

**Church Support Committee Minutes****Time:** 10.30am – 2.30pm**Date:** Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2022**Location:** Hybrid meeting in person and Zoom**Attendees:**

Barbara Bridges  
 Eric Fenwick (Zoom)  
 Colin Brown (Zoom)  
 Steve Richards  
 Margaret McGuiness (Zoom)  
 Anna Lachowski (Zoom)  
 Ian Jones (Zoom)  
 Keith Bradley (Zoom)  
 Alan Kennedy  
 Hillary Biggin (Zoom)  
 Peter Young  
 Joy Howell  
 Steve Gill (Zoom)

**Representing:**

(Acting Chair) Chair APCC Group  
 Chair of Communications Group  
 CF in Wales  
 CF in Wales  
 CF in Scotland  
 East Midlands Area  
 Eastern  
 North East Area  
 North West Area/ICB Chair  
 North West Midlands  
 South East Area  
 South West Midlands Area  
 South West Area

**Staff:**

Yvonne Campbell    General Secretary  
 Maddy Varley        L & D Administrator / Minutes  
 Lisa Vickers          Safeguarding Officer (Zoom)  
 Luzia Watt            Church Support Worker (Zoom)

**Apologies:**

Neil Chappell        Website and Social Media Officer  
 Nick Gleich          Chair of CIPT Management Board  
 Oliver Kinchin        President elect  
 Suzanne Nockels     Past President  
 Barry Osborne        East Midlands Area  
 Mark Taylor          President

**Abbreviations:**

APCCG            Accreditation and Pastoral Care Coordinator Group  
 CC                Congregational Church  
 CF                Congregational Federation  
 CIPT MB         Congregational Institute of Practical Theology Management Board  
 CSC              Church Support Committee  
 CSW              Church Support Worker  
 FX                Fresh Expressions

**1. Opening devotions**

The Chair welcomed committee members to the meeting. She confirmed that she was acting as Chair and that the role of Chair was still currently vacant and needing to be filled.

The absence of Walter was acknowledged along with recognition of the work he had done. A Minutes' silence was held in his memory.

The Chair opened the meeting with a reading from Psalm 121 and a prayer.

**2. Apologies**

As noted above.

**3. Minutes of Last Meeting (26<sup>th</sup> March 2022) Paper B**

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

**4. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**

- It was confirmed that the Robinsons Trust and Christian Aid are both still seeking representatives from the CF. All the details are available on the CF website.

**Action** – Share opportunity sheet with Area

**By who** – Area representatives

**By when** – next Assembly meeting or communication

- A Doodle poll regarding the Praying Together paper had been circulated, however there were no responses or interest shown and therefore has not been actioned.
- Legacies of Slavery – Union Chapel are holding an event on 12<sup>th</sup> October which is open to all. Details will be circulated.
- A fact sheet with energy saving tips for churches has been created and is available on the CF website, along with two posters that can be displayed. They are on the committee page and on the website.

**Action** – Share news with Area

**By who** – Area representatives

**By when** – next Assembly meeting or communication

- It was confirmed that churches are included in the six-month government energy help scheme. Churches are being encouraged to open as ‘warm spaces’ during the colder months and funding is available to support this. Many local councils are coordinating this with a whole community approach, so that one venue is available every day. If a church is planning this as a new project, they may be eligible to apply for a starter grant.
- Asda and Co-op are offering food grants to support community projects.
- The Children and Youth section of the website has been updated and has lots of practical resources to use with groups and for community action etc.
- The next issue of Refresh will be available from 24<sup>th</sup> October.

## 5. Notice of Any Other Business

CMD grants

## 6. Chair of Church Support Committee

The General Secretary has approached several people regarding the role of Chair of CSC, but all have fallen through for a variety of reasons. The role is therefore still vacant, and urgently needs to be filled. The committee were asked to take this back to their Areas again to ask for volunteers. The Chair led the committee in prayer regarding the current vacancies that need to be filled.

The CSC is usually represented at Council by the Chair. It was suggested that Barbara Bridges was the rep on this occasion, to which she agreed if she was available. If not, CSC will be represented by the General Secretary and North West Midlands rep as they are already due to attend the Council meeting.

**Action-** Inform Chair of Council for permission

**By who** – General Secretary

**By when** – asap

## 7. Christian Aid

Our fundraising target for the Christian Aid Coffee to Cocoa appeal is £11,500. The latest figures show that we have raised under £2000 so far. The General Secretary has confirmed with Christian Aid that we are not obliged to deliver the full £11,500 and they will gratefully receive whatever donation we are able to raise. Committee members were asked to encourage churches in their Areas to continue fundraising and donating.

