Supper and Funerals.

Mrs Anne Clarkson - Holy Supper.

Mr Phillip Brooks - Holy Supper and Funerals.

Mr Stephen Russell-Lacy - Holy Supper and Funerals.

Mr David Sharrock - Holy Supper and Funerals.

*Mr David Friend - Holy Supper.

Mr Trevor Millar - Baptism, Holy Supper and Funerals.

Dr Geoffrey Bentley - Baptism, Holy Supper and Funerals.

Mr Michael Clubb - Baptism, Holy Supper and Funerals.

*Mrs Thelma Wilson - Baptism, Holy Supper and Funerals.

Miss Gwendolen Rowe - Holy Supper.

*Mrs Kathryn Brooks - Funerals.

Mrs Pauline Grimshaw - Baptism, Holy Supper, Funerals and Marriages.

Mrs Jean Mrozek - Funerals.

Mrs Marion Curry - Holy Supper and Funerals.

Mr Stephen Thomas - Holy Supper and Funerals.

Mr David Brooks - Holy Supper and Funerals.

*Mr Alan Bowie - Holy Supper.

Mr Nigel Sutton - Baptism and Holy Supper.

Mr Gordon Kuphal - Holy Supper.

LAND AND BUILDINGS HELD IN TRUST BY CONFERENCE

Insurance of buildings (excluding contents)

B Conference Block Policy

M AMP

+ Index Linked

Held in trust for the Embsay Fund

Conference maintains with Ecclesiastical a combined insurance policy for employers, public and products liability on the properties listed below and also for other Societies and associated institutions

In London and the South of England

Bournemouth. Church and rooms at Tuckton Road, Southbourne BH6 3HT	B £1,973,000	+
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West Wickham. Church and rooms at High Street BR4 0LZ	B £1,202.00	+
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General Conference.

House at 18 Pollard Road, Whetstone, London N20 0UB Freehold.	B £563,000	+
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Bungalow at 80 Broadway, Southbourne Bournemouth BH6 4EQ Freehold.	B £478,000	+
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In the Midlands and West

Derby. Church and rooms at Horwood Avenue DE23 6AN	B £2,148,000	+
House at 409A Burton Road, Derby DE23 6AN	B £454,000	+

General Conference.

Bungalow at 215 Coventry Road, Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV10 7AX Freehold.	B £408,000	+
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Purley Chase Centre, Atherstone Freehold.	B £6,806,000	+
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In North Lancashire

Accrington. Church at Hargreaves Street BB5 2BB	B £1,026,000	+
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General Conference.

House at 5 Whittycroft Drive, Barrowford, Nelson BB9 6AS Freehold. #	B £402,000	+
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In North-West (Manchester) and Cheshire

Chester. Church and rooms at Brook Lane, Newton CH2 2BT	B	£488,096	+
House at 51 Woodlands Drive, Newton CH2 3QQ	B	£431,000	+
Kearsley. Church and rooms at Bolton Road BL4 9DD	B	£1,696,000	+
Radcliffe. Church and rooms at Stand Lane.	B	£1,164,000	+
General Conference. House at Church Street, Kearsley BL4 9DD Freehold.	B	£450,000	+

In Yorkshire and the North-East

Bradford. Church and rooms at Ashfield Avenue, Frizinghall BD18 3AL	B	£1,216,000	+
Dalton. Church and rooms at Grove Place, Dalton, Huddersfield HD5 9LH	B	£1,317,617	+
Flats at 111 and 113 Long Lane, Dalton, Huddersfield HD5 9LL	B	£1,502,000	+
Keighley. Church and rooms at Braithwaite Road, Braithwaite BD22 6PX	B	£1,095,000	+
Seaburn Dene. Church and rooms at Shields Road, Seaburn Dene, Sunderland SR6 8ND	B	£891,323	+
General Conference. House at 22 Wimborne Drive, Keighley Jointly owned freehold. #	B	£373,000	+
Kildwick New Church Centre, Main Road, Kildwick BD20 9BD Freehold. #	B	£1,130,450	+
New Zealand 59a Balmain Road, Birkenhead, Auckland, 1310 (Conference share 86.7647%)	M	NZ\$615,037	
Property of the New Church College 25 Radcliffe New Road, Radcliffe, M26 1LEB		£1,347.00	+

