

Chair Agreed Minutes Council 18-19 November 2022

Minutes of the Council Meeting 18-19 November 2022 Woodbrooke, Birmingham

Present

Jim Lyon
Mark Taylor
Sue Austin
Tom Wilson
Chris Gillham
Brendan Mason (Saturday)
Eric Fenwick
Catherine Booton
Betty Bentham
Foday Kamara
Hilary Biggin
Chris Damp
Caroline Stott
Judi Holloway

Representing

Chair
President
Chair of FSSC
CF Scotland
CF Wales
CF Wales
Eastern
East Midlands
North East
North West
North West Midlands
South East
South West
South West Midlands

On Zoom

Margaret McGuinness (Friday) CF Scotland

Participant Observers

Dawn Mason (Saturday) CF in Wales
Yvonne Campbell General Secretary
Mark Tucker Operations Manager/
CFL Company
Gary Baker (Friday Evening) Financial Controller
Sam Coleman Minutes

Apologies

Oliver Kinchin President Elect
Gerry Simonis CF Scotland

Friday 18th November

1. Opening Worship

Opening reflections and prayer was led by the President, Mark Taylor based on the reading from Acts 15: 1-13, this included the Presidents report. His three points made were.

It's OK to have different points of view to bring to the meeting

It's not only OK it's right to have a spirited discussion

In the end the aim is what God wants not individuals

Presidents Report included

Officiating a fitting tribute to Walter's Ministry in the Congregational Federation, the successful launch of the Pioneer Hub and taking over as Chair of the Fresh Expressions group.

As President preaching at 5 churches and visit to another church all with positive responses, Mark will be visiting at least another 7 churches before the end of his year as President.

Mark has attended several ecumenical events representing the Congregational Federation.

2. Welcome & Introductions

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

Especially welcoming Caroline Stott, returning to Council, Catherine Booton attending her first in person meeting and Margaret McGuinness joining on Zoom.

3. Apologies Were noted as above.

4. Minutes of the Council Meeting 1-2 April 2022

(Paper C)

Minutes of the Council Meeting 28 April 2022

(Paper C1)

Decision: The minutes from the meetings held on 1-2 April 2022 and 28 April 2022 were accepted as accurate and correct.

5. Matters Arising

From April 22

5.1. The work on practical pastoring (page 8) is still ongoing.

6. Declaration of other Business

Discussion on milage rate for attending CF meetings
Retired Ministers and Widows Fund

Both included later in the meeting.

7. Finance and Support Services Sue Austin & Gary Baker

(Papers D & D1-12)

Minutes of meeting 1 st October 2022	D
Decision Sheet	D1
CF Finance Report	D2
Finance Strategy / KPIs	D3
CF Accounts	D4
CF Balance Sheet 30.6.22	D5
Affiliation Fees	D6
Year Book	D7
Travel Grants	D8
CMD Grants	D9
Hope Community Church	D10
Southam Church Community Project	D11
No 4 Castle Gate	D12

Decisions

7.1 Council receive the CF Half Year Accounts and Balance Sheet 2022 which have been noted and received by the FSSC – October 2022 **see Papers D4 & D5.**

Council received the accounts unanimously.

7.2 That the remaining Gift of Grace balance is awarded/designated to CF Trading to help somewhat in offsetting its loss of income and significant trading losses caused by COVID during 2020 and 2021.

Following discussion Council agreed the award unanimously.

7.3 Write-off 2022 Affiliation Fees from Carlisle City Church of £262 and Glasgow Cathcart Church of £280.50 both churches having closed.

Council agreed the write-off of affiliation fees as above unanimously.

Post meeting note – General Secretary has spoken to a member of Cathcart and the church is not closing

7.4 Write-off unpaid affiliation fees as per **Paper D6.**

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Council agreed the write-off of these affiliation fees as per Paper D6 unanimously.

7.5 Financial and Operations Strategy.

That the three-year rolling strategy be extended into the 2024-2026 level of operation.
Paper D3.

Council agreed the Financial and operational strategy in Paper D3 unanimously.

7.6 FSSC request that Council confirm and agree that the minimum recommended stipend for Ministers continue to increase in line with the RPI in September in keeping with the current policy.

