



**THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW CHURCH**  
**CONFERENCE COUNCIL MEETING**  
**held on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024 at 10.00am Via Zoom**

|                     |                                                                                              |                                                                              |
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| Trustees Present:   | Mrs M Cowie<br>Revd B Jarvis<br>Mrs S Chesworth<br>Mr B Friend<br>Mr T Millar<br>Mr N Sutton | Chairperson<br>Vice-Chairperson                                              |
| Also in attendance: | Ms N Welch<br>Mr P Mehew                                                                     | Company Secretary<br>Company Accountant                                      |
| Invited Guests:     | Revd J Dunion<br>Revd B Jarratt<br>Mr C Chambers                                             | Spiritual Leader<br>Deputy Spiritual Leader<br>President, New Church College |

Start time: 10.00am

Finish Time: 16.16pm

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|           | <b>Opening</b><br>Revd Jack Dunion opened the meeting with reading from Luke 13:6-9 and Divine Providence 251, followed by a short prayer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |  |
| <b>20</b> | <b>Minutes</b><br><i>Confirmation of the Minutes of the Conference Council Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2024.</i><br>Correction to Minute 4: Insert <i>Junior Membership</i> . Sue Chesworth had discussed junior membership of Conference with the young people and at present they don't perceive any benefit. Revd Jack Dunion would take this information back to the Committee of Ministers.<br>Correction to Minute 5: delete the item Junior Membership<br>Correction to Minute 6: second line, delete the word "both". Insert "he meets"<br>The minutes were approved by all present with Revd Bruce Jarvis proposing and Sue Chesworth seconding.<br><br><i>Confirmation of the Minutes of the Conference Council Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024.</i><br>The minutes of the meeting were approved by all present with Revd Bruce Jarvis proposing and Barry Friend seconding.<br><br><i>Confirmation of the Minutes of the Conference Council Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024.</i><br>The minutes of the meeting were approved by all present with Barry Friend proposing and Revd Bruce Jarvis seconding. |  |
| <b>21</b> | <b>Finance Update</b><br>Paul Mehew, Company Accountant, gave an update on the current position of the accounts.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |

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|    | <p><i>Approvals for Purchases</i> –Paul Mehew, had produced, and spoke about, a document illustrating who has authority to approve purchases and the maximum amount allowed. This was approved by the Conference Council.</p> <p><i>Purley Pricing 2025</i> –The Purley Management Team had put forward the pricing for the Purley Chase Centre 2025 for the Council to approve. Paul Mehew had researched prices charged by similar local businesses to produce the pricing structure. The new pricing structure will be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 to coincide with the financial year. All present approved the new pricing structure for 2025.</p> <p><i>VAT (Value Added Tax)</i> – Paul Mehew explained that he had looked into the issue of VAT and confirmed that, as Purley Chase Centre is a religious retreat, its accommodation income is exempt from VAT. This argument is strengthened by the vetting procedure currently in place. This procedure requires checks to be carried out on any proposed new customers wishing to make a booking in order to ensure adherence to the ethos and foundations of The General Conference of the New Church.</p> <p><i>Expenses Authorisation procedure</i> - Anyone who claims expenses must complete an expense claim form and send this along with any receipts to their Line Manager or the person who approves their expenses. Once they have been approved the expense claim form along with any receipts can then be sent onto the Company Accountant for payment.<br/> <i>Action:</i> Paul Mehew will send a reminder out to anyone who claims expenses to remind them of the procedure for claims expenses.</p> <p><i>Budgets</i> – It was agreed that Paul Mehew would present the budgets each quarter at Council meetings, so everyone is aware of expenditure within their budgets and what funds are available.</p> <p><i>Retired Ministers Fees</i>– The Council agreed that these would be reviewed in March/April 2025.</p> <p><i>Signatories</i> – The Trustees discussed the signatories for Santander and all the Common Investments Fund accounts, and it was agreed that Margaret Cowie and Nigel Sutton would remain the two main signatories on all the accounts.</p> <p><i>Angels Events</i> – Carolyn Kennion and Margaret Presland are organising events to involve all churches and all ages and asked if they could have of budget of £150. Paul Mehew, Company Accountant, felt this was too small and they should claim through expenses.<br/> <i>Action:</i> Margaret Cowie will explain this to Carolyn Kennion</p> | PM          |
|    | <i>Paul Mehew left the meeting</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |             |
| 22 | <p><b>Safeguarding Procedures Manual</b></p> <p>The General Conference has taken up membership of Christian Safeguarding Services. This is an organisation which provides specialist training, consultancy and professional support to churches and other Christian Faith Based Organisations.</p> <p>Sue Chesworth and Natalie Welch are working together on a new Safeguarding Procedures Manual using the Christian Safeguarding Services as guidance.</p> <p>Sue Chesworth is attending an online Safeguarding Lead training course run by Christian Safeguarding Services on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.</p> <p><i>Action:</i> Revd Bruce Jarvis and Revd Becky Jarratt will proofread the manual.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | RBJ/<br>RRJ |
|    | <i>Chris Chambers joined the meeting</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |             |
| 23 | <p><b>Youth &amp; Family Team Update</b></p> <p>Sue Chesworth reported that the Family Weekend on 25<sup>th</sup>- 27<sup>th</sup> October at the Purley Chase Centre, was a great success with over 50 people attending. Currently the Youth and Family team subsidise</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |             |

