

Agenda for Church Support Committee**Time:** 10.30am – 12.30pm**Date:** Saturday 26th September 2020**Location:** Zoom**Attendees:**

John Bentham
Eric Fenwick
Nick Gleich
Colin Brown
Steve Richards
Vacant
Anna Lachowski
Ian Jones
Keith Bradley
Alan Kennedy
Joy Leathers
Peter Young
Ruth Green

Representing:

Chair
Chair Communications Group
Chair CIPT MB/SW Midlands Area
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 Area

Staff:

Yvonne Campbell	General Secretary
Walter Riggans	L & D Manager
Neil Chappell	Website & Social Media Officer
Lisa Vickers	Safeguarding Officer
Maddy Varley	L & D Administrator / Minutes
Luzia Watt	Church Support Worker

Participant Observers:**Presidents:**

Janet Wootton	President
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Apologies:

Barbara Bridges	Accreditation and Pastoral Care Coordinator Group
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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

Opening devotions

The Chair welcomed committee members and thanked them for attending the virtual meeting. A particularly warm welcome was given to Luzia Watt as the new CSW.

The General Secretary showed a short video outlining the work of the Indian Evangelical Team, a mission charity working in India. We are encouraged to pray for this work and if churches wanted to make links with them that was possible.

The Chair led the Committee in prayer.

Apologies

Barbara Bridges, as noted above.

Minutes of Last Meeting (18th April 2020) Paper B

An amendment to the wording of Item 6 was requested to read 'Supports education for children of Ministers and Members of Congregational Churches'.

Matters arising not elsewhere on the Agenda

It was confirmed that Eric Fenwick has been appointed as Chair of the Communication Group and he was welcomed to the meeting.

Notice of Any Other Business

There were no notifications of AOB

Budget Papers Paper C

The current pandemic situation means that there are significant changes to the forecasted budget figures, due to changes in planned events and meetings, and working in different ways. Some budget lines will see reduced spend, where others will see increased expenditure.

Thanks to the Financial Controller for producing the papers and his report. The budget holders walked the committee through the papers highlighting lines that would see significant change. This including changes to the Y&C International line which will be carried over into 2021, reduced income for Ministry and Mission, reduced expenditure for meeting lines and available monies for local

pastoral training

It was also highlighted that the Ministerial Counselling Service offers vital support, the need for which is likely to increase throughout the pandemic, therefore the expenditure for this may increase as awareness is raised and the service is more widely used.

It was confirmed that details of this service have been emailed twice to ministers this year, but it would be useful for Area Reps to ensure that all ministers in their Area are aware of the service available.

Action: Area Reps to be sent the leaflet outlining the Ministerial Counseling Service. Area Reps to make available to all ministers.

By who Safeguarding Officer and Area representatives

By when ASAP

The Ministry and Mission donations are significantly down, which is to be expected as churches have not been able to meet, and income has reduced. The associated donation to CWM will reflect this shortfall.

Further to discussion in previous CSC meetings, it was confirmed that 60% of Ministry and Mission donations are made available for grants and 40% provides the donation to CWM. Any changes to these percentages would be a decision to be made by Council.

Action: Discussion with Finance Team if a church may donate only to the grants fund, without making a donation to CWM and check any decision made by Council in Nov 2019.

By who – General Secretary to discuss with Finance Team

By when – asap

Post Meeting Note: Minutes from the Council meeting of November 2019 state that: a decision on this issue has been deferred, and that the discussion of separation of the above funds be on the agenda of the next meeting of FSSC to review the ideas and report back to Council on the implications of making this change.

A question was asked about if any staff had been furloughed. It was confirmed that two members of staff were furloughed, and returned to work in September, therefore these salary costs will be reimbursed through the furlough scheme.

The Committee queried the information on the Mission and Ministry receipts page

Action: The Areas listed in the Ministry and Mission receipts in the Finance report require revision as Highbury and Bethel should both be listed as South East Area.

By who: **GS to speak to the Financial Controller**

By when: asap

- **Review of Impact Grants Situation**

Impact Grants have been paused, as agreed by Council, due to concern about how to replenish the grant income pot as there have been fewer closed churches. The maximum grant award has already been reduced to £15,000 over three years. There is now £76,000 available in the grant fund and a discussion took place whether the grant should be reinstated at the reduced rate leading to a proposal that this should be done.

Proposed: Nick Gleich

Seconded: Ian Jones

Agreed: Unanimous

Action – recommend to Council that the Impact Grant be reinstated for applications

By who – Chair of CSC

By when – November Council meeting

- **Impact Grant 12-month reports**

The 12-month annual Impact Grant reports from Springhead and Blaenavon have been delayed until next spring due to the pandemic.