Council agreed the RPI Based increase for 2023 unanimously.

Following discussions

Proposal:

Tom Wilson Proposed, seconded Eric Fenwick

That the annual increase to Ministers recommended minimum stipend use CPI not RPI in all future calculations.

Council agreed to use CPI from 2024 unanimously.

7.7 Yearbook Amendments – recommended church service fees table Paper D7.

Council agreed by majority to publish the 2023 figures in Year Book as a guide.

7.8 FSSC recommend the Travel Grants scheme as per Paper D8.

Council agreed to the Travel Grant scheme unanimously.

7.9 FSSC recommend the CMD Grants scheme as per Paper D9.

Council agreed the CMD Grant scheme unanimously.

7.10 FSSC recommend that CF do not gift nor purchase the property at 264 Hotwells Road – Paper D10.

Following much discussion:

Decision:

**Council agreed by majority not to gift or purchase the property as above.
(4 votes against)**

Action:

The Operations Manager will visit the church in the next week to advise them of the decision, offer encouragement to the church and to suggest support available through other CF grants.

This discussion highlighted there needs to be further discussions on the CF investment policy.

7.11 Southam Church and Community Project Ltd Paper D11.

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Council comments on Paper D11 -

- What are the views of the church – what would they really like to happen?
- what can CF legally do?
- The building no longer used for Christian work but community work.
- What are the trustee's responsibilities,
- Aren't minded to renew/extend lease – consider options – give them 1st chance to purchase the building at market value.

Following discussions

Proposal

Eric Fenwick proposed, seconded by Hilary Biggin – that CF do not extend lease after 2027 and look to review the situation and the possibility to dispose the property.

Action: Operations Manager to communicate the decision to the charity and update the Minister of the church.

Timescale: as soon as possible.

7.12 No 4 Castle Gate Paper D12.

Based on the information about possible tenants, a discussion took place regarding the values and types of tenant that might be suitable to occupy the building.

Decision:

Councils request the Property Manager ask the Agent to get further details from the prospective tenants and follow up on due diligence.

Action:

Details to be discussed by Council via zoom before any decisions made.

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

8. CF Ltd – separate minutes

9. Church Support Committee

(Papers F, F1 & F2)

Barbara Bridges & Yvonne Campbell

Council received the Minutes of the CSC Meeting held on 24.09.22

The General Secretary reported that this had been the worst of years: The sudden death of Walter Riggans - Learning and Development Manager - had left a massive hole. Maddy Varley & CIPT Management Board have stepped up to manage the workload.

Opportunities to representing CF on other committees were highlighted (Paper F2). The Christian Aid partnership for this the £50th Anniversary year of the Congregational Federation was based on climate change and cocoa farms in Nicaragua; The General Secretary expressed her thanks to all who have donated to this fund; and to Neil Chappell who has run a marathon and raised over £300.

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Impact grants were highlighted as there had not been any applications this year; however there are currently five applications in the pipelines.
Yvonne is still actively seeking a new Chair for the Church Support Committee.

Barbara highlighted that the Accreditation & Pastoral Care Coordination Group (APCCG) has some vacancies, areas reps. were encouraged to make sure that their area has representation on the group.

Barbara is approaching the completion of her second 3-year term as Chair of APCCG meaning a new Chair will soon be needed.

CWM partnership, Nigel Lindsay in Grenada. Nigel will be doing a fund raiser for the church he is working with. He requested continued prayers.

Safeguarding – a beginners guide leaflet was shared with Council.
Church Support Worker, Luzia has been building the Children's and Youth work; there were 20 youngsters at assembly and there is a Youth Camp taking place in February 2023.

Barbara Bridges was thanked for stepping in to Chair the last CSC meeting and for feeding back to Council.

10. Chair's Presentation

Jim Lyon

Jim has been in the role 3 years –

Council unanimously agreed for him to continue as Chair.

He asked Council that the Chair (ultimately line manager of senior staff) be given the authority to agree exceptions in non-staff expenses and have authority to give direction on how things need to be done in certain circumstances.

Decision:

Council agreed that the Chair of Council can approve exceptions to non-staff expenses up to £1000, all exceptions to be reported to Council at every meeting. Agreed that such expense claims be submitted to the Chair for approval before being passed to Finance.

