



THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEW CHURCH
CONFERENCE COUNCIL MEETING

held on Friday 14th March 2025 at 10.00am Via Zoom

Trustees Present:	Mrs M Cowie	Chairperson
	Revd B Jarvis	Vice-Chairperson
	Mrs S Chesworth	
	Mr N Sutton	
	Mr J Ford	Co opted
	Mr P Brooks	Co opted
Also in attendance:	Ms N Welch	Company Secretary
	Mr P Mehew	Company Accountant
	Revd J Dunion	Spiritual Leader
	Revd B Jarratt	Deputy Spiritual Leader
	Mr C Chambers	President, New Church College

Start time: 10.00am
Finish Time: 16.10pm

	Opening Revd Bruce Jarvis opened the meeting with a reading from Luke 4:1-13, followed by a short extract from Arcana Caelestia 1690.	
	Apologies – Trevor Millar and Barry Friend both tendered their apologies	
48	Minutes <i>Confirmation of the Minutes of the Conference Council Meeting held on 20th January 2025.</i> The minutes were approved by all present with Revd Bruce Jarvis proposing and Sue Chesworth seconding. Minute 44 – Continuing professional development,(CPD) which is an ongoing and planned learning and development process for employees. Sue Chesworth, Chris Chambers and Revd Becky Jarratt will now be looking at this further and will report back to Conference Council. <i>Confirmation of the Minutes of the Conference Council Meeting held on 3rd March 2025.</i> The minutes were approved by all present with Sue Chesworth proposing and Revd Bruce Jarvis seconding. <i>Council meeting minutes May 2024 item 58</i> - In the minutes of the May 2024 Council meeting, item 58 is stated ‘Citygate, the organisation interested in purchasing the building, have at last obtained a mortgage’. <i>Correction:-</i> Citygate stated they definitely wanted to buy the property but would seek a mortgage to have the funds for it.	
49	Finance Update Paul Mehew, Company Accountant, gave an update on the current position of the accounts.	

	<i>Card Reader at Purley Chase Centre</i> Paul Mehew explained that Conference have now purchased the hardware to be able to accept card payments at Purley Chase Centre once it has been installed. <i>Legacy</i> A letter has been received from a solicitor informing us of a bequest of £30,000 to Conference from a late Arlette Pettersen. These funds will be held in the restricted funds until guidance is received from the New Church officials managing the charity.	
50	Safeguarding Sue Chesworth explained that we had a new safeguarding procedures manual. The Code of Conduct that has recently been sent to all employees and secretaries forms part of this manual and must be adhered to. Conference Council approved the document. It was agreed that a summary page at the front of the document would be included to pinpoint sections to help people reach information quicker. It was agreed that all Trustees and leaders of a church/societies have a responsibility within the organisation and must attend a safeguarding awareness course. This will be organised through the Company Secretary, Natalie Welch. <i>Recruitment Guidelines</i> We now have recruitment guidelines which applies to all volunteers and employed staff. A volunteer is anyone representing the church. These guidelines will be introduced to the church/societies on a gradual basis.	SC/NW NW
51	Youth & Family Team Update Sue Chesworth gave an update on the Youth & Family Team. They have an “away day” organised on Saturday 22nd March 2025 at a location in the East Midlands which is being fully funded by a generous donation received for the event. At the event the team will be looking at the following:- • Partnership • Inclusion • Wellbeing • Communication	
52	HR <i>Outreach Coordinator</i> The new Outreach Coordinator, Shannon Fitzgerald started employment on Monday 17th February 2025, based at Bradford New Church. Sue Chesworth is Shannon’s line manager, and they meet every Friday on Zoom to go through what Shannon has been working on that week and what the plans are for the following week. <i>Marketing and Media Coordinator</i> Sibby Mkoba is settling in well into her role. She is currently working on a recruitment video which is hoped will encourage members of Conference to consider becoming a Trustee. <i>Online Worship Coordinator</i> Revd Becky Jarratt explained that Emma Daniels who has been covering this position until a new recruit had been appointed is no longer able to fill this role. Although currently 36 people attend the online Zoom worship services the online worship team have made the difficult decision to cease online worship after Easter Sunday until this position has been filled. <i>Action: This will be announced to all attendees of the online worship services by email. It will be announced in E-News</i>	RMJ

