

Chair Agreed

Minutes for Church Support Committee

Time: 10:30 – 4.30

Date: Saturday 23rd March 2019

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

Attendees:

John Bentham
Barbara Bridges
Sandra Turner
Nick Gleich
Colin Brown
Steve Richards
May-Kane Logan
Peter Damen
Keith Bradley
Alan Kennedy
Joy Leathers
Peter Young
Ruth Green
Peter Butler
Ian Jones

Representing:

Chair
Chair Accreditation Group
Chair Communications Group
Chair CIPT MB/SW Midlands Area
CF in Wales
CF in Wales
CF in Scotland
East Midlands Area
North East Area
North West Area
North West Midlands Area
South East Area
South West Area
Chair of Finance Committee
Eastern

Staff:

Yvonne Campbell
Walter Riggans
Judith Mbaabu
Johnny O'Hanlon
Maddy Varley
Gary Baker

General Secretary
Learning and Development Manager
Church Support Worker
Church Support Worker
Learning and Development Administrator/Minutes
Financial Controller

Participant Observers:

None

Apologies:

Janet Wootton
Martin Spain
Susan Durham
John Durham
Lee Rayner
Sue Rayner
Lisa Vickers
Neil Chappell

President Elect
Immediate Past President
CF in Scotland
CF in Scotland
CF in Scotland
CF in Scotland
Safeguarding Officer
Website and Social Media Officer

Abbreviations:

AG Accreditation Group
CC Congregational Church
CF Congregational Federation
CG Communications Group
CIPT MB Congregational Institute of Practical Theology Management Board
CSC Church Support Committee
CSW Church Support Worker
CWM Council for World Mission
ICB Inter-Church Board
PCC Pastoral Care Coordinator
ToR Terms of Reference

1. Opening devotions

The Chair welcomed committee members and thanked them for attending, before leading the Committee in prayer.

2. Apologies

As noted above.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting (22nd September 2018)

The minutes were approved with the following post meeting amendments for clarification:

Peter Young had sent apologies, and he was not present at the meeting. This will be amended in the previous minutes.

Re item 8.5 of the previous minutes:

To clarify, the removal of Minister's details to a 'hidden list' only occurs where no contact has been established, *and* the Minister's DBS certificate has lapsed.

Re item 7.1 of the previous minutes:

Re the comment regarding some churches from CF in Scotland 'losing their individual identity', please substitute 'cohesion' for 'identity' here: the point is that that while a number of our churches are operating fully as congregational churches within their locality fewer are meeting centrally for fellowship/discussion etc.

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at Council meetings.

4. Matters arising not elsewhere on the Agenda

Re item 15 of the previous minutes:

An update on the Christian Aid Syria Appeal: over £2000 has now been raised from churches towards our £12,000 target. Area Reps were asked to remind churches about fundraising for this appeal. It was confirmed that this appeal is in addition to the usual Christian Aid Week Appeal.

Re item 7.9 of the previous minutes

The issue of redeveloping church buildings for use for outreach work is to remain as an active action point.

5. Notice of Any Other Business

Requested by Johnny O'Hanlon and Peter Young

6. Budget Papers

Paper C1 (Attached): A training Session on budget reports had been held for Area Reps the previous day, delivered by the CF Finance department. The training had been very well received and those who participated found it very useful.

The Financial Controller thanked those who had participated in the training, and expressed how encouraged he was that people had benefitted from the training. In future meetings Q&A sessions will be included in the meeting and minuted.

It was confirmed that where donations have been given for a specific purpose, for example Alumni Association or Graduation, any unused funds will be carried forward to be used for these purposes in future years.

It will be investigated as to whether donations given to students from other bodies, such as those from Lady Hewley Trust then donated for CIPT, can be Gift Aided from the individuals.

The committee was reminded that staff budget holders are doing so on behalf of the committee, and therefore questions to budget holders are welcomed.

It was noted that the 2020 budget and 2019 forecast are provisional and some amounts will be subject to change when presented to FSSC and Council.

Paper C2: A need has been identified to review the TOR and the roles of governing committees. A consistency between the TOR's of different committees needs to be achieved to provide greater clarity for budget setting. Clarity needs to be sought regarding whether a specific percentage of agreed overspend needs to be included in the TOR and budgets.

Action

A revised TOR to be brought to the next CSC meeting in September, which is to include specific clarification of overspend allowances and ways in which new projects can be introduced.

By Who

The General Secretary to arrange a meeting with Peter Butler, John Bentham and Sandra Turner to arrange standardizing the TORs across the CF

By when

Next CSC committee

A discussion took place concerning the possibility of a contingency budget, from which budget holders are able to draw-down funds. This would need to be carefully managed, and would require

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caps to be placed on existing budgets.

