

Chair Approved

Minutes for Church Support Committee

Time: 10:30 – 4.00

Date: Saturday 21st September 2019

Location: Congregational Federation, Congregational Centre,
8 Castle Gate Nottingham, NG1 7AS

Attendees:

John Bentham
Nick Gleich
Colin Brown
Steve Richards
Peter Damen
Keith Bradley
Alan Kennedy
Joy Leathers
Peter Young
Ruth Green
Ian Jones

Representing:

Chair
Chair CIPT MB/SW Midlands Area
CF in Wales
CF in Wales
East Midlands Area
North East Area
North West Area
North West Midlands Area
South East Area
South West Area
Eastern

Staff:

Yvonne Campbell
Walter Riggans
Judith Mbaabu
Neil Chappell
Maddy Varley

General Secretary (1st half of meeting)
Learning and Development Manager
Church Support Worker
Website and Social Media Officer
Learning and Development Administrator/Minutes

Participant Observers:

Mark Taylor

Apologies

Martin Spain
Barbara Bridges
Lee Rayner
Janet Wootton
Suzanne Nockels

Immediate Past President
Chair APCC Group
CF in Scotland
President
President Elect

Abbreviations:

CC	Congregational Church
CF	Congregational Federation
CIPT MB	Congregational Institute of Practical Theology Management Board
CSC	Church Support Committee
CSW	Church Support Worker
FX	Fresh Expressions
ICB	Inter-Church Board
ToR	Terms of Reference
WSMO	Website and Social Media Officer

1. Opening devotions

The Chair welcomed committee members and thanked them for attending.

The meeting was informed that £244.54 had been raised by Nottingham CC that week at their Macmillan Coffee Morning, and further donations for the cakes available during the meeting would be welcomed.

Update since meeting

A further £20.70 was raised for Macmillan Nurses.

The Chair led the Committee in prayer.

2. Apologies

As noted above.

CF in Scotland hope to have a new rep in place for the next meeting.

Janet Wootton had sent apologies due to attending the Induction of Jason Boyd in Cheltenham.

Yvonne Campbell left the meeting during the morning to attend the same event.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting (23rd March 2019) Paper B

The minutes were approved with correction to the spelling of Peter Damen's name in item 6.

4. Matters arising not elsewhere on the Agenda

An update on the Christian Aid Syria Appeal: over £6635 has now been raised from churches towards our £12,000 target, so we are on track to reach the target. However, Area Reps were asked to remind churches to keep giving and fundraising for this appeal to maintain the momentum. The Committee were reminded that all funds are match-funded x 9.

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The Communications Group is still without a chair and therefore has yet to convene. There has been no progress to date, and there is no report from them.

5. Notice of Any Other Business

There were no notices of AOB.

6. Budget Papers Paper C

6.1 It was noted that the budget papers available only give actual figures to the end of June.

It was asked why actual figures for July and August were not available.

The General Secretary explained that budget holders are given the budget figures on a monthly basis, but it was too early for the August figures to be available. She agreed that July might have been ready but would be working with the Financial Controller to produce a timeline of when to expect each set of actual figures for 2020 so it is more helpful for budget holders and the committee.

It was confirmed that forecasts are done a long time in advance, so there can be differences between forecasts and actuals although forecasts have recently been updated. Certain funds roll forward, so are ringfenced.

Further to the question raised in the previous meeting, as to whether donations from the Lady Hewley Trust could be gift-aided, the General Secretary will inform the committee once she has had a response.

Update

A form would need to be designed and then sent with the forms to claim Gift Aid

6.2 TOR update

As the governance review with Council is still ongoing, now is not the best time to review all the ToR's individually.

The suggestion by the Financial Controller has been made that a Financial Controls and Policy booklet, which would be updated regularly is produced. It is expected that this would be a universal document, referencing the basic ToR's for all committees.

This suggestion prompted some discussion, including the following:

- Is cost a consideration in producing a booklet, or will this be produced in-house?
- What additional details will be included?
- Clarification was sought over the wording "the financial budgets and funding of are contained within the CF Budgets and Financial Controls Policy Booklet". Should each department name be inserted after the word 'of...'?
- Should the word 'booklet' be changed to 'document'?
- Will CSC have any say in the content?

The document will be designed to be supportive of committees and to help manage budgets that the committee is responsible for.

Recommendation

The meeting proposed that the Financial Controller, General Secretary and Operation Manager meet to discuss the purpose and outline for the booklet to bring to the next meeting.

7. Area Representative Summary Report Paper D

Reports had been sent to the General Secretary for her to produce a summary strategy which was tabled. The Chair thanked the Area Representatives for their reports.

