

Minutes of the Council Meeting
21 November 2020
Zoom Meeting

Present

James Lyon
Janet Wootton

Suzanne Nockels
Peter Butler
May-Kane Logan
Margaret McGuinness
Gerry Simonis
Chris Gillham
Craig James
Eric Fenwick
Mark Taylor
Betty Bentham
Foday Kamara
Hilary Biggin
Chris Damp
Caroline Stott
Judi Holloway

Representing

Chair
Immediate Past
President
President Elect
Chair of F&SS Comm.
CF Scotland
CF Scotland
CF Scotland
CF Wales
CF Wales
Eastern
East Midlands
North East
North West
North West Midlands
South East
South West
South West Midlands

Participant Observers

Bill Bentham
Ruth Leeming
Yvonne Campbell
Mark Tucker

Gary Baker

Assembly Rep
Assembly Rep
General Secretary
Operations Manager/
CFL Company
Financial Controller

Apologies

John Bentham

Chair of Church
Support Comm.

1. Welcome & Introductions

Chair of Council, Jim Lyon welcomed all to the meeting. There were no new members to introduce to the meeting. The Chair welcomed Craig James to his first Council meeting.

2. Opening Worship including President's report

Suzanne Nockels & Janet Wootton

Suzanne led the opening devotions using Ecclesiastes 4:12 "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken". NIV

The Presidents reported that the current lockdown is making the role difficult, but that God is working in their double act. They have participated in lots of online local and national events & meetings; both have led the CF online prayers. They have been involved with Cong Fest, Mayflower Fest, Area meetings and online gatherings with local Churches and Ministers. They have attended the online committee meetings, been involved with CWM and the CF Training event. Both are encouraged by the creativity of churches during these times and welcome more invitations.

3. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

4. Minutes of Council Meeting July 2020

(Paper B)

Item 7. Going for Gold

7.2 Area Feedback

Mark Taylor disagreed with the use of the word consensus in the phrase "The consensus was that Council are not likely to get many responses before 2021,"

It was agreed to replace this with "Most members of council considered it unlikely that we would get many responses before 2021," as a more accurate reflection of our discussions.

Matters arising from July 2020

4.1 (item 10.1) asked if grants could be made available for traveling costs of ministers & students attending Congregational Federation Events (inc. CIPT)

Decision of this meeting was to postpone this item to the next meeting.

4.2 (item 10.4) request from the United Board.

To be discussed later in the meeting.

5. Church Support Committee

(Paper C1)

Points to note

The Sample Safeguarding Policy has been updated for churches.

Safeguarding training being delivered by 31:8 is being recommended to Ministers, Deacons and those in Youth and Children's leadership roles. We want to extend this to also include those working with vulnerable adults.

Sara Iles is now representing CF on Milton Mount foundation along with Peter Young.

A new representative is being sought for the Robinson Charity board.

Joy Leathers has taken over as the new CF representative with Christian Aid.

Christian Ministerial Counselling Service leaflets are being sent to Ministers.

The Website has been updated to include new headings with drop down menus, and the Life Light advent reflections started on 1 November running until Christmas Day.

Recommendations

- **We offer a clear separation between giving to Ministry and Missions and CWM. M&M line becomes 100% CF and a new line for CWM donations be created**
- **Impact Grants be reinstated after them being paused for 6 months as the pot of money stands at £76k**

- **New partnership with Christian Aid be established for 2021 – in 12 months we commit to raising £6k for an Orphanage in Kenya. Christian Aid have secured this will be match funded 19 times over.**
- **Recommendation to accept the Church Support Committee Minutes**

All Recommendations Approved Unanimously

6. Finance & Support Services Committee (Papers D1, D2, D3 & D4)

Points to note

Sue Austin will be a CF representative on the Memorial Hall Trust alongside Chris Damp and Barbara Bridges.

There has been a change to terms of reference to widen the ITTB (Investment Board) membership.

Income and Investments have been hit during the COVID-19 restrictions; money has been saved counteracting this by many events and meetings moving online. Committee noted that some meetings will continue to be held online creating permanent savings.

Grants have been received via the furlough scheme and for Pilton Green, the Property Manager continues to seek grants for the trading areas.

Recommendations

- **That the amount of £696 unpaid affiliation fees be written off (this includes St John signing church which has closed and partial church payments)**
- **Council approve the fees for 2022**

	2022	2021
Church Affiliation Fees	160	155
Member Affiliation fees	8.50	8.25
Personal/Associate Membership	42	41
Yearbook	37	36

- **The level of operations for 2022 budgets to be worked out at the same level as 2021**

- **Recommendation to accept the Finance and Support Services Committee minutes**

All Recommendations Approved Unanimously

7. Publications

Alan Argent publications

Alan Argent has written several CF Publications, but no agreement was made with respect to royalties. Alan is asking for some financial contribution.

CF paid all publication and printing fees; the publications were not commissioned by CF and sales have not covered the costs.

General Secretary recommended a one-off payment of £250 (5% of sales) as a thank you.

A discussion took place.

Recommendation:

- **An alternative recommendation suggested ongoing royalties also be paid**
Proposed: Janet Wootton; Seconded Chris Gillham.

Recommendation not approved by majority vote; therefore, no payment to be made.

New publication

(Paper E2)

Name to be ***Refresh***

This verse being the inspiration “looking forward to being refreshed by your company. God’s peace be with all of you”. (Romans 15 v 33 Message version)

Dates to be published will be January/February (this will be 44 pages and include the Year Book) and August/September (this will be 22 pages)

Subscription £20 per year (however, churches would receive one free copy)
This publication will also be accessible online with appropriate safeguards for the Year Book.