Action:

Expenses policy to be reviewed by FSSC as soon as possible for the next Council meeting.

Strategies Group:

Chair proposed a small group (6 – 7 members) be formed to work on scenarios of:

- how CF could be different
- how CF could look like in differing situations
- how could CF be in the future.

Producing worked through options for Council to make final decisions.

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The chair asked Council to consider who would be good participants? – people from different area/country church size, rural or urban church.
People who would have with the right skill set and time to make it happen.

Jim closed the day's proceedings in prayer.

Saturday 19th November

11. Worship and prayer led by the President based on Acts 15: 19-29.

His three points made were

When you come to a decision – it needs to be communicated with everyone who needs to know. Can we do better?

You should not be saddled with any crushing burden – he related this to new church application.

We need not be bound to history – things change – keep the necessary & essential – then consider what matters.

Brendan Mason CF Wales was welcomed to the meeting - Dawn Mason was welcomed as an observer.

12. HR Issues (Closed Session)

13. General Secretary Report (Paper I & I1)

Yvonne Campbell

The General Secretary created a spreadsheet report on all the churches which included grants that have been given, affiliation fee payments outstanding, data forms still to be returned and safeguarding status & visits.

Council requested that an addition be made to Paper I to show if there is an active relationship with CF – i.e., committee member, student etc.

Christmas card competition, the 4 winning designs have been printed and will be sent to churches and ecumenical contacts.

Calendar for 2023, this year has the theme of miracles and will arrive in the office on 28/11/22.

50 Biblical Reflections, (new book) for the 50th Anniversary will be available before Christmas.

Serving the Community awards for 2023 is ready to launch and the poster will be dispatched with the 2023 calendar at the beginning of December.

Refresh, there has been 3 editions in the year and there will be the same number of issues for 2023.

Ukrainian bibles are available free, the information of how to get these is on the CF website.

Assembly 2023 is being held in Taunton at the 'Tacchi- Morris Arts Centre' TA2 8PD. The South West Area are excited to be hosting this year.

Proposals from the General Secretary

13.1 Data form

If church has not returned their data form 2 years in a row they should be removed from the Yearbook.

Council requested that where there has not been a data form received the entry be annotated "No current details held" or "Last info received".

13.2 Affiliation Fee

If a church has not paid their affiliation fee or communicated why they are unable to pay their fee, they should not benefit from affiliation including mailings and grants.

Council suggested that there needs to be face to face or telephone conversation with the church/treasurer not just post or email.

They asked how would this affect churches with ministers who get pensions and or payroll services. It was noted that the pension follows minister not church.

Decision:

Council requested a group of staff (General Secretary to facilitate) format a timescale for the 2 issues with Data Forms and Affiliation Fees.

Timescale: to feed back at next Council meeting.

Foday Kamara Proposed – that everything regarding the Year Book and Mailings stays as is for now.

Decision:

Council Area representatives were tasked to follow up all churches on their list and feed back to the General Secretary with recommendations by the next Council meeting.

Action:

General Secretary to organise 1-1 conversations with Area Council reps.

Timescale: Within next couple of weeks.

CF Scotland requested another safeguarding checker be appointed to assist as the current checker is currently not available.

General Secretary will organise as soon as possible.

13.3 Safeguarding

If a church does not have a CF safeguarding certificate or equivalent from a church denomination or are working towards a CF safeguarding certificate by the end of 2023 they will not benefit from Affiliation or be included in the Yearbook

This is everyone's responsibility it needs to be kept on the radar by all.

14. UCCC Representatives

Mark Tucker, Chris Damp & Jim Lyon

Both Mark's & Jim's 4-year term is coming to an end.

Chris Damp Proposed, Tom Wilson seconded that they both be re-elected to the positions.

Council agreed unanimously.

15. 2023/2024 Schedule

(Paper K)

It was noted that Council needs to move 1 week earlier to the 3rd weekend in November.

The Chair asked if Council wanted all meetings moved to Nottingham to be able to offer the upgraded Zoom facilities, or would they prefer all meetings be in person only.