The Church Support Team will prepare an action plan during the next meeting, based on the strategy/summary of the needs identified. The updated strategy will be brought to the next meeting. Members were invited to comment or ask Area Representatives questions on their reports which included the following:

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- Could a module be offered on practical knowledge such as church maintenance, health and safety etc?
 - The General Secretary responded that training needs for these issues reach further than the training course. The Baptist Union were due to hold an event on these issues earlier this year, which we had delegates due to attend, but it had been cancelled due to low registration numbers. Perhaps there is scope to hold a joint training event with them in the future?
- The Welsh Area have access to a variety of online resources around maintaining church buildings etc. Details of these will be forwarded to the General Secretary for distribution and adding to the Resources Hub. Other information regarding grants and information on maintaining heritage buildings has been previously emailed out to churches.
- The South-West Area have a new Mission Enabler in post, Edmonde Openshaw-Gill. An update of how this work is going will be provided for the next meeting.
- It was noted that Fritchley are now holding 1 service per month, with an average congregation of 25 per month. There is hope that the Church will come back to the Congregational Federation in time.

8. Church Support Team Paper E

8.1 Church Support Workers (Paper E1)

The committee were reminded that there is now only one CSW following the resignation of Johnny O'Hanlon.

Appreciation was given for the work of the CSW and the question was raised as to whether the CSW post will be advertised. There was concern that there are unmet support needs in some Areas; this workload could be too heavy for one worker to sustain. Praise was given how well the Church Support Worker model has worked, with them being able to see the 'bigger picture' and having local knowledge of the churches they are working with.

There was much discussion around potential support models, with consideration given to the costs involved.

A proposal relating to CSW was included in the South West Midlands Area report sent to the General Secretary

"4. Delivering Support to the Areas

Whilst the support team that operates from Nottingham has done a very good job thus far, as the CF develops it may be appropriate to revisit the operating model.

An option that SW Midlands would like considered is for some form of devolved activity. Basically, having a team that is spread across the regions of the UK. As a possible model, someone in Scotland, one in the north of England, one in the midlands, one in Wales and one in the south. To fund this perhaps Areas would be encouraged to match-fund or in some other way contribute to the costs of this model."

The following suggestions were put forward by the Committee:

- Could more Areas fund an Area CSW, or the cost split between 2-3 Areas for a regional CSW, with one central Church Support Worker overseeing the work. This would mean workers would be more locally based, therefore being on hand to respond to local issues more easily. There was awareness of issues in funding such posts and was therefore suggested that some Areas could match-fund costs, a full-time worker could work ¼ time over 4 Areas and Area resources could be amalgamated to fund a post.

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- Four or more part-time regional posts could replace two full-time central posts at equivalent cost.
- A temporary post created to work alongside the current CSW until a decision on a permanent post is made by Council.
- All posts recruited on a temporary basis, with recruits being informed that the post is subject to funds being available.
- A second CSW could be employed with a specific remit to work with youth and children, with advertising for posts to appear in appropriate publications.
- The combined salary, pension contributions and expenses saved by the vacant post could be added to the Church Support Team budget for the General Secretary to use as she sees fit for church support projects.

Recommendation

The CSC recommends that the General Secretary uses the equivalent of the CSW salary and expenses to fulfil the requirements and objectives to meet the needs of churches and Areas, at her discretion working alongside the Church Support team.

A newly published leaflet, 'A Way of Being Church' was tabled. This leaflet expands on the smaller 'Being Congregational' leaflet produced last year. Members of the committee were invited to take copies to distribute at their Area meetings and to make suggestions of where and how they could be used more widely.

Thanks and appreciation was again offered for the work carried out by the Church Support Workers.

Recommendation

The CSC recommends that a thank you letter is sent to Johnny O'Hanlon in respect of all the good work he carried out before his resignation.

Action:

Chair of CSC to send a letter of thanks on behalf of the committee.

8.2 Website and Social Media Officer (Paper E2)

The committee were invited to ask any questions in relation to the report.

- A request for training and support for improving the promotion of events and the use of social media was made. The WSMO responded that this would form part of the action being addressed in the next Church Support Team meeting. Support will be tailored to the individual needs of the church or Area and the WSMO will visit in person if needed. He has already visited some churches to assist in person. Contact details are available in the yearbook and on the CF website.
- Information regarding building maintenance is available on the website under the 'Building and Property' section. This is updated whenever new information is available and time-sensitive information is always added to the news section on the homepage. In addition, information is also sent out by email to those on the mailing list.
- Committee members were reminded that those who have not returned GDPR forms will be removed from mailing lists and will not receive information directly.
- A request was made for Secretarial emails to be renamed *CF Secretarial* as emails often go

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into spam mailboxes.