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|    | <p>this event from their designated budget. The New Church Children's Society also supports a range of people.</p> <p>The Youth and Family Team are meeting at Wellspring House on January 11<sup>th</sup> 2025, to plan future developments.</p> <p>There is some difficulty when organising events for young people arising from the difference in ages. It was agreed that, in order to abide by safeguarding guidance, strict observance will be given to precise dates of birth when bookings are received. This information will be included on the events booking form.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |    |
| 24 | <p><b>Young People's Committee Update</b><br/>Sue Chesworth gave an update on the Young People's Committee.<br/>It was agreed that Conference Council will send a letter of congratulations on their achievements so far, and encouragement for the future.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | NW |
| 25 | <p><b>Bradford New Church</b><br/>The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council has decided that they are no longer going to use Bradford New Church for their Family Hubs and Start for Life programme.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |    |
| 26 | <p><b>Recruitment</b><br/><i>Media &amp; Marketing Coordinator Update</i><br/>Two interviews took place via Zoom and one in person at Purley Chase Centre on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. Unfortunately, neither of the applicants were thought suitable. It was decided that the Task and Finish group would re-evaluate the personal qualities expected of role, and re-advertise it via the recruitment agency in January 2025 which is, traditionally, when jobseekers are more plentiful.</p> <p><i>Outreach Coordinator</i><br/>The Task and Finish Group has been working on the job description for the Outreach Coordinator who will be focussed on working with branches of the New Church organisation within the North of England, alongside the management of the Bradford Project. Having considered the broader picture, Conference Council had agreed that it would be preferable for someone to be employed in this role. Once the post is filled the grant to Bradford New Church will cease. The job will be advertised internally and externally via the website and E-News on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024.</p> <p>The Task and Finish group have the autonomy to appoint this position, although they will inform the Council via a quick Zoom meeting before offering the position.</p> |    |
|    | <i>Trevor Millar joined the meeting</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |    |
| 27 | <p><b>Constitution Revision Group</b><br/><i>Storage of signed Articles, Rules and Conference Meeting minutes.</i><br/>Natalie Welch explained that the signed Article, Rules and Minutes from Conference are currently stored in the safe at the Purley Chase Centre and recommend that these are archived at Swedenborg House along with other documentation. It was thought that documents should be moved there after 5 years.<br/>All present agreed.</p> <p><i>Junior Membership</i> – The Committee of Ministers felt that the name 'Youth Membership' would be a better term than 'Junior Membership', and would be available to 14 -17 year olds. Revd Jack Dunion, Revd Becky Jarratt and Revd Brian Talbot are currently working on the benefits of Youth Membership.<br/>This will go back to the Constitution Revision Group.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |    |