Recommendation

That the Finance Committee explores the possibility of the creation of a contingency fund, available to budget holders to drawdown funds when necessary, with the aim of taking it for sanctioning by Council for budgets in 2021/22.

Proposed: Nick Gleich

Seconded: Peter Damon

Agreed: Unanimous

The Financial Controller confirmed that much insight can be gained by studying the budget data, and items can be drilled-down to give more detailed information. He stated that he welcomed questions from committee members, either by email if they need a detailed response, or via the committee as appropriate.

There was some general discussion around budgets, which included the following points:

- Financial provisions need to be made for the longer term, whilst at the same time managing the balance between income and expenditure
- Taking funds from reserves reduces the amount of interest for future investment, so requires careful management.
- Using funds from reserves and closed churches is not a long term strategy.

The group also welcomed the overall budget picture that was provided at the training in future budget papers

Action

Overall budget for CF to be part of the presented budget papers for CSC

By who

Financial Controller

By when

Next CSC in September

GB was thanked for his time at Committee meeting and running the trainin day

GB left the meeting

Paper C3 (tabled)

The committee was reminded that Mission and Ministry boxes were available for them to take back to their Areas, and were encourage to promote collections for the Mission and Ministry fund at their meetings and churches. This prompted much discussion about the fund, including the following:

- Do we need to increase promotion about what the Ministry and Mission Fund is for, including updating the content on the CF website.
- 40% of donations go to CWM.
- There is some confusion among churches about donations, fees and funds that they are asked to contribute to. It should be made clear what is required and what the funding is used for, to avoid confusion. Could a single payment be made, and then divided appropriately by the CF?
- CWM needs to be promoted more widely as our mission organisation, as some people are unaware of who they are and what they do.
- Donations from churches have dropped significantly. These feed into the grand fund, along with a small amount from closed churches. Information needs to be shared so that churches are aware that if the funds are not continuously built up, then no grants can be offered. Grants have never yet been refused on the grounds that funds are not available, however,

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this is a real concern for the future.

- It was confirmed that individual churches are welcome to make donations, they do not need to come via the area.
- The committee was reminded that Treasurers can get in touch with the Nottingham office directly if they are experiencing any difficulties in making payments.
- Some funds from 2018 have not yet been paid in.

Action

The General Secretary will send a letter to Churches and Areas to clarify the purpose of the Mission and Ministry Fund, and ensure that it is more prominently promoted on the CF website. Area reps should also help to share this message within their Areas.

By who

General Secretary and Website Manager

By when

Asap

Action

Church Support Team to produce a summary document of grants awarded in the past and how funds have been used to help promote the need for donations. This will also remind churches of what they have received as well as what they have donated.

By who

Church Support Workers

By when

For next meeting in September

7. Area Representative Reports

Reports had been circulated and read prior to the meeting. The Chair thanked the Area Representatives for their reports and commended the reports as being very informative. Members were invited to comment or ask Area Representatives questions on their reports.

In the following sections, only matters that were emphasised by the Area Representatives, or that raised particular comments from members, are noted.

Scotland (Paper D1)

May-Kane Logan represented the Scottish Federation in the absence of Lee Rayner. She highlighted the fantastic work taking place locally, with a successful Breathing Space event and training weekend. The GIFT course being held in Dundee is almost complete.

It was noted that Susan and John Durham have stepped down from Church Support Committee Representatives and we thank them for their contribution.

Wales (Paper D2)

The Area report was compiled from a report by Area Worker, Sara Iles. The Area is extremely grateful for the support offered by Sara, and is currently looking for grants and funding to ensure this support can continue in the future.

A booklet entitled 'Reflections' by Geoff Cable from Rhosgoch chapel was shown to the group as an example of support they had received from a starter grant.

East Midlands (Paper D3)

Several churches that had been experiencing difficulties are now moving on with support. Another church which was closed is now in the process of reopening, being aided by the Area.

Eastern (Paper D4)

Four churches have closed in the past few years, but the Area are keen to plant new churches. It has been recommended to Council that Ipswich St Clements is relocated to an area where new housing estates are being built, which may also open up opportunities for Pioneer Ministries. There

Chair Agreed

is also a church plant taking place in Leicestershire, which is being supported by the Church Support Workers and also the East Midlands Area.

North East (Paper C5)

Stanley Zion church in Wakefield had not engaged with the CF, but a visit from the Area Rep and Church Support Worker proved successful, and they are now engaging and will host the Area assembly.