- Anyone can sign up through the appropriate mailings, email or website to receive 'A Secluded Place' messages.

8.3 Safeguarding Officer (Paper E3)

The Safeguarding officer was not present at the meeting to answer questions.

There was some discussion about confusion regarding the online safeguarding training that checkers had been sent to pilot. It became apparent that Checkers had been sent different elements of the training to test. Some had not participated, but on the whole, it was felt that the training was good.

Update

General Secretary confirms that all checkers had been sent all the same safeguarding training to access

It was suggested that safeguarding training becomes an agenda item for the next meeting.

It was confirmed that the budget line reflected the cost of the training for Checkers. The Checkers need to complete this training before it can be rolled forward to others, and it was felt that Protection Verifiers should also complete the training before March 2020, so that they are able to help decide who else should complete the training.

8.4 Learning and Development Manager (Papers E4)

The L&D Manager tabled a document detailing which Areas students have come from over the past few years. This showed that students from all Areas have completed the course, confirming that not all students are aiming for accreditation.

The L&D Manager invited CSC members to contact him if they would like to attend the course for a weekend – they would be made very welcome.

There is an excellent intake of students on the course this year (13), and there have already been enquiries for starting in September 2020.

A positive Continuing Ministerial Development day has taken place at Ashby, and others are going ahead over the next few weeks.

10. Grants (Paper G)

The report from the grants meeting raised the concerns outlined in paper G. The grants fund is not an unlimited resource, and there is concern that there are not enough funds to support potential grant applications going forward, leading to concern about how churches might be supported in the future if grants are not available.

The various proposals put forward in the report were discussed and the following points were raised:

- Current donations from Areas and churches are split 40% / 60% between CWM and CF. Could this split be adjusted or, in fact reconsidered to the point of separation, allowing churches and Areas to make specific and transparent donations.
- An increase in the 10% of revenue from the sale of closed churches would be welcomed, however concern was raised that other budgets would then be affected.
- Any increase in the funds available for grants would increase the chance of churches having applications accepted, having a positive outcome for Areas as well as the individual church
- It was confirmed that both Starter Grants and Mini Grants also come from the same funds, and there was concern about the level of support for churches if these were not available. It

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was clear how important grants can be to churches in helping them to survive, and in the support delivered to churches.

The Grants group had recognised that the eligibility criteria for grants was not clear and therefore the criteria has been re-worded for clarification (see paper G), although the criteria itself has not actually changed.

It was noted that Castle Coombe no longer require the Impact Grant previously awarded, and therefore these funds will be made available in the grants budget.

Recommendation:

That Council reconsider how the funding for Starter, Mini and Impact grants are generated and accept the amended eligibility criteria.

Proposed: Ruth Green

Seconded: Joy Leathers

Agreed: Unanimous

10.1 Reports were received from Thundersley (paper G1) and Hay Mills (Paper G2) on how their Impact Grants had been used over the first year.

Concern was raised about the financial outlook in the report from Hay Mills. The CSW confirmed that she continues to work closely with them, and they are also receiving support from the Financial Controller.

10.2 Hope Community Church, Bristol (Paper G3) have submitted an Impact Grant application to assist with appointing a part-time Youth Worker.

It was noted that this was a very thorough application, which included a sustainable plan for subsequent years. It was also confirmed that the previous grant application relating to the provision of a CAP Centre has now been withdrawn as the project is not going ahead for various reasons. The funds allocated were not used and have been returned the grants fund.

The new application requests £24,000 in equal installments over 3 years.

Recommendation

The CSC recommends that an Impact Grant of £24,000 is awarded.

Proposed: Peter Young

Seconded: Ian Jones

Agreed: Unanimous

10.4 South West Midlands Area request for Impact Grant (Paper G4).

There was much debate around the recommendation from the South West Midlands Area that the eligibility terms for Impact Grants be reviewed to allow Areas to apply for grants.

After lengthy discussion it was agreed that the regeneration of churches was a larger issue than the discussion around this one church, as there are various legalities which need to be adhered to and churches have the right to close without notice if they wish. Although much CF funding comes from closed churches it was reiterated that nobody wanted to see any church fail and before a church is closed it should be considered whether regeneration is a possibility.

Proposal:

A proposal was tabled by the South West Midlands Area Rep that Council consider the development of a strategy for pioneering and regeneration, to include funding for resources and ministry.