Decision:

Council agreed that the two main meetings should be in person, locations to be sought. Meetings extra to the two main meetings to be on zoom.

Action:

General Secretary to consider venues.

Timescale:

As soon as possible (to enable bookings)

16. Yearbook – Area Pages

Area pages from the Year Book had been issued. Council members were requested to pass any changes that need to be made to the Area pages 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 the outstanding forms.

GDPR contacts – the safeguarding officer, Operations Manager and General Secretary continue to search for a way forward to streamline accessibility to information and contact details.

Action:

Churches who don't have a contact in the Year Book be contacted directly and be added to the spreadsheet of the General Secretary and included in the 1-1 conversations with Area Reps.

17. New Church Applications

Minutes of the New Churches meeting held on 12 October 2022 **(Paper M)**

Ridgewell

(Papers M1 – 4)

It was noted that the Safeguarding process has started.

Wellcome Church (definitely 2 l's)

(Papers M5 & M6)

They will be using Orsett's building – the church minutes requested have been received.

Proposal to Council from the meeting was:

To welcome both the newly formed church at Ridgewell and Wellcome Church into affiliation with the Congregational Federation.

Council was unanimously in favour of welcoming both churches into affiliation. Formal recognition to be given at the May Assembly in 2023.

18. Area Feedback to -

- How will your area Function in 2023?
- Is there any help CF can offer to function better?

18.1 Eastern Area – Eric Fenwick

There have been no formal meetings in several years, Area executive has taken place via zoom, recently suggesting that churches meet in clusters for pastoral support and encouragement.

The pandemic has taken its toll.

Area meetings are hoped to restart in Spring 2023.

18.2 South West Midlands Area – Judi Holloway

The Treasurer has moved from the area and Nicola White the South West Area Treasurer is covering on a temporary basis. The Secretary & an active Minister have also left.

A hybrid area meeting is due to take place in February. Joy Howell. The Area Worker is supporting Kingswood Bristol.

Jason Boyd as Chair has asked for assistance in HR and Treasurer

They haven't had a treasurer for nearly 2 years.

18.3 South West area – Caroline Stott

The Area Worker has left. The held an Area AGM which no one attended.

Following prayer, at the next meeting all but 2 churches from the area attended and there were volunteers to take on the vacant roles. God answered prayers

18.4 East Midlands Area – Catherine Booton

They have seen lots of change in the area, Barry Osborne has stepped down as Secretary, they have no volunteers to take over from him yet. The Area Treasurers job is shared by 2 people. The have met on Zoom throughout the Pandemic and have met in person recently. It is a large area from Grimsby to Bedford.

18.5 North West Midlands Area – Hilary Biggin

Dudley is closing, the area is shrinking in size and aging, they are disorganised and disillusioned! The Area Secretary receives an annual honorarium plus expenses paid; area have not seen a balance sheet for almost a year. The area wondered if there could be a national document detailing the role of area officers and a list of people who could help new officers, i.e., treasurers & secretaries. (It was noted that ACAT do an excellent course for new Treasurers)

Action – General Secretary to look at producing documents as requested

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18.6 North West Area – Foday Kamara

They have just had an area assembly, Covid has had massive impact, they have lost Carlisle City Church. the area used YouTube etc. in lockdown for assembly and for encouraging each other. The Area Worker stepped down in February, they have advertised to recruit a Church Support Worker & Youth Worker. The Area Chair wants to step down and they have had another volunteer.

He encouraged churches to share what the Area Officer roles involve. There are very positive signs.

18.7 North East Area – Betty Bentham

The Area have good officers but struggle to get people to attend area meetings. Days out attracts more people, the executive meet formally twice a year with ad hoc meetings in between. They are planning to send circulars to churches if any big decisions need to be made and hoping that will help. The area is large, and people don't want to travel. We need younger people!

18.8 South East Area – Chris Damp

His church (Bedford – Bunyan) cluster with Bedford Elstow and other local churches for fellowship and encouragement. There were 31 churches in the area in 2016 – 28 today. They have met by zoom, autumn assembly was held at Cranbrook, a happy occasion. They have had issues with the bank wanting to close accounts. The Treasurer wants to give up as they are unable to attend meetings (can join Zoom) but for now they have full complement of officers. The area is in good heart. Penge are facing challenges with buildings. If churches want support from the area, they encourage them to engage with the area and attend area meetings to support them.