North West (Paper D6)

Rob Cross is the new Minister at Buxworth, Brierley Green. He is keen to carry out some training through CIPT in the future. The Church Support Worker has already visited the Church, and the General Secretary has also arranged a visit.

North West Midlands (Paper D7)

Good work is being achieved in the area with support from the Church Support Workers, Area Worker and Area Rep.

South East (Paper D8)

In addition to the report presented, it was noted that Anchor, Wandsworth is in a period of change as the minister is moving to East Ham in September. The church is seeking a new Minister but also exploring other possibilities.

The Church Support team have visited a number of churches working with the area worker.

South West (Paper D9)

The report shows that those churches that accept support do well and are holding successful events such as Vision Days and Breathing Space events. Those which do not engage with support appear to do less well. There was concern that some churches see the offer of support as interference, and therefore we need to promote the fact that churches may struggle if they do not access the support available. We also welcomed Ruth as the new representative and thank Jim Parsons for his contribution.

South West Midlands (Paper D10)

The Area Rep expressed his appreciation of the involvement of the Church Support Workers and the work they have carried out in the Area. He commented that he found producing the CSC report useful in reconnecting with churches and improving the bonds within the CF. Concern was raised that one particular church had suggested sending some of its ministers outside of the CF for training. This will be followed up by the Area Rep and Learning & Development Manager, to find out why our courses might not be attractive to them, and how we can best support them.

Other Churches in Scotland (Paper D11)

No report was submitted

Concern was raised as to whether there was a GDPR issue with sharing reports between Areas. It was confirmed that the reports only come to the CSC meeting and are stored in a secure area of the website. Minutes that are more widely shared have any sensitive information removed or anonymized as appropriate.

Recommendation:

All reports to be submitted the General Secretary. She will with the CST produce a summary report to feedback to the meeting. CSC will then assist in identifying trends and needs, to help prioritise actions and guidance and direct the work of the Church Support Team. A new style of agenda will be used for the next CSC meeting to assist with this process. The committee was reminded that in order for this process to be effective, reports will need to be submitted earlier and deadlines will need to be adhered to, along with a commitment made to attend all meetings. A timely reminder will

Chair Agreed

be emailed to all Area reps before the deadline for submitting reports.

Proposed: Nick Gleich

Seconded: Colin Brown

Agreed: 11

Abstained: 1

8 Church Support Team (Section E)

8.1 Church Support Workers (Paper E1)

The Lent Reflections have been very well received and feedback has been positive.

After the last committee meeting a Children and Youth Group has been set up and will meet regularly through the year. They have produced an action plan and have a focus initially to support those who work with children and young people. The database of children and youth groups and contacts is currently being updated to fall in line with GDPR guidelines.

The report contained an update on the grants awarded in September. 3 have started and 2 are pending.

Recommendation

A proposed time limit of six months is suggested for churches who have been awarded grants to meet all the conditions and draw-down the funds. If this time limit is exceeded the funds will be returned to the grants fund. The church is welcome to reapply in the future, subject to funds still being available. This information should be included on the application form, and churches with grants pending will be written to informing them of this change. This is dependent on individual circumstances and each case will be reviewed by the Grants Group.

Proposed: Peter Butler

Seconded: Alan Kennedy

Agreed: Unanimous

8.2 Website and Social Media Officer (Paper E2)

Positive remarks were made about the feedback on 'A Secluded Place', which had been included in the report. Many find the reflections useful and it is encouraging to others to share their Christian faith.

Comments were made that items on the CF website can become out of date quite quickly and we need to ensure that old items are removed and new items are easy to find. It was also noted that the 'search' facility is not always useful.

It was suggested that all emails have 'Congregational Federation' somewhere in the subject line, as when they are sent by individual members of staff they may be missed or deleted in error.

It was requested that the link to the Resources Hub is made more prominent on the CF website, as some committee members were unsure of how to access it. It was suggested that the Resources Hub may require further promotion to ensure it is more widely accessed.

Action

- **Promote theresourcehub.co.uk in churches and areas**
- **Ensure emails are sent from Secretarial or Congregational Federation not named staff**
- **Review the website news and search facility**

By who

General Secretary to work with the Website and Social Media Officer

By when

Asap

8.3 Safeguarding Officer (Paper E3)

It was confirmed that there had been no applications for Disclosure Funding (discretionary funding for churches in financial difficulty that need to apply for a number of DBS checks at one time).