12. Fresh Expressions presentation (Mark Taylor and Nigel Lindsay)

Mark Taylor thanked the committee for the opportunity to present the findings from the Fresh Expressions conference that he attended with Nigel Lindsay in Utrecht.

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They attended the conference along with 30 delegates from 9 countries and were excited by what they heard.

What is Fresh Expressions?

- Taking the message out to where people already are.
- To build your church with new projects allowing the church to grow in its own right.
- Fresh Expressions should be at the centre of what we do, rather than an add-on.
- Forward looking
- A different expression of how church is 'done'.

Some churches have issues with how Fresh Expressions churches link to the 'mother' church, particularly where there is hierarchical and financial control. Congregational churches can benefit from a more flexible and independent approach.

Some areas of the training course do have an emphasis on Fresh Expressions ministries. The CF offers Pioneer, Mission Enabler and Spiritual Enabler as a specific ministries, however there are currently no ministers in these roles. Raising awareness of this role and offering specialist training in this type of ministry will be important to develop Fresh Expressions within the CF. There are some students who have expressed an interest in ministry in these areas but are concerned that there is no home to develop them in the CF, where there is much emphasis on *ministers* rather than *ministries*. These types of ministry should not be considered less important, but a different and important way to encourage others in their faith journey.

The report contained the following recommendation to Council, which was supported by the committee.

Recommendation

That a working party be set up to examine the following issues and report back to the next meeting of the CSC

- a) How can FX fit into the Congregational model of church governance, and what can this teach other denominations?
- b) What more can be done to bring the use of FX into the mainstream of Congregationalism?
- c) How can the CF work with other denominations on issues relating to FX, in particular training?

Proposed: Judith Mbaabu

Seconded: Peter Damen

Agreed: Unanimous

13. CIPT Management Board (Paper I)

The presented report explained that the York St John University annual and revalidation reviews cover everything that would be included in a quinquennial review, and it was recommended that this could remove the need to carry out the quinquennial review. The report was received and accepted by the Committee.

Recommendation

That the CIPT Management Board report is received and accepted by CSC, including the proposal that the reviews carried out by York St John University should replace the need for a quinquennial review.

Proposed: Ian Jones

Seconded: Ruth Green

Accepted: Unanimous

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14. Children and Youth Group update (Paper J)

It was confirmed that there will be an event for youth leaders later in the year.

The responses to the questionnaire sent to youth leaders suggested that most would only be prepared to travel up to 25 miles to any form of event. Bellshill and Greenacres have both agreed to host youth leader events, which are aimed at the leaders of any youth or children's groups. The hope is to rebuild networks and provide opportunities for learning and sharing best practice.

There is an opportunity for us to send 4 young people to Massachusetts for the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower landings with International Congregational Fellowship. So far, we have received one application.

15. Inter Church Board (Paper K)

In addition to the circulated report, the ICB Rep tabled a leaflet from the Bible Society about their Home 360 project, which is bringing an interactive dome to 8 cities in England and Wales during 2020, providing an immersive and innovative way to introduce and engage people with the Bible. Churches will be informed of dates once these have been announced.

The Bible Society are also involved in a YouGov poll that is due to be launched before the end of the year; this is set to be the biggest religious survey ever carried out, surveying 20,000 people on their attitudes to the Bible and the church. All the results will be available on a map that is searchable by council ward and constituency. Churches will be able to access this local data and use it to inform and support local mission. A toolkit named Lumino will be launched to assist churches in making the most of the data available.

The ICB Rep confirmed that he will always share any resources that might be useful to the CF.

The question was asked as to whether the CF could also have a Fresh Expressions rep at ICB to assist with partnering and ecumenical working. Ruth Green volunteered to do this and is to discuss the proposal with the General Secretary.

16. Accreditation and Pastoral Care Coordinator group (Paper L)

There were no representatives from the APCC group at the meeting to answer questions on the report.

It was confirmed that there is likely to be a significant number of students on the training course that are aiming for accreditation in the next year or so. Students have expressed their appreciation at having an APCC group rep at the training weekends.

Approximately a third of current students are aiming for accreditation, but this may change as they progress through the course, so there may be more. The majority of the new starters are aiming for accreditation and a high percentage are already in ministry.

17. AOB

The Good News newspaper was distributed, and leaflets on grants for building restoration and maintenance were made available.

18. Date of Next Meeting

The CSC will next meet on 21st March and 26th September 2020.

19. Closing Prayer

The Chair of CSC led the members in prayer.

Signed.....

Dated.....