18.9 CF in Wales – Chris Gillham

The area has kept meetings going by zoom, they have now held two meetings in person, but have found that more people joined with zoom. The executive meetings will continue to be held by zoom. Wales is a large area, face to face is often not well attended, but appreciated and of a good standard. They are hoping to continue in the same vein in 2023. Clustering churches could be difficult. For 2023 the area officers have been stepped down a generation; very helpful. Wales has deliberately thought 2023 will be a year of reviewing and looking forward. CYTUN have been very encouraging and helpful to the churches in ecumenical matters. They are considering how/if they should relate and invite UCCC churches to meetings. They have no church support worker now but are looking for grants to support this. CF in Wales need help with legal, HR & Safeguarding from CF centrally so that the area can concentrate on mission. Overall they are moderately upbeat.

The General Secretary is loved in Wales and all the CF staff are very much valued

18.10 CF in Scotland – Tom Wilson

Lerwick to Eyemouth and everywhere in between, they are a massive area a whole country.

The number of churches has reduced, fuel prices are causing concerns in many churches. There are 3 officers who share all the roles on all the committees; this will cause issues in the future. Hybrid meetings haven't worked in Scotland. The numbers attending area assembly have reduced. Walter created a new way of

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learning for Scotland; he brought a different dimension; Walter brought them together; they are down on their knees praying for the future of CF in Scotland.

Foday led prayers for the CF Countries & Areas, reminding everyone that churches have had challenges before, and flourished.

Areas to possibly change in future strategy review

19. Action Plan Review

(Paper P & P1)

High Action points

Action	Update November 2022	Conclusion
<p>Have a library of suggested recorded sermons for use in churches without a 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.</p>	<p>Library has one recording so far List has been created of all churches who live stream their services or record Cf Scotland service shared on social media GS visited Carmarthen CC to see the TV and equipment NC put together specifications and recommendations for churches without equipment</p>	<p>Work will be ongoing</p>
<p>Make more people aware of the Resource Hub. Need several ways to communicate as some don't use emails. Calendar of events happening online include intouch monthly.</p>	<p>This continues as much as we are able Online calendar has not been possible Calendar of events included in Year Book and every month in the Intouch Hits have increased over the year by 50%</p>	<p>Work will be ongoing</p>
<p>Prayer needs to be built into the strategy. Developer prayer life of CF will stop encourage churches to connect with other churches as prayer partners</p>	<p>Prayer is part of every CF meeting and committee Prayer diary in the Refresh Bible Study continues on a Monday afternoon 2023 calendar has a prayer for each month</p>	<p>Work will be ongoing</p>
<p>Practical Instruction on conducting life events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • holding babies • dealing with funeral directors <p>Different locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crematorium's • graveside. 	<p>Walter dying has halted this work Preaching Likewise event planned for March 2022 in Newark Webinar on supporting people suffering with Trauma has been held and a plan for a</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting bereaved families • managing unchurched families in church • using relevant language 	monthly gathering in 2023 is being worked through	
Mentoring dash coaching with questions	On the agenda for the Fresh Expressions group	January 2023
Create a skills database	CST are in the process of creating a list of skills we think would be helpful to share including Applying for grants/ filling in electronic forms Websites and Podcasts Interior/Graphic Design Illustrators Painters Video/film makers Editors	Ongoing
Revisit “likewise” topic/ideas, group churches in type and area to share/network North, South, Midlands, Scotland and Wales. City, Rural, Town, Large Church, Fresh Expressions New Churches	GS held a zoom for all Area officers Proposal to be discussed at areas think about merging to form something like a Cf England with churches forming clusters for mutual support	Ongoing
Fund for Leaders to assist with CMD (all on roll and leadership in churches] Safeguarding needs to be included in this	Proposal agreed by CSC and FSSC for Council approval	Completed

