

# Chair Agreed Minutes Council 19-21 November 2021

## **Minutes of the Council Meeting 19-21 November 2021 Woodbrooke, Birmingham**

### **Present**

Jim Lyon  
Suzanne Nockels  
Mark Taylor  
John Bentham  
Tom Wilson  
Betty Bentham  
Foday Kamara  
Chris Damp  
Caroline Stott  
Judi Holloway

### **Representing**

Chair  
President  
President Elect  
Chair of CS Comm.  
CF Scotland  
North East  
North West  
South East  
South West  
South West Midlands

### **Participant Observers**

Yvonne Campbell  
Mark Tucker  
  
Gary Baker (Friday Evening)  
Oliver Kinchin.  
Michael Rolton  
Sue Austin  
Sam Coleman  
  
General Secretary  
Operations Manager/  
CFL Company  
Financial Controller  
Assembly Rep  
Assembly Rep  
FSSC  
Minutes

### **On Zoom**

Gerry Simonis  
Chris Gillham  
Martin Spain  
Eric Fenwick  
Walter Riggans  
Margaret McGuinness

CF Scotland  
CF Wales  
CF Wales Observer  
Eastern  
L & D Manager  
CF Scotland (19<sup>th</sup> Nov)

### **Apologies**

Craig James  
Hilary Biggin  
Bill Bentham  
  
CF Wales  
North West Midlands  
Assembly Rep

## **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November**

### **Opening Worship**

Opening reflections and prayer was led by the President, Suzanne Nockels.

### **Session 1**

#### **1. Welcome & Introductions**

Chair of Council, Jim Lyon welcomed all to the meeting.

Especially welcoming Sue Austin who is considering the role of Chair of F&SSC; Michael Rolton & Oliver Kinchin as Council Observers and those joining on Zoom.

**2. Apologies** Were noted as above.

#### **3. Minutes of the Council Meeting April 2021 (Paper D)**

**Decision:** The minutes from the meeting held on 24 April 2021 were accepted as accurate and correct.

#### **4. Minutes of the Council Meeting September 2021 (Paper E)**

**Decision:** The minutes from the meeting held on 23 September 2021 were accepted as accurate and correct.

**Decision:** Council Minutes once Chair agreed to be circulated to the Members of Council prior to being released to all.

## 5. Matters Arising

### From April 21

**5.1** Item 4.3 Representation for Robinsons Charity Board, Christian Aid & World Day of Prayer (England & Wales) charities are still required; Council were requested to encourage individuals into these roles.

**5.2** Assembly – The Renewal Centre are no longer hosting meetings; Assembly 2022 will be held at Edgbaston Cricket Ground.

**5.3** Assembly Saturday evening is being organised by Hay Mills and will include Paul Kerensa (Christian Comedian), there will also be a GO 4 IT reunion. Friday evening fringe is to be arranged.

**5.4** Item 10 communication continues with the churches in the Scottish Congregational Fellowship.

### From Sept 21,

**5.6** Law; there has been no further response received from the church.

**5.7** Item 10; Paragraph describing the role of chair was requested from the Chairs of Committees and is still outstanding.

## 6. Declaration of other Business

To approve the increase in stipend and salaries for 2022.  
To be discussed on Saturday morning in closed session.

## 7. Finance and Support Services

(Papers F, F1, F2, F3, F4 & F5)

<b>Finance &amp; Support Services</b>	
Highlights and Recommendations (Decision Sheet)	<b>F</b>
Acceptance of Minutes of Meeting 2.10.21	<b>F1</b>
Half year Accounts 2021	<b>F2</b>
Balance Sheet 30.6.21	<b>F3</b>
Finance Report	<b>F4</b>
Finance Strategy and KPI's	<b>F5</b>

There is currently a vacancy for Chair of FSSC and ITTB, Sue Austin has expressed an interest and attending this meeting.

A sub working group of ITTB have met to review the Ethical Policy negative investments have been removed from the portfolio (i.e., tobacco etc.)