**SECRETARIES AND TREASURERS OF
NEW CHURCH INSTITUTIONS AND
CONFERENCE COMMITTEES**

	Secretary	Treasurer
Broadfield Benevolent Fund	Mr.N.Skinner	Mr.N.Skinner
New Church College	Miss.G.Rowe	Mr.R.J.Nicholls
Committee for Auxiliary Ministry	Mrs.J.E.Millar	
Examining Board (College Education Studies)	Leader of Studies	
Home Worship Scheme	Rev.G.L.Gordon (Organiser)	
Jeggins Trustees	Rev.R.A.Gill	Rev.J.Dunion
Kildwick Committee	Mr.K.Sandiford	Mr.K.Sandiford
Library & Archives Committee	Mrs.M.Hawkins	
Marketing and Resources	Mr.S.Russell-Lacy	
Ministers' Committee	Mrs E Daniels	
New Church Children's Society	Mrs.S.Chesworth	Mrs.C.Rowlands
New Church Historical Society	To be appointed	
New Church Youth Association	Miss.G.Rowe	Miss J Walton
Purley Chase Centre	Mrs.R.Gilsenan	Mr P Mehew
Swedenborg Society	Ms.D.Prentice (Admin)	Mr.A.Morley
Yorkshire Missionary Association	Miss.G.Rowe	
Yorkshire & North-East Area Council	Miss.G.Rowe	Mr. T.Millar

LIST OF SOCIETIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE GENERAL CONFERENCE
(For addresses and telephone numbers see Address List)

City, Town, etc.	Situation of Church	Minister or Lay Leader	Treasurer	Secretary
Accrington	Hargreaves Street Accrington BB5 2BB		Miss.J.Walton	Contact the Treasurer
Bournemouth	Tuckton Road, Southbourne BH6 3HT	Rev.C.Curry	Mrs.J.Pike	Rev.G.Gordon
Bradford and Saltaire	Ashfield Avenue, Shipley W Yorks BD18 3AL	Contact Secretary	Ms.P.Blomfield	Mrs.D.Nolan
Dalton, Huddersfield	Grove Place, Dalton Huddersfield HD5 9LH	Mr.T.Millar	Mr.R.Jessop	Mrs.J.Mrozek
Derby	Horwood Avenue Derby DE23 6AN	Mrs.C.Sutton	Mr.N.K.Sutton	Mrs.R.F.Delderfield
Kearsley (07913 121119)	Bolton Road Kearsley Lancs BL4 9DD	Rev B Talbot	Mr.D.Ormes	Mrs.C Kennion

LIST OF SOCIETIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE GENERAL CONFERENCE
(For addresses and telephone numbers see Address List)

City, Town, etc.	Situation of Church	Minister or Lay Leader	Treasurer	Secretary
Keighley	Braithwaite Road Braithwaite Village Keighley BD22 6PX	Rev.C.Bank	Mrs. K Higgins	Mrs. Y.Higgins
Paisley	The Wynd Centre 6 School Wynd Paisley PA1 2DB	Rev.J.J.Dunion	Mr.C.A.Macpherson	To be appointed
Seaburn Dene, Sunderland	Shields Road Seaburn Dene, Sunderland SR6 8ND		Mr.G.Nicholls	Mrs.N.Ramsay
West Wickham (07534 702887)	142 High Street, West Wickham Kent BR4 0LZ	Mr.A.C.Misson	Mr.C.V.Skinner	Mr.D.E.Brooks
Mauritius	Remono Street, Curepipe Road and 2 Rue Champ de Lort Port Louis		Mr.R.Sookeeah	

AREA COUNCIL

This Council comprises a Secretary, a Treasurer and as many Ministers and Lay Members as are deemed necessary.

The numbers in brackets after the names of the Societies denote the number of representatives which the Society is entitled to send to the Annual Meeting of the Conference.

An asterisk indicates that the property of the Society is in Conference Trust.

Yorkshire and North-East

Ministers: Rev.C.Bank, Rev.B.Jarvis, Rev.R.Jarratt

Secretary: Miss.G.Rowe

Treasurer: Mr.T.Millar

*Bradford and Saltaire (2); *Dalton (1); *Keighley (2); *Seaburn Dene (2)

WEB SITES

General Conference	www.generalconference.org.uk
New Church Youth Association	www.ncya.generalconference.org.uk
Purley Chase Centre	www.purleychasecentre.org.uk
Spiritual Wisdom	www.spiritualwisdom.org.uk
Apocalypse Awakening	www.apocalypseawakening.org.uk
Spiritual Questions	www.spiritualquestions.org.uk
SOLCe	www.swedenborg-openlearning.org.uk
Swedenborg Society	www.swedenborg.org.uk
New Church Camps	www.newchurchcamps.org.uk