	A number of applicants have applied for the position. The interview panel, consisting of Sue Chesworth, Revd Becky Jarratt and Natalie Welch are currently deciding who to invite for first interviews which will take place on 27th March 2025. <i>Revd Bruce Jarvis left the meeting</i> <i>Retired Ministers</i> It was agreed that the Retired Ministers fees will be reviewed at the Council meeting on 8th May 2025. <i>Revd Bruce Jarvis rejoined the meeting</i> <i>Revds, Jack Dunion and Becky Jarratt plus Paul Mehew and Natalie Welch left the meeting.</i> <i>Annual Salary/Wage Increase</i> It was agreed by the Trustees that for salaried staff, annual pay increases will be determined by the rate of the average pay rise in the UK. All salaried staff will receive the same percentage rise as their pay increase. Pay rises for hourly staff will always be based on the increase in the National Living Wage, as determined by the government. The final figure will calculate as whichever is the higher: the National Living Wage, the rate of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Prices Index for the month when the rise is decided, or 2.5 %. <i>Revds, Jack Dunion and Becky Jarratt plus Paul Mehew and Natalie Welch rejoined the meeting.</i>	NW
53	Ministers' Book Allowance It was agreed that the Minister's Book Allowance will no longer be in place as things that Ministers need for their work should be paid for by the organisation. The principle will be that if Ministers are going to be spending over £300 in a year on books and resources, they should speak to their line manager before going over this figure. The same will apply for retired colleagues. These items will be claimed as "Ministerial Expenses".	
	<i>Sue Chesworth and Paul Mehew left the meeting</i>	
54	Trustees Our solicitors, Harris & Harris, brought to the attention of Conference Council that it has not been complying with the Articles of Association number 28. Article 28 states "<i>The Council shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and six members to be known as Elected Members, subject to the provisions of clause 4 of the Memorandum. The General Conference in General Meeting shall appoint the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and the Elected Members in accordance with Article 31</i>". We were advised to co-opt two members in the short-term and amend Article 28 by adding the words "up to" before "six" thus allowing flexibility in numbers. Margaret Cowie explained that the Constitution Revision Group are currently working on this so it can be included in the changes to the articles and rules for Conference 2025 <i>New Trustees</i> John Ford and Phillip Brooks have been co-opted onto the Conference Council as trustees on 11th March 2025. <i>Nigel Sutton</i> Nigel Sutton has informed the Conference Council that, owing to conflicting pressures on his time, he will resign as a Trustee at the forthcoming AGM in July. He has indicated that he is willing to continue to support the Conference Council with membership of the Finance Committee and the Purley Management Team.	

	The Council all expressed their appreciation for all the hard work and dedication Nigel has given to the Conference Council over many years and that he will be sadly missed.	
55	Purley Chase Programme Director The Conference Council acknowledged the importance of appointing a Programme Director and a Task and Finish group consisting of, Revd Jack Dunion, Margaret Cowie, Chris Woodhouse and <i>Action: Natalie Welch will arrange for the Task and Finish Group to meet and discuss and report back to the Conference Council.</i>	NW
56	Constitution Revision Group <i>Youth Membership of Conference</i> The CRG are currently preparing an application form for Youth Membership which they will send to Conference Council to approve once it is completed. Young people who are already Junior Members of their local churches would also be able to apply to be Youth Members of Conference, should the rule be passed. Revd. Bruce Jarvis, on behalf of the CRG, presented, and sought approval of, the proposed changes to the Articles and Rules to be brought before Conference at the July AGM. <i>Resolved: All were approved unanimously</i> <i>Membership Database</i> Natalie is still working on updating the database with Paul Crone, IT Manager. Currently there are 370 Members of Conference on the database and 159 of those are members are also on the Central Register. <i>John Ford joined the meeting</i>	
57	Property Update <i>Sale of Bournemouth New Church</i> An offer of £525,000.00 was received from Citygate, the organisation interested in purchasing the Bournemouth New Church premises at Tuckton Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth, BH6 3HT. This amount is above the original independent valuation. Conference Council intend to instruct their solicitors to accept. Conference Council agreed to pass section 333 of the Charities Act 2011, Section 333 provides that Conference may confer on two persons a general or limited authority to execute in the names and on behalf of the Charity Trustees documents for giving effect to transactions to which the Charity trustees are a party. <i>Resolved: Conference Council accept the offer of £525,000.00 for Bournemouth New Church premises at Tuckton Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth, BH6 3HT</i> <i>Resolved: It was unanimously agreed to pass section 333 Resolution in relation to the sale of The New Church, Tuckton Road, Southbourne, Bournemouth, BH6 3HT</i>	
58	Spiritual Leader's Update Revd Jack Dunion explained that he and Revd Becky Jarratt are working together with the Ministry on the Strategic aims. Revd Jack Dunion expressed appreciation to the Conference Council for their support for which the Ministry are very grateful of.	
59	Committee of Ministers <i>Ordination at Conference 2025</i> The Committee of Ministers proposed to the Council that Lynne Griffiths be ordained at Conference 2025, subject to successful completion of her studies.	