Investments total assets have improved and increased over a number of years; operating deficits have reduced. Finances of CF are in a healthy position.

Memorial Hall Trust – the first call of this charity is to maintain the Library; half the funds of Memorial Trust have already been distributed. Gary is in contact with the Clerk.

John Bentham asked: is there room in the budget for 2 full time church support workers? Yvonne commented that there is £25K in the budget in the consultancy

## Draft Minutes Council 19-21 November 2021

line; in line with full time employee, John also asked if CF are we still reliant on Closed Church funds. Mark tucker replied that the closed church funds are used/distributed as per the current council policy.

Ideas from Council for any changes to policy to be modelled by FSSC prior to implementation.

### **Recommendations (Paper F5)**

- I. To receive the CF Half Year Accounts and Balance Sheet 2021 which have been noted and received by the FSSC - October 2021. Document F1 and F2.

**Council received the CF Half Year Accounts and Balance Sheet 2021.**

- II. Write-off unpaid 2020 £3,300.75 & 2021 £966.50 Affiliation Fees.

**Council unanimously agreed to write off the unpaid Affiliation Fees as above.**

- III. The remaining balance of the Gift of Grace to be rolled over into 2022, with the Finance Team communicating to the churches when they send out the 2022 Affiliation Fees.

**Council unanimously agreed to roll over any remaining Gift of Grace fund after the Grant request later in this meeting has been considered.  
(Item 12)**

- IV. To freeze the Church Affiliation Fee for 2023 at £160.00, with the Member Fee increasing from £8.50 to £8.75 and the Personal/Associate Membership Fee increasing from £42.00 to £43.00.

**Council agreed unanimously to freeze the Church Affiliation fee for 2023 at £160.00, with the Member Fee increase from £8.50 to £8.75 and the Personal/Associate Membership Fee from £42 to £43.**

- V. Sue Austin has expressed an interest – would the Committee be willing to support Sue if she goes forward as the next Chair of FSSC, subject to Council agreeing and Sue having time to think it through further. (Sue left the room)

**Council approved unanimously to Sue taking on the role; but want to offer assistance if needed, the Financial Controller will be on hand; and Council want Sue ask for help if needed.**

**Council received the Minutes of the F & SSC Meeting held on 2.10.21**

**8. Church Support Committee (Papers G & G1)**

**Council received the Minutes of the CSC Meeting held on 25.09.21**

The Christian Aid partnership for 2022, the £50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Congregational Federation is planned to be £50 per church (£11,500), there will be a launch and Christian Aid will attend Assembly and run a bible study. This project is in Nicaragua and based on climate change and the growing of cocoa

**Council agreed unanimously to this partnership with Christian Aid for 2022.**

It was noted that Ruscombe is in SW Midlands area not the South West area.

**9. Temporary delegates voting on Committees**

**Poll:** Do we agree where Area sends temporary delegates can they vote on committees? Ideally letting the Chair of the committee know at least a week in advance to enable access to papers. (using the existing policy)

**Council unanimously agreed to allow temporary delegates on committees vote.**

**10. New Church Application Process & Forms (Papers G2, G2a, G2b, G2c, Appendix 1, 2 & 3)**

Feedback from areas and individuals have been used to change and improve the forms.

The General Secretary to convey thanks to the Areas who responded and explain changes that have been made.

**Council unanimously all agreed to the new church application process.**

**11. Travel Grants**

**(Paper G3)**

This decision was approved in principle by Council at the April 2020 meeting.

The General Secretary and Financial Controller have been working on the application process and comments were requested from Council along with permission to continue with this work.

**Comments:**

There are options to consider, e.g. offering 70% or 50% of the travel costs.

CF Scotland pay in full for all for students/training traveling expenses. However, some Countries and Areas don't have the funds to do this.

To consider encouraging the type of travel we want people to use, the most environmentally friendly where possible.

Include all on the Ministries rolls, active ministers of any type on the roll & Students.

Do we include Assembly? Should there be a limited budget?

Have a ring-fenced amount per person?