A CF Anniversary quiz is being run by Mark Taylor the President on 14<sup>th</sup> October to encourage donations. The aim is for each church to donate £50.

**Action** – Share news with Area

**By who** – Area representatives

**By when** – next Assembly meeting or communication

#### 8. Accreditation and Pastoral Care Group – Paper C

The APCCG report had been circulated prior to the meeting and there were no questions about this.

It has recently become apparent that there is some confusion regarding Accreditation among the student body. This is likely to be as a result of online teaching during the pandemic, meaning that additional sessions with Accreditation reps were not held. Measures to correct this are being put in place, and clarity has been provided where there were queries.

The APCCG rep confirmed that the accreditation process is not part of the training programme but runs alongside it. The onus is on the candidate to take the lead with initiating the process. Queries should be directed to the Area APCCG reps or Chair.

The APCCG Chair is approaching the end of her three-year term, therefore a new Chair is sought for the group.

Post meeting note – A review of the Accreditation process will take place

#### 9. CIPT Management Board – Paper D

The Chair of the CIPT Management Board was not present at the meeting. His report had been circulated in advance and there were no questions about this.

Ruth Green was the CSC rep on the CIPT Management Board. As she has now stepped down as Area rep a new rep from the Committee is sought. Requirement is for attendance at two online meetings per year. Anyone interested in representing CSC at the CIPT Management Board should contact the Learning and Development Administrator.

**Action** – include opportunity on paper being prepared

**By who** – General Secretary

**By when** – asap

**Action** – Share news with Area

**By who** – Area representatives

**By when** – next Assembly meeting or communication

#### 10. Inter Church Board – Paper E

The report was circulated prior to the meeting. A question was asked about the ICF meeting at the end of July 2023 which is to be held in Fiji. UK delegates were disappointed that this was not being held in New England, as had been previously proposed.

After some negotiations the ICB rep is now leading a steering group planning an educational trip to New England for British delegates in 2024. More details will follow in due course.

A question also asked about the Free Churches Group and the Prison Awareness course. The General Secretary explained about it was being organised by the Welcome Directory which offers

a list for people leaving prison to find a church that will be both welcoming and supportive for them. They are now offering an online Prison Awareness course for people from faith communities who want to learn more about welcoming people who are ex-prisoners. The General Secretary has signed up for the course and will feedback on its suitability. It may also be useful for those working in or considering prison chaplaincy.

## 11. CWM

CWM have a new General Secretary who has been in post for approximately 18 months. There are still lots of vacancies within CWM, including European Secretary. Due to these changes in staffing some programmes have been dissolved, however the E-dare webinars are still taking place. Information is on the website and committee page.

**Action** – Share news with Area

**By who** – Area representatives

**By when** – next Assembly meeting or communication

It has been agreed with CWM that remaining MSP3 funds can be merged to the MSP4 funds. CF had advertised several times for the Discipleship worker role, but have not been able to appoint, therefore these funds have not yet been used and there is significant funding available. If anyone is interested in moving this forward, please contact the General Secretary as funds can be used towards this.

The report from Nigel Lindsay on his mission in Grenada was shared prior to the meeting and there were no questions about this. There is a webinar – in conversation with Nigel on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October and a poster advertising the event has been sent to churches.

**Action** – Share news with Area

**By who** – Area representatives

**By when** – asap before 16<sup>th</sup> October

The Church Support Worker confirmed she was in talks with Nigel about ways to support his mission, and a potential trip to Grenada in September 2023. This is still in discussion and updates will be provided in due course.

**Post meeting note:** CWM If Only project concluded by sending out to churches 139 packs (39 each of Pioneer and Spiritual Enabling, 31 improving online presence and 30 making use of buildings).

## 12. Budget Papers – Paper G

The Financial Controller and Finance team were thanked for preparing the accounts.

The committee were reminded that 100% of Ministry and Mission funds are now donated to internal funds and provide income for grants. The North West Area was thanked for their generous donation. Donations for CWM need to be clearly stated as such and it was confirmed that CF also offer support to CWM in other ways.

The grant fund currently holds £113,000. There have been no applications for impact grants to bring to this meeting, but it is expected that there will be some applications to bring to the spring meeting.

There are funds available, and Area Reps are asked to remind churches to apply;

Starter grants of £400 are available for new mission projects, reducing the financial risk for churches and mini grants of £100 are available for children and youth work eg replenishing art and craft resources, gifts for children and replacing equipment.