Chair Agreed

Recommendation

In her absence, the Safeguarding Officer, through the General Secretary, proposed that training for Safeguarding Checkers is taken via an online course rather than a annual yearly face to face training. This will provide the checkers with a recognised safeguarding qualification and is more efficient in resources and time. It is suggested that Checkers take options 1,2 and 4 of the courses outlined in paper E3, and CF staff take option 3 and 4. Checkers will be able to feed back on the course and then make recommendations for future training for churches.

Proposed: Ian Jones

Seconded: Joy Leathers

Agreed: Unanimous

8.4 Learning and Development Manager (Papers E4-E8)

Recommendation

The Learning and Development Manager requested that the CIPT Vision statement for 2020 (Paper E4) be accepted by CSC. He confirmed that this vision statement was prepared with the inclusion of the student voice. The Chair of the Accreditation Group requested that approval by the Accreditation Group be removed from the proposal as, although she was in favour, she was unable to speak on behalf the whole group.

Proposed:

Seconded: Peter Butler

Agreed: Unanimous

The vision statement contains the proposal to close the BA (Hons) programme, which has already been approved by the CIPT Management Board. The reasoning for this is that cohort sizes are extremely low, and there is no interest from those completing their Foundation degree this year. These numbers not only reduce the student experience, but make the course non cost-effective, as the fees for validation are high, and are fixed regardless of the number of students. The BA (Hons) is not required for CF accreditation and the Life Learning programme has proved more popular and very effective. The academic material and resources at this level are of a very high quality and could be used more widely in a number of different ways both within the CF and beyond, for example being rebranded and marketed as a series of 'Summer Schools'. This recommendation was met with enthusiasm from the committee.

In addition it is further proposed that any financial saving made by closing the BA (Hons) programme be retained by CIPT for the purpose of reinvesting in and launching new programmes.

Recommendation: To close the BA (Hons) programme and find new initiatives to make more widespread use of existing materials.

Proposed: May-Kane Logan

Seconded: Joy Leathers

Agreed: Unanimous

Recommendation: That any funds saved by the closure of the BA(Hons) programme be retained by CIPT for reinvesting in new initiatives.

Proposed: Nick Gleich

Seconded: May-Kane Logan

Agreed: Unanimous

There has been strong interest in continuing ministerial development regional day conferences (Paper E8). These will be regional rather than Area-based in order to make them more widely accessible.

Action: Members were asked to provide details to the Learning and Development Manager of any churches within their Areas, that are good conference-style venues and have good general facilities. Learning and Development Manager to contact committee members with requirements such as

Chair Agreed

capacity and facility needs.

By who

Committee Area Representative

By when

asap

Feedback was requested on the Ministry to Yourself booklet (paper E7). If feedback is positive we will consider having it professionally published.

10. CIPT Management Board (Paper F)

The Chair of CIPTMB reminded the committee that the purpose of the Management Board is to provide scrutiny and be a 'critical friend' to CIPT. He reassured the members that appropriate quality process are in place within CIPT.

11. Children and Youth Group (Paper G)

A paper outlining 9 short-term goals for the group was tabled at the meeting. These goals were established at a meeting held earlier in the year. The action plan to be implemented is still a work in progress.

The meeting was informed Big Church Day out are offering some free youth places this year, as Soul Survivor has been dissolved. This will give young people the opportunity to try the festival to see if they would like to attend in future years.

The Youth and Children's group will select a suitable candidate to represent the CF at the CWM Assembly in 2020.

The committee members were asked to encourage churches and Areas to keep Youth and Children as a permanent item on their agendas.

12. Inter Church Board (paper H)

ICB will meet in May before the Assembly to discuss the bodies and representation we have within the Congregational Federation.

The ICB chair has recently attended a Churches Together in England meeting. The Free Churches Group and Wesleyan Reform Union have both recently joined Churches Together in England and have a very Congregational approach. The Church of England is currently working on a project called 'Living in Loving Faith', which is researching difference in faith, such as same-sex relationships.

The ICB Rep reported that attendees at the Churches Together meeting had been encouraged to request an increase in financial contributions of 10%. Ecumenical funding from C of E has been reduced, which is having an impact on other churches and denominations, with some Ecumenical Officers being made redundant.

Action:

Write expressing our concern for the current circumstances.

By who

The General Secretary

By when

Asap

13. Accreditation Group (Paper I)

Area interviews have taken place, there are no recommendations to be made at this stage, as all interviewees have yet to complete their training.

National Interviews have taken place, and the Accreditation Group are pleased to recommend the following:

Sian Lampard – Chaplain

Sue Rayner – Minister and Chaplain

Ruth Leeming – Minister

Chair Agreed

Audrey Lee – Minister

Proposed: Barbara Bridges

Seconded: May-Kane Logan

Agreed: Unanimous

Action:

Write to all of above confirming the recommendation.