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|    | <p><i>Honorary Life Member (HLM)</i>- The Constitution Revision Group(CRG) had published an article in E-News inviting Members of Conference to submit ideas and views, and particularly to suggest alternative titles. Several suggestions had been received, and after discussion CRG had commended the term Life Voting Member (LVM). All the Trustees present approved the name ‘Life Voting Members’. CRG would prepare a motion to this effect for the AGM in 2025.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
|    | <p><i>Nigel Sutton joined the meeting</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
| 28 | <p><b>Spiritual Leader’s Update</b><br/> Revd Jack Dunion explained that he is continuing to work closely with Gayle-Anne Drury and Emma Daniels on improving administration and communication to help the Ministry.<br/> Jack thanked Nigel Sutton who attended as a representative from Conference Council at the last Committee of Ministers meeting that was held in November. Sue Chesworth will be attending the next meeting in January 2025 as a representative from Conference Council.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
| 29 | <p><b>Committee of Ministers</b><br/> <i>Conference Theme for 2025</i><br/> Carolyn Kennion and Margaret Presland are leading a national angels themed event for all age groups which will involve everyone within the Church. The idea is that all the work will be displayed at Conference 2025</p> <p>The Committee of Ministers is happy to support this and proposed to the Conference Council that the theme for Conference 2025 be ‘Angels’.</p> <p>The Council confirmed the theme ‘Angels’.</p> <p><i>Yearbook and Address Directory</i><br/> It was pointed out that a few errors had been included in the Yearbook and Address directory. It was noted that the new Yearbook and Directory include a number of errors. It was agreed that in future the proof readers should include a Minister as well as Officers and Trustees.</p>                                                                                                                                                                   |  |
| 30 | <p><b>Residential Centre in the North</b><br/> Jack Dunion asked if there was a need for a residential centre in the North of England. This will be discussed at a later date.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
| 31 | <p><b>Conference 2025 - Attendance on Monday at Conference</b><br/> The Council discussed attendance on the Monday at the Annual Meeting. It was agreed that Conference should be expected to fund only those who need to arrive that day. Clarity is needed, and it was agreed that the Conference Planning Group would identify who needs to be in attendance on Mondays. Others would be welcome to come but would be responsible for their own costs.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |  |
| 32 | <p><b>Report from Conference 2024 - Facilitation Discussions</b><br/> Gayle-Ann Drury, Baobab Centre, was asked to co-ordinate a facilitated discussion at Conference 2024 to gather the views of members on three proposed strategic aims for the General Conference of the New Church drawn from Conference’s Vision Statement.</p> <p>AIM 1 - Encouraging and supporting varied and diverse approaches to worship<br/> AIM 2 - Applying doctrine based on personal conscience<br/> AIM 3 - Becoming more accepting and inviting</p> <p>Gayle-Ann Drury had produced a detailed report on the facilitated discussions on the strategic aims, and Conference Council had a full discussion of the contents of this document. The views of the Committee of Ministers were presented by Jack Dunion, who shared their reservations about the aims as a whole and, particularly, concerns about Aim 2. He also shared that he had suggested at the CoM meeting that the aims potentially be dropped altogether.</p> |  |

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|    | <p>Jack suggested that one possible compromise might be that the Trustees adopt aims 1 &amp; 3, leaving 2 out for further CoM discussions. However, Conference Council felt that there was much value in them all, particularly after reading the opinions of those attending the facilitated discussions. Having taken into consideration the views of the Ministry, Conference Council voted on putting the aims into action. Aims 1 and 3 were accepted unanimously and Aim 2 was accepted by a majority.</p> <p>Conference Council would welcome input from the Committee of Ministers as to how these aims can be achieved.</p> <p><i>Action:</i> Natalie will organise a meeting with Gayle-Ann Drury, Margaret Cowie and Trevor Millar to get some guidance on how to take this to the next step and communicate this to the members.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
|    | <i>Sue Chesworth left the meeting</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  |
| 33 | <p><b>Property Update</b><br/> <i>Radcliffe New Church</i><br/> The Trustees present approved the sale of New Jerusalem Church, Stand Lane, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 1JQ at the reduced price of £241,400.00 to take into account the amount required for repairs to the damage caused by vandalism.</p> <p>There is a provision in the Transfer Deed which ensures that the Buyer must, at all times, allow connected persons wishing to visit the burial ground access to visit memorials or tend to graves. Any new owner of the property in the future must enter into a Deed of Covenant with Conference to ensure that the covenants allowing access to the Burial Ground are maintained.</p> <p>In order that two Trustees, be authorised to sign documents related to this sale on behalf of General Conference, section 333 of the Charities Act 2011, the following resolution is required.</p> <p><i>Resolved:</i> It was unanimously agreed to sell the New Jerusalem Church, Stand Lane, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 1JQ at the reduced price of £241,400.00.</p> <p><i>Resolved:</i> It was unanimously agreed to pass section 333 resolution.</p> <p><i>Bournemouth New Church –Citygate</i> are almost at the point of receiving their mortgage and it is hoped that completion can be achieved before the end of December 2024.</p> <p><i>Properties Registered with the Land Registry</i><br/> The Solicitors have been able to identify eight properties owned by General Conference which are not yet registered with the Land Registry. They would be happy to go through the process to ensure that all of our properties are registered which would cost approximately £1,100.00 plus VAT per property.<br/> The Council discussed this and felt it was important that all properties are registered and approve for the solicitors to go ahead.</p> |  |
|    | <p align="center"><b>Conference Council Meeting Date</b></p> <p><b>2025</b><br/> January 20<sup>th</sup> 2025 (Zoom)<br/> March 14<sup>th</sup> 2025 (Zoom)<br/> May 8<sup>th</sup> 1.30pm – 6pm - (Purely Chase Centre)<br/> July 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025 - (Writing Room at the Hayes Conference Centre)<br/> September (Zoom) - Date to be confirmed<br/> November (Zoom) - Date to be confirmed</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |  |
|    | <b>The meeting closed at 16.16pm</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |  |