**Council agreed that Yvonne & Gary continue to work on the policy & forms bringing this back to the next formal Council meeting. (April 2022)**

**12. Gift of Grace Grant.**

**(Paper G8)**

Correspondence has been received from 3CCam requesting grant from the Gift of Grace fund for the work to the building they need to have done.

There is no costing or work list.

**Council requested Yvonne ask for costed information, i.e., quotes to enable informed decision. Could they apply through Area Impact Grant?**

**13. CF Safeguarding Policy update**

**(Paper G4)**

Operations Manager, General Secretary and the Safeguarding Officer have worked through the policy having made changes and updates.

**Council approved the updated safeguarding policy subject to the following.**

**Appendix 1 clarification is needed that drinking, smoking and drugs will not be tolerated in formal settings.**

**14. Personal/Associate Membership**

**(Paper G5 & G5a)**

**Proposal** to cease Personal Membership and Associate Membership and start a new group of Subscribers.

No members of Council wanted to go with a new group of subscribers.

Council were asked; do we reinstate Personal Membership to the Federation & should they be able to vote?

**Council agreed restore Personal Membership. 1 abstention & 1 against.**

**15. UCCC representation**

Peter Butler has stood down from this role; therefore there is a vacancy to serve on the board of UCCC. (Mark Tucker and Chris Damp are already members)

There are 3 meetings a year.

Jim Lyon volunteered to represent Congregational Federation on the board of UCCC.

**Council unanimously agreed Jim Lyon into the role.**

**16. Yearbook**

**(Paper G6)**

For information.

Council members were requested to pass any changes that need to be made to this document to the Administration Team.

They were also given the names of the churches who have yet to return their data forms and asked to encourage them to return outstanding forms.

## **17. Terms of Reference working group**

**Council unanimously agreed that the Operations Manager and General Secretary pull together a group to update the Terms of Reference for all Committees and Boards.**

## **18. 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**(Paper G7)**

The Calendars for 2022 have arrived – one copy will go to each church. More copies can be ordered if needed.

There are many planned events for the year as in Paper G7.

President Elect, Mark Taylor closed the evening session in Prayer.

## **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November**

Closed Session

**Morning Worship – Led by the President Elect Mark Taylor.**

## **19. Session 2**

**Object of the Congregational Federation**

**(Paper H)**

**How do we as the Federation encourage the birth and rebirth of churches?**

**Examples of some churches were shared, and discussion followed.**

**Discussion took place in Groups using the following questions.**

How can we encourage/release/identify leadership into new starts?

How can we share successful experiences and stories?

What should our role be in resourcing?

How could area meetings be a source of inspiration?

## **Feedback**

- Community is most important – reach out to the world outside church buildings.
- Use buildings in the week. Create a space for time, chat, people. Not about Sundays, people will gather.
- Share personal stories, they are powerful.
- “Can do” people are gifted, creating spiritual opportunities. Need to identify those in our churches who can be “can do” people.
- New churches may need places to meet, we can share our buildings with non-CF churches.
- What can the CF do? produce a resource book by people who are doing the stuff.
- Use social media to share what’s happening, real life stories.

## Draft Minutes Council 19-21 November 2021

- Social media, try podcasts, recorded messages of good news and testimony.
- Listening to other people's stories encourages others and connects.
- Relationships, church built on relationship with Christ, this must be right first. Then relationships will grow.
- Structure is good, but we need to concentrate on community. If structure is holding us back, we should get rid, and look to Christ, if the structure helps, keep it.
- Do we still need a national assembly or should council focus on local assemblies?
- Assembly should be a sharing what's good with others.
- CF be a resource for the things churches can't do themselves, legal, safeguarding etc.
- Lightbulb moments very similar to podcasts.
- Leadership; don't create too many hoops, walk with people. Discipleship weekend, helping people know the love of God and discern calling in a safe environment.
- Prayer – comes with everything, pray for new churches.
- Areas are not working, should we have them? should we group like for like in resourcing each other?
- Area Workers – often work with the “better off” churches and those that ask. Should we have them spending half their time planting churches?
- Leadership, need “can do” people, having a heart for Jesus, passion for growth of churches in life, look at Likewise events again, create films to share at Area Level.
- CF to provide training accountability with bigger churches that are people rich providing (people) to plant new church and small churches that are cash rich providing the cash.