Medium action Points

Action	Comments	Time scale
Re-enthuse those in ministries in The Bible.	Immerse Bible just been released Run a webinar and or a group	January / February 2023
Short course for preachers and worship leaders	Is this on preaching and leading worship or other general topics	Cherry picking modules Monthly webinar starting
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	This is already being actioned new camera being bought to go and start filming	Luzia and Neil will lead on this
Fund for Leaders to assist with CMD (all on roll & Leadership in churches). Safeguarding needs to be included in this.	CMD been developed and to be agreed at Nov Council although does not include those not accredited	
Open discussion with GS, Council area reps and CSC reps to consider value of CSC as		

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Trustees need know the value of CSC		
Define roles of President and GS and updating them as needed. Review ecumenical duties.	GS Job description has started to be updated	
Short courses for inspiring and training		

20. Council Communications

(Papers N, N1 & N2)

Letters from 6 churches listed as Other Churches in Scotland stating they are to leave CF with immediate effect have been received.
Response letters have been sent by the General Secretary. There are 4 churches remaining in this group, affiliated to CF but not CF in Scotland.
The letters and response were noted.

Papers N & N1

Chair of Council received a letter from Ruth Green both the letter and response from Chair of Council were noted.

Paper N2

It was reiterated that Council Members are elected as representatives of the area, CF in Scotland and CF in Wales are National bodies, England has 8 areas represented.

Decision:

Council decided that Voting at General Assembly to be standardised.

1 vote per attending church.

Personal Members being grouped as being equivalent to 1 church.

Action:

Tellers to tally the votes must be appointed prior to assembly (inc PM tally vote). Different colour cards to be used for Church & PM votes.

Decision:

Produce a short video to be shown in Churches, explaining how Council works. Including trusteeship, the processes from church member to Groups, Boards, Committees and to Council and explaining the governance system.

Action:

General Secretary and Church Support Team to plan and produce the video.

Timescale:

For next Council Meeting

21. AOB

21.1 A letter has been received by the General Secretary from Paul Davis. Council was made aware that the "Retired Ministers and Widows Fund" is to be wound down following the next pay out.

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CF will then receive a lump. When this is received, Council will need to decide what the money will be used for.

21.2 Council were asked to make churches aware that the request for nominations for President 2024 is coming up.

21.3 Old Meeting House, Norwich; a review meeting is to take place following the recent visit.

21.4 The mileage rate for expenses was discussed – it being only 35p per mile and doesn't cover costs.

Proposal:

**Eric Fenwick Proposed, Chris Damp Seconded
That the mileage rate be raised to 45p per mile with immediate effect
(including this meeting)**

Decision:

Council unanimously agreed the raise in milage rate.

Action:

Finance Team to produce an updated expense claim form.

Timescale:

As soon as possible.

It was suggested that "Thinking Notes" come out on papers to be discussed; with the agenda and papers being on the website in plenty of time before the meeting so that decisions can be made from a more informed and considered basis.

And

Could important decisions be discussed on the first day of the meeting and the decision made the following day after time to consider options.

22. Chair led Session – Moving Forward Review and Transformation

Catherine Booton & Foday Kamara left the meeting at this point.

Small Groups were asked to discuss:

- **Who (not in your group) would be good in the small strategy group?**
- **What skills expertise will the bring?**

Council was asked to take these 2 points away and come back in January (Zoom meeting) with ideas and nominations for the group.
They were asked to consider the following.

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- Do members of the group need to be CF church members?
- Could it be valuable to have experts in the group from outside CF (for specific areas)?
- Could group members be from other congregational traditions?
- Should be paid expenses only.

What would the 3 main priority topics (from each small Council group) for the Strategy group to address?

- a) Financial strategy – how does CF spend funds and how does CF invest money?
- b) Communications – how can improvements be made.
From CF to Churches – and from Church back to CF?
- c) Structures of CF – looking at the whole package
- d) Evangelism – looking at the image of CF
How development in small aging churches take place?
- e) How does CF encourage outreach?
- f) What is the future of areas? – how could it change and develop, and should it change?
- g) If there was no CF - what would we start with?
- h) How could we be a new federation?
- i) How do we effectively recycle and share good ideas and support new growth in the churches?
- j) How can CF equip with buildings for churches? Could there be CF properties Ltd ?

Discussions will continue at the Zoom meeting in January 2023.

The meeting closed with prayers led by the President.