Churches that have received a grant are encouraged to provide photos and feedback of how they have utilized the funds.

The General Secretary talked through the main budget papers and highlighted several areas where there were significant changes between forecast and actual spend in the half year to date. It was noted that it would be useful to have the previous half-year accounts for comparison.

Meeting costs were significantly lower due to the number of hybrid meetings taking place, however the original forecast remains in place in case in 2023 as there is a greater return to more face to face meetings.

There has been a significant investment in safeguarding, including training, the historic case review and retaining funds for ministers counselling services.

The General Secretary confirmed that the remaining funds from MSP3 and 4 will be merged into one fund.

The Committee were reminded that the consultancy fund is still available for work supporting churches where the required expertise is not available internally. This fund is made up from the saving from the two full time Church Support Worker posts that have been reduced to one part time post.

In response to feedback from CSC, Council have agreed in principle to support a new fund offering grants to ministers towards the cost of travel to CF events where cost is a barrier to attendance. This is potentially a substantial investment, and the details are likely to be confirmed later in the autumn.

### **13. Impact Grants – Paper H**

An application for an impact grant has been received, however there was information missing from the application and therefore it cannot be recommended for this meeting. It will be brought to the spring CSC meeting.

There are several churches that have expressed interest in impact grants, and it is hoped that more applications will be presented at the next meeting.

Some grant reports were received. There was some discussion around continuing support for churches after they have received grants, as the implementation of new projects can require a period of adjustment and tensions can sometimes arise. It was confirmed that grant applications for projects should follow agreement at a church meeting and that the purpose of a grant is to help the church manage the financial risk involved in embarking on a new project.

The General Secretary will arrange a visit to the church outlined in the example presented to the committee.

**Action** – Visit to church noted

**By who** – General Secretary

**By when** – before next meeting

#### **14. Area Reports, a joy and a challenge – Paper I**

Area reports were submitted in advance and Area Reps were invited to share a joy and a challenge with the Committee.

##### **North West Midlands**

The Rea Valley churches of Marton, Minsterley and Pontesbury are working well together and joining together for worship one Sunday per month. They are working strongly together which has given all three churches an uplift.

Ladypool Road is including readings in services in three different languages to accommodate its evolving congregation.

The Area as a whole has felt quite disjointed, but the reports indicate that all churches are doing well, which is uplifting.

##### **East Midlands Area**

There are lots of positives in the Area with projects re-opening, and new projects such as warm spaces starting up.

There has been a challenge in recruiting a new Area Secretary, and the role currently remains vacant.

Some larger churches have struggled to re-open post covid and are only meeting in person twice per month.

##### **CF in Wales**

Only three responses for reports from churches were received by the Area rep.

Haverfordwest has a new minister from America starting in 2023. He is very enthusiastic, and the church are looking forward to him starting.

The church also recently held a joint event with other local churches celebrating the bicentenary of the maker of the organ in the church. This included an organ concert and the opportunity for new musicians to play the organ.

Bethesda Congregational Chapel have hosted a Brazilian ministry team who have been very active in the church and community. Their organist has retired at the age of 93!

##### **South East Area**

A number of church members are hosting Ukrainian refugees and are sharing the gospel with them. Support is being offered to both refugees and hosts.

It is a joy to be able to keep in contact with other churches.

It has been challenging to recruit Area officers and an APCCG rep. Churches also have vacancies for secretaries and treasurers etc, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit for these roles.

##### **Eastern Area**

The Area have recently met on Zoom for the first time in several years.

Sadly, Thundersley has chosen to leave the CF, however two others have applied to join.

Some members are hosting Ukrainian refugees, however the promised government funding has been delayed, which has been challenging.

### **South West Midlands**

The Area have not been meeting and it is very difficult recruiting officers within the Area. Churches have been engaging well with their local communities which is very positive.

### **North East Area**

A Challenge has been that there is currently no Area Chair, however the Secretary has stepped up temporarily and is doing a very good job.

Some of the older generation have not yet returned to services following covid. Some churches have been struggling with this, but others have seen increased attendance.

The summer gathering in Scarborough was well attended and was a very successful event.

Pickering has reopened a house church and is welcoming new attendees.

One church has welcomed a Ukrainian refugee family.

There is a good team carrying out pastoral care who are doing good work and sharing the load.

### **North West Area**

The Chair was welcomed into the North West Area following her recent move!

The Area had provided a generous grant to each church to support them during Covid. There are plans to repeat this grant to support churches with their energy bills.

The Area has advertised for a Youth and Children's Worker and Church Support Worker.

There has been an appeal for volunteers for various Area positions including Area Chair.