### **Actions from 20.11.21 Morning Session 2**

- I. Create a series of Podcasts (short films) of good news and success stories. To be a library/catalogue of the films. With a process to share the films on Facebook. Could be linked to be relevant to the Christian calendar year and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary calendar
- II. Have a library of suggested recorded sermons for use in churches without minister/preacher. Plus details of churches broadcasting online services. Ask churches what equipment/training they need to be able to use the recordings in their place of worship. Include grant information to enable them.
- III. Revisit “Likewise” topics/ideas, group churches in type and area to share/network  
North, South, Midlands, Scotland & Wales.  
City, Rural, Town, Large Church, Fresh Expressions, New Churches  
Meet face to face discussing challenges, ideas, successes.  
Possibility of invited speaker.

## 20. Session 3

**What should be the goal of the broader church support function?**

**Are there ways in which we can better enable churches to support one another?**

**General Secretary gave a presentation and discussion in groups followed.**

### Feedback

- Grants – good experience
- Internal publicity some good some bad – intouch is good website difficult, resource hub some didn't know about.
- Ask churches to do a case study when they do something that goes well to share in the hub.
- Matching – putting you in touch with churches that have done the same as you want to do.
- General Secretary is good
- Historically some visits from Church Support Team have been poor.
- How do Church Support Committee & Council duplicate?
- Refresh – more community news needed.
- President and General Secretary how does this work roles and relationships, to be more ecumenical.
- Constitution – needs reviewing to keep up with the times.
- Ministry; continual Ministry fund (not just Ministers) to help with spring school and Luther King House Summer school. Training needed to enthuse continual learning.
- Training in relation to birthing & rebirthing churches – with training on the job.
- Bespoke training modules.
- Safeguarding is a massive issue; can CF get training for the churches set up for all. – this is set up for the new year starting with Youth and Children's workers.
- President role – ambassador of CF.
- The General Secretary role has changed since she started the job, does she need a deputy or fresh expression member of staff or someone to assist in her role. Could be someone to support new leadership. Does the personnel committee need to be revisited?
- Do we need a Minister for social media?
- Skills bank, to go along the resource hub – to put people in touch with likeminded people.
- Transparency is needed through everything.
- Need to identify what churches need rather than give them what we think they need. – need to listen to churches.
- A body to hold your hand at various time when extra help is needed (someone to carry the light)
- Making connections – networking – resource hub
- Knowing the local needs, supporting specific needs/wants
- Seeking of feedback from Church Support Committee reps to Council.
- Listen, inspire & Encourage.



## Draft Minutes Council 19-21 November 2021

- Encouragement to think out of the box.
- Expertise that can be identified and used from outside CF
- Are there ways we can support each other – Areas, but some don't work well.
- We are a small group – must be realistic in what we do and not underdeliver. Identify what we can do and do it well.

### **Actions from 20.11.21 Afternoon Session 3**

- I. Fund for Leaders to assist with CMD (all on roll & Leadership in churches)  
Safeguarding needs to be included in this.
- II. Open discussion with GS to consider value of CSC as.  
Trustees need know the value of CSC
- III. How do we make people more aware of the Resource Hub. Need several ways to communicate as some don't use emails.  
Calendar of events happening online. Include in Intouch monthly.
- IV. Define roles of President and GS and updating them as needed. Review ecumenical duties.
- V. Create Skills database.
- VI. Explore how we can provide support for churches thinking of running Fresh Expressions of church (Potentially with other church Groups)
- VII. Prayer needs to be built into the strategy. Develop the prayer life of CF. encourage churches to connect with other churches as prayer partners.**

### **21. Session 4**

**Are there ways in which the Learning and Development approach can better enable the advancement of the Christian Faith?**

**Presentation by Walter Riggans followed by discussion in groups.  
(Paper I)**

### **Feedback from Session 4**

- Keep what's good.
- Build in training for specific issues, baptism, how to hold a baby, care of sick & their relatives, funerals, weddings more in depth training, role play. Practical preparation.
- Visit other churches, just to be.
- Learning and Development team visit churches to critique.
- Spring School great, but don't have it every year.
- Who's doing the training, an academic or someone on the front line?
- How would the training be paid for, Areas, Churches, Student?
- Publications need to be visually attractive.