Contents for the Year Book Section

Other information that is included in the Year Book to be online

1	President and President Elect Message	1 page
2	Declaration in Intent	
3	Constitution	
4	Admin Procedures	
5	Safeguarding	

6	Diary Dates	Include more dates and special Sundays
7	Who we are – to include staff, trustees, committees	Just email addresses
8	Church Support Team (including students and accredited ministers)	CIPT Church Support Website Safeguarding
9	Overseas work	CWM ICF Christian Aid
10	Grants – highlighting organisations that churches can apply	
11	In memory including churches who have closed	
12	Financial Matters	Discuss with GB on how many pages he thinks are necessary to be printed v website
13	CF Ltd	
13	Assembly summary	
14	List of Churches Area officer details Church Name, Address, date, Minister or secretary name, numbers as now and ticks as now	

Contents for Refresh will be

1	General Secretary message	
2	Prayer diary covering different aspects of CF and world issues	
3	This is our story Encouraging news from churches	
4	History Society and Peace Society news item and story to highlight their work	
5	Rewilding stories from churches – fresh expressions	
6	Puzzle/crossword/Quiz/Competition	Professional standard
7	Church Support Team News	
7	Ecumenical news	
8	Vacancies and Opportunities	Internal and External
9	Well being	
10	Resources/Book Review	

Recommendation - to create new Refresh Publication as outlined in 2021

After discussion with some wishing to retain the Year Book, the recommendation was agreed by majority vote.

Moving forward with the project, consideration needs to be given to those for who the Year Book is important.

8. Safeguarding

(Paper G1)

The General Secretary and Ken Hague with the support 31:8 have written a safeguarding policy for the Congregational Federation.

The General Secretary and Operations Manager have taken part in safeguarding trustee training through 31:8

The Congregational Federation needs to be confident when responding to external organisations about the safeguarding in its affiliated churches

Recommendations

- **New safeguarding policy for the Congregational Federation (not churches) be adopted by Council.**
- **Council members complete the trustee training run by 31:8 safeguarding for churches charity and organise a dedicated 3 hour session at a time to be agreed.**
- **We move to a place where it is a condition of affiliation for churches that the safeguarding processes are adhered to.** (Council aware that this will require a change in constitution)
- **That a plan is put together for safeguarding visits to all churches which presently have no policy to happen in 2021.**

All recommendations approved unanimously.

9. CWM Gift of Grace

68 churches applied and received the gift. Request has been received from SW Midlands Area for the gift to also be made to Ruscombe.

Decision needs to be made about the remaining monies (about £10k). 7 churches have been identified by the Church Support Committee as struggling financially.

Recommendation

- **Churches in need of financial support because of the impact of COVID-19 send letter to GS by 6 January 2021 requesting funds; and that churches who can support other churches financially be invited to contribute to the fund.**
- **Gift of grace be extended to Ruscombe church as requested.**

Approved unanimously

10. 50th Anniversary 2022 (ideas)



- New Logo for the year (Metallic Gold)
- 50th Anniversary Bibles
- Bible highlighters
- Event/idea each month

General Secretary is in conversation the URC to establish a mutually respectful commemoration looking at the past, the Present & the Future.
Looking to produce a serious statement for ecumenical friends.
The General Secretary is also in conversation with the Bible Reading Fellowship as it will be their 100th anniversary, and with the Congregational History Society

Recommendation:

General Secretary form a working party to lead the anniversary plans

Approved unanimously.

50 gatherings of joy (or parties) were suggested to celebrate the 50 years.

11. Assembly Saturday 8th May 2021

In light of the restrictions by Government on large gatherings until at least the end of March 2021 it is unrealistic for us to be able to plan a face to face Assembly in May – General Secretary asked can we plan an online Assembly with feedback mechanisms?

Thoughts included churches/areas gathering in smaller groups to watch together, not traveling could encourage a larger attendance as no expenses incurred.

Recommendation

Chair of Council, General Secretary and Social Media Officer in consultation with other bodies create a plan for Assembly to bring back to the January 2021 Council meeting.

Recommendation approved unanimously

12. Going for Gold

Thanks were expressed from the Chair to those who had encouraged churches to respond.

The Chair of Council has recorded a YouTube video for the North West Area to help and encourage churches to respond - this could be used by others and will be shared after the meeting.

A clear conclusion from the meetings Council held in the summer was that Assembly should be a consultative event rather than a decision-making event.

Recommendations

- **To devote January Council meeting to the Going for Gold actions and 2021 Assembly**
- **That each member of Council be invited to prepare a short document (max 2 sides A4) by January 9th summarising the changes that they believe would improve CF and/or CFL (to be sent in confidence to the General Secretary).**
- **The General Secretary produce a summary of the returned Going for Gold and Council responses before the January meeting**

All recommendations approved unanimously

13. Declaration of Other Business

13.1. United Board

Communication received from the United Board requesting a donation towards the cost of moving their Museum.

Decision: Council decided unanimously to send £500 towards the moving costs of the United Board Museum.

Action: General Secretary to authorise the payment.

Timescale: As soon as possible.

13.2. 2021 Meeting Dates

- Saturday 16th January
- Saturday 24th April
- Saturday 10th July
- Saturday 20th November (TBC)

14. Closing Prayers and devotions were led by Janet Wootton