### **CF in Scotland**

Churches are working well, but there appears to be a lack of communication and working together.

Information from CF is always appreciated, however there is often a difficulty in getting people involved.

The online service delivered each week by Tom Bonnar has been very well received.

### **Church Support Team (Paper J)**

The Area reports have generated themes for the Church Support Team to focus on over the next six months.

The General Secretary highlighted the positive nature of the reports and particularly emphasized the number of new ideas and projects and growth.

The themes for the Church Support Team to work on are:

- Growth in churches – new projects and members

- Vacancies, both for ministry and church/Area roles
- Finance to support churches with projects
- Buildings – a number of churches are considering big projects that require support
- Safeguarding
- Support for Ukrainian refugees and host families

The General Secretary confirmed that the Communications Group and Refresh publishers have designed professional generic posters that can be used by churches to promote events with a consistent image. The posters will be easy to use and professionally printed by contacting the publishing company with the text to be included, who will then provide a quote for printing. Details will be forwarded.

### **Church Support Worker (Paper J1)**

The Church Support Worker has begun organization of a children's 'weekend away with Jesus' at Pine Lakes on 10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> February 2023. This will combine lots of outdoor activities with learning about Jesus. Area reps are asked to promote this within their Areas.

The CSW is in discussion with Nigel Lindsay, potentially planning a future trip to Grenada to help support his mission work there in the future.

There are two safeguarding training sessions planned for Youth and Children's workers for January and March.

Over the summer the CSW visited Brazil and worked with local churches there to support mission work with children from very deprived backgrounds. She hopes to take a CF group to deliver mission work in Brazil at some point in the future.

### **Website and social media (Paper J2)**

The Website and Social Media Officer was not present at the meeting. His report had been circulated in advance to the committee. There were no questions relating to this report.

The Committee were reminded that the Resource Hub is the ideal place to find useful resources for ministry and projects. Pre-recorded sermons are currently being collated and will be uploaded with instructions for use in due course. Committee members were asked to encourage churches to make good use of these free resources.

The book of 50 Bible reflections is currently at the publishers and should be available next month. The General Secretary thanked everyone who has contributed to this.

### **Safeguarding (Papers J3, J3a, J3b)**

Safeguarding Sunday takes place on 20<sup>th</sup> November, which is a campaign from 31:8 to raise awareness and encourage safeguarding. The President and Past President are producing a resource to run alongside this, and the General Secretary has been involved in the safeguarding prayer.

Lots of churches have recently applied for their safeguarding certificates and new guides and resources have been produced to assist them.

It was confirmed that the terms Designated Safeguarding Person, Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Coordinator all relate to the same role of having an overview of all safeguarding within the church. The Protection Verifier has responsibility for the administration of safeguarding within the church/Area.



**Action:** The policy to be changed to use the term designated safeguarding lead throughout the safeguarding policy for consistency

**By who** – Safeguarding officer

**By when** - asap

From 2023 churches must have a safeguarding certificate in place to remain affiliated to the CF. It is now also a government recommendation that all faith institutions engage with safeguarding. A beginner's guide leaflet has been created and is available. Area reps requested a list of the safeguarding status of churches within their Area so they can assist with encouraging engagement.

**Action:** Area reps to receive a list of the Safeguarding status of churches within their Area.

**By who** – Safeguarding Officer

**By when** - asap

### **Learning and Development (Paper J4)**

The Learning and Development report was circulated in advance and there were no questions about this.

The General Secretary thanked the L&D Administrator and the Church Support Team for working together through the difficult time following the death of the L&D Manager.

Council have agreed to recruit for the role of L&D Manager and a working group has been set up to manage the recruitment process.

Members of the committee offered to support the Church Support Team in any way they can.

### **AOB**

#### **CMD Grants**

Following suggestions that arose from previous CSC meetings, The General Secretary and (late) L&D Manager had been working on a proposal for grants to support CMD. The proposal is for a grant of £300 every two years for all active ministers on the accredited roll who have complete safeguarding training. The funds could be used for any form of CMD, such as courses and conferences, books, retreats etc.

The proposal has been agreed in principle by Council and should be confirmed with more detail in the autumn.

This will be a substantial investment in CMD by the CF as there are currently 136 people in active ministry on the roll. However, the proposal mirrors schemes offered by other denominations such as URC and offers more encouragement and benefits to our ministers.

**Proposal:** £300 CMD grants to be available every two years, to those in active ministry on the accredited roll and who have completed safeguarding training.

**Agreed:** Unanimous

#### **Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March. This will be a Hybrid meeting.