## Draft Minutes Council 19-21 November 2021

- All ideas from Walter would be great to do.
- The direction of travel is great.
- How do we develop biblical literacy within the churches?
- Online bible studies might help. See the Bible as a text for all.
- Public speaking and how to do that well.
- Training for resilience.
- Mentoring new ministers. Skilled accompaniers to travel with them. Training mentors too. Having a safe non-judgmental place to reflect.
- Coaching with questions.
- All Learning and Development has value, very short courses for inspiring & Training having the most value.
- What is the value to the federation to providing inhouse training verse what if we outsourced to another group to provide some of the training. Evaluate the cost of this. Which is most attractive to our students & churches. (Cost per head) look beyond one college consider Scotland & Wales.

### **Actions from 20.11.21 Evening Session 4**

- I. Practical instruction on conducting life events. Eg: Holding babies, dealing with funeral directors. Different locations: crematoriums, graveside, Supporting bereaved families, Managing unchurched families in church, Using relevant language, Practical preparation of leading services and preaching.
- II. Visit services and provide coaching.
- III. Leading multilingual/multi-cultural church.
- IV. Spring schools good but not every year.
- V. All Walter's ideas are good.
- VI. Re-enthuse leaders in The Bible – studies for leaders.
- VII. Practical coaching on public speaking.
- VIII. Resilience training.
- IX. Interpreting biblical worship into fresh expression.
- X. Mentoring – coaching with questions.
- XI. Highest value from Walter's list - very short course for inspiring and training.

### **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November**

#### **Morning Worship – Led by the President Elect Mark Taylor.**

#### **22. Session 5**

#### **Action Plan** with time scales and ownership

The top 6 actions to be worked on first, based on them having the highest impact for the least effort.

## Draft Minutes Council 19-21 November 2021

- I. Have a library of suggested recorded sermons for use in churches without minister/preacher. Plus details of churches broadcasting online services. Ask churches what equipment/training they need to be able to use the recordings in their place of worship. Include grant information to enable them. Also printed sermons.  
By General Secretary.
- II. Make people more aware of the Resource Hub. Need several ways to communicate as some don't use emails. Calendar of events happening online. Include in Intouch monthly.  
By General Secretary.
- III. **Prayer needs to be built into the strategy. Develop the prayer life of CF. encourage churches to connect with other churches as prayer partners.**  
**By All.**
- IV. Practical instruction on conducting life events. Eg: Holding babies, dealing with funeral directors. Different locations: crematoriums, graveside. Supporting bereaved families. Managing unchurched families in church. Using relevant language.  
By Walter Riggans.
- V. Practical preparation of leading services and preaching. Visit services and provide coaching. Leading multilingual/multi-cultural church. Spring schools good but not every year. Public speaking. Resilience Training.  
By Walter Riggans.
- VI. Mentoring – coaching with questions.  
By Pioneer Group.

The following actions to be worked on at a later date.

- Create Skills database.
- Explore how we can provide support for churches thinking of running Fresh Expressions of church (Potentially with other church Groups)
- Re-enthuse those in ministries in The Bible.
- Short course for preachers and worship leaders
- Create a series of Podcasts (short films) of good news and success stories. To be a library/catalogue with a process to share on Facebook
- Revisit "Likewise" topics/ideas, group churches in type and area to share/network North, South, Midlands, Scotland & Wales. City, Rural, Town, Large Church, Fresh Expressions, New Churches.
- Fund for Leaders to assist with CMD (all on roll & Leadership in churches). Safeguarding needs to be included in this.
- Open discussion with GS, Council area reps and CSC reps to consider value of CSC as Trustees need know the value of CSC
- Define roles of President and GS and updating them as needed. Review ecumenical duties.
- Spring School

- Short courses for inspiring and training

### **23. Area Reports**

#### **Wales**

The Major thing has been relaying the countries Covid regulations to the churches. Bigger stronger churches have managed very well.