	<i>Resolved:</i> It was unanimously agreed that an Ordination Service be held for Lynne Griffiths at the 2025 Conference and AGM. <i>Standing Order for Ordination Students Applications</i> – The Committee of Ministers completed a new standing order for Ordination Students from the UK which the Conference Council have approved. The Committee of Ministers wish to thank Chris Chambers, Sue Chesworth and Christine Bank for their help. <i>Ordination Student Procedures up to employment</i> – The group working on the Standing Order for Ordination Student Applications have worked together to put a step-by-step process in place for ordination students up to employment. The Council all agreed and approved this process which is easy to follow. Areas of responsibility and links with Ministry were confirmed as follows:- <table><tr><td>Purley Chase</td><td>Mr N Sutton and Revd H Brown</td></tr><tr><td>Finance</td><td>Mr N Sutton and Revd C Curry</td></tr><tr><td>Youth</td><td>Mrs S Chesworth and Revd R Jarratt</td></tr><tr><td>Human Resources</td><td>Ms N Welch and Revd B Talbot</td></tr><tr><td>Training and Development</td><td>Mrs S Chesworth and Revd R Jarratt</td></tr><tr><td>CAM</td><td>Mrs M Cowie and Revd C Bank</td></tr></table> <i>Tempus Fugit - Emma Daniels</i> Emma Daniels, contract to support the Committee of Ministers is due to end in March 2025. Emma works 28 hours a month. The Committee of Ministers would like to extend her contract for a further 6 months. After a discussion it was agreed to offer to extend Emma’s contract for 12 months as she is making good progress sorting out the ministry’s administration. It was also agreed that during busy periods the Conference Council authorise an additional 4 hours per month, though this is not to be carried over to the following month. <i>Ministers Seminar</i> The Ministry have four places in addition to regular attendees in which they can invite guests to attend Seminar. It was agreed that the Marketing and Media Coordinator, Sibby Mkoba and Outreach Coordinator, Shannon Fitzgerald, be invited as employees, rather than as two of the additional guests.	Purley Chase	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	Mrs M Cowie and Revd C Bank	
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60	Policies Natalie Welch explained that she had produced some new guidelines for using social media with the input from the Marketing and Media Coordinator and sought Conference Council’s approval prior to circulating them within the organisation. The following procedures/policies have all been reviewed and were approved by the Council. • Legionella • Asbestos • Safer Recruitment Policy • Data Protection Policy/procedure • Appropriate Data Protection Policy • CCTV Policy • Data Privacy Notice • Risk Management													

	• Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption • Bullying and Harassment • Health & Safety Policy • Financial policy is currently still be reviewed. • Social media guidelines/policy • Children and Youth Social Media guidelines • Filming and posting guidelines	
61	Conference John Ford has indicated that he will be retiring as Conference Organiser after Conference 2025. Natalie Welch will organise a meeting with herself, John Ford and Barry Friend to discuss this further.	NW
	<i>Nigel Sutton left the meeting</i>	
62	Archives/IT Equipment Natalie Welch has been spending some time going through archives stored at Purley Chase Centre and found that a lot of archives contain old expenses claim forms and invoice which are over seven years old, thus eligible for disposal, and sought Conference Council's agreement for these to be disposed of in the correct manner. Natalie also mentioned that she had found very old IT equipment stored at Purley Chase Centre which is no use and wanted to dispose of the equipment in the correct way once any data had been removed for the equipment. <i>Resolved:</i> All present approve and agreed for Natalie to organise the disposal of the old equipment and disposal of the old financial documentation that was no longer required.	
	Conference Council Meeting Date 2025 May 8th 1.30pm – 6pm - (Purley Chase Centre) May 19th 1.00 pm - Finance Meeting July 22nd July - (Writing Room at the Hayes Conference Centre) September (Zoom) - Date to be confirmed November (Zoom) - Date to be confirmed	
	The meeting closed at 17.10pm with a short prayer	