By Who

Chair of the Accreditation group

By when

Week commencing 25th March 2019

14. Communications Group, Including Congregational Conference (Paper J)

There have been no meetings or reports from the Communications Group due to Sandra acting as Interim Chair of Council, so work undertaken by the group is currently pending.

Feedback regarding the Congregationalist has been received, but work on this project is on hold until such time as a full review can take place. David Kinchin (Editor) has been informed.

No progress has been made in planning a CF Conference, and it is suggested that the working group for this is integrated into the work of the Communications Group once they are active again.

15. Grants (Paper K)

Several Impact Grant applications had been submitted and reviewed by the working group delegated to undertake this work. The following grants had been discussed. The summary of applications, as presented in the papers, was presented to the full CSC for final approval. It was decided that the eligibility criteria will be published with the grant papers prior to the meeting.

The following were proposed by the Grants working group:

Bow (Paper K1):

£19,000 over 3 years to help fund a new Minister

It was confirmed that CSC cannot influence who they appoint, but the successful applicant will need to engage with CIPT training if they are not already accredited.

Seconded: Alan Kennedy

Agreed: Unanimous.

Blaenavon (Paper K2):

£21,000 over 3 years to help fund an outreach leader.

It was confirmed that the Area report has been received and the safeguarding certificate is now in place.

Seconded: Colin Brown

Agreed: Unanimous.

Oldham – Springhead (Paper K3):

£17,500 over 3 years to help fund a Project worker and full time Ministry.

It was confirmed that the church has engaged with support from the Area Worker.

The circumstances were clarified in that the current minister is retiring after a period of agreeing to work part-time. The savings made here will be used to top up the grant to employ a full-time minister. Higher funding was requested in year 1 to support the employment of a Project Worker alongside the minister. Longer term plans have been put in place for when funding ends.

Seconded: Joy Leathers

Agreed: 10

Against: 1

Chair Agreed

Abstained: 1

Neath – New Maria (Paper K 4):

£23,900 over 3 years to help fund Ministry including Minister training.

The recommendation is that this application is not approved at this time, as clarity sought over how a large proportion of the grant was to be specifically used had not been provided. There had been no engagement with Church Support Workers regarding the content of the initial application before it was received, and to date no application for training has been received by CIPT.

It is recommended that a new application is made once these issues can be clarified and more detail as to the specific use of funds can be provided.

Agreed: 11

Abstained: 1

Caterham:

It was noted that the application did not meet the eligibility criteria. A safeguarding visit is now planned, but the grant cannot be approved until the certificate is in place and other eligibility criteria have been met. Grant was for assistant job club manager.

Impact grants totaling £57,500 have been approved.

16. CWM MSP4 (Paper L)

A summary sheet for the planned application of an MSP4 grant of £79,000 from CWM was tabled but the full application had been available online.

The Consultation we completed with the CWM European Coordinator identified 3 areas of focus:

- Discipleship
- Listening to our community
- Call to Action

This is a large piece of work which includes a vacancy for a Project Leader for a 15 month period at the beginning of the 3 year project, to take the work forward and set up the new initiatives.

The draft application has been viewed by CWM, and a few minor amendments made.

The aim of the project is

“In 3 years all churches in the Congregational Federation will be directly involved in contextual and relevant missional activities.”

The committee recommended rewording the aim of the project from ‘all churches will...’ with ‘give all churches the opportunity..., as there will be some churches that may not engage with the project.

Recommendation:

To submit the grant application for CWM MSP4 project as outlined above.

Proposed: Yvonne Campbell

Seconded: Nick Gleich

Agreed: Unanimous

11. AOB

Peter Young raised concern regarding the lack of promotion and communication around the publications we hold. He suggested that the issue of publications as a whole needs to be reviewed and a strategy implemented. It was suggested that either CIPT or the Communications Group take the lead on this. It was felt that it was more appropriate for the Communications Group to lead on it, and it will be an item on the agenda when they next meet.

Action

Publications and issued raised to be discussed by Communications Group

By who

Communications Group Chair

Chair Agreed

By when

As soon as Communications group meet again

Johnny O'Hanlon has received a call to ministry with the URC and will beginning his training and new role in September. He thanked the committee and the reps for the welcome he had received in churches in their Areas. Thanks and congratulations were offered to Johnny.

20. Date of Next Meeting

The CSC will next meet on 21st September 2019

21. Closing Prayer

The Chair of CSC led the members in prayer.