Many smaller churches have struggled, some have had help from larger churches, 1 has closed and there are a possible 2 more that will close.

CYTUN runs a welcome to Wales course for Ministers new to Wales.

The Welsh Government have been very responsive to CYTUN.

Area Meetings have doubled in attendees since holding them on Zoom.

#### **South East Area**

A Small group of churches attend the area meetings.

Area struggling with getting personnel (treasurer/chair

Sense of unity and oneness in Christ in the area, problem is getting all churches to participate.

Some churches struggling with opening after the lockdown, some are back doing everything as normal.

#### **South West Area**

Area meet regularly, are some churches that don't engage.

Struggling to get a Chair for the area, it is difficult to get people to participate.

Area Minister gets around the churches.

Possibly 3 or 4 churches will close shortly.

#### **North West Area**

Struggling to fill vacancies for the executive.

Autumn assembly was in Oldham, safeguarding for all regularly discussed.

Likewise event held 20/11/21

No churches expressing that they will close, some struggling and asking for help.

Area Worker is fantastic.

Covid has stopped much visiting.

#### **North East Area**

Small area 11 churches, 3 don't participate,

Pickering are working through an issue.

Communication is very well distributed.

Some members have not returned to services and may never.

Area like the gathering days and likewise reasonably attended.

#### **East Midlands Area**

Cathering Booton will be taking over as the Area Representative on Council from January 2021.

Barry Osborne is enthusiastic.

Churches engaged well with the going for gold.

Some churches have structural problems, some seeking ministers.

### **Cf in Scotland**

The majority of our churches have returned to worship on a Sunday morning but as per Scottish Government restrictions, we continue to follow hand hygiene, mask-wearing throughout the services including when singing and track and trace. The mood of the churches is buoyant but also there are struggles and challenges with no sign of settling any time soon. There are some concerns about the future of some churches but only time will tell but the churches have been made aware that CF Scotland is ready to help talk through the issues they face and advise accordingly.

We are now facing the reality that only the offices of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer have been filled with Rev Susan Durham still holding down the childcare part of Safeguarding. We have reformed ourselves into a smaller, slimline group and changed our name from the Area Council to the Congregational Federation in Scotland, Church Support Group as this is more in tandem with what is happening nationally.

We are looking forward to meeting in person at our Scottish Assembly later in the Spring if restrictions are not put in place. We also look forward to welcoming Walter Riggans, who has put a lot of effort into promoting learning and development and he will be welcomed when he comes to Knightswood Congregational, Glasgow in December of this year. This is viewed as a very positive step forward in establishing normality but also investing in education, something which was traditionally close to the heart of the Scottish Congregationalists and this CDG is viewed with great optimism due to Walter's enthusiastic approach.

Please share Area prayer lists with Yvonne.

### **24. Observer's feedback**

The observers thanked Council for making them feeling welcome. Feedback has been gratefully received by Council; Council feels fluid and able to respond.

Area feedback could have been earlier in the meeting to feed into the meeting. At times they have felt councils' pain, but there is passion too. When sharing back to the Churches refer what Council are doing back to Going 4 Gold. did churches realise that G4G was the process from Assembly 2017. Help churches to see how and what has been done. Can minutes be made more visible when released on the website?

Practical, thought through weekend, the observers were impressed by the chairing of the meeting, especially on the Friday night.

Small groups encouraged honesty and feedback has been well structured. The venue was very good. Action plan looks great. This will all come down to individuals making it work. What can we do to change peoples thinking of what and how we do things?

**Closing Worship including communion was led by the President, Suzanne Nockels**