Four starter and two mini grants have been awarded in recent months.

Area Representative Summary Report – Joys and Challenges from Areas Paper D

Many Areas have reported that churches have a much-reduced income and are struggling. Some fear closure. Many also raised concerns around property upkeep, particularly with churches being closed. Some ministers are experiencing personal financial difficulty.

A joy has been the recognition by many that “churches are not buildings”. This has led to a renewed reflection on church activities and positive mission. Many churches are offering lots of support within the community, which has the potential to increase church attendance in the future.

Some churches have found their online services have attracted people from further away than usual and have continued with online services for this reason. Some have offered online services alongside physical church services, but this has time and financial implications, so may not be sustainable.

Some churches have chosen not to offer online services and have engaged with their congregation and community in other ways, embracing the concept of ‘churches without walls’, using telephone, newsletters and paper-based services to maintain contact.

Overall, there is plenty of evidence of spiritual growth and there is excitement and enthusiasm about how church is changing.

We thanked Andy Cowie for the idea that has come from the churches in Aberdeen for a stewardship leaflet which has been written in draft ready for sending to all churches next month.

Thanks were given for the weekly IT support meetings that have been offered. There was some discussion on how although this was useful for those wanting to improve their skills and develop their use of technology, it may be too advanced for those who have no existing skills, but who would like to make use of technology within their church. It was advised that there is much support within communities, such as through local libraries, where basic support with technology for organizations is offered.

Some church members have completed online training courses on the use of technology and may be keen to share the knowledge they have gained with other local churches.

The role of Area Reps and Pastoral Care Coordinators has become even more important during the pandemic in maintaining contact with churches and offering advice in relation to COVID-related restrictions and the opening and activities of churches.

Therefore the key areas for the CST to work on include

- Loss of income – stewardship leaflet
- Overcoming fear of closure and ways to support
- Property upkeep
- Reaffirming churches are more than buildings
- Managing children and Family work
- Church Growth
- Help with IT equipment and training/ sharing skills

Church Support Team Papers E1 – E4

- **Church Support Worker**

The CSW outlined the projects she is currently working on, including the Mayflower Fest and Light Night Party, both being arranged as virtual events. These events received positive feedback from the Committee, and Area Reps were encouraged to ensure churches and families in their Areas are aware of the Light Night Party particularly.

- **Website and Social Media Officer**

Thanks was given for the Secluded Place reflections continuing throughout lockdown. The positive feedback demonstrated how well received the initiative has been. In response to this feedback the Advent reflections will start earlier than usual, beginning in November.

- **Safeguarding Officer**

Safeguarding visits have started to gradually resume. An updated sample church Safeguarding Policy was presented to the meeting. This is a more robust Policy, produced from collaborative working with Christian safeguarding charity Thirtyone:eight.

Churches that need a new Safeguarding Certificate who are in areas of local lockdown can work with the Safeguarding Officer to find ways to ensure this can be reissued.

As more churches are using online resources, online safeguarding issues were discussed. It was confirmed that for any work the church carries out, regardless of location or whether it is actual or virtual, it should be assumed that the Safeguarding Policy should be followed. Example social media policies are available from the Safeguarding Officer.

Meeting accepted the new policy and chair of CSCS to recommended to Council

Proposed: John Bentham

Seconded: Keith Bradley

Agreed: Unanimous

The previous pilot for online safeguarding training did not receive very positive feedback. A new training package has been sourced through Thirtyone:eight. Safeguarding checkers will complete this training, but it is felt that there is wider need for safeguarding training within churches, and it was proposed that those on the accredited roll should also take the training as well as deacons (trustees) and youth and children's workers.

Action: To share training recommendations with churches

By who: Church Support Team

By when: asap

Proposed: John Bentham

Seconded: Joy Leathers

Agreed: Unanimous

- **Learning and Development Manager**

There was discussion around training for accreditation for ministers who have a previous theological qualification, especially the length of time that it can take. Currently, exemptions may be offered for previous theological study which directly maps against modules offered by CIPT. It was pointed out that due to the method of delivery, university procedures and part time study for the course, it is not possible to completely customise any student's wishes.

Action: Discussion to take place with the Chair of the APCCG

By who: LDM and GS

By when: next meeting

Church Support Committee external representation

1. Sara Iles has volunteered as the CF representation on the Milton Mount Foundation. This recommendation was carried unanimously.

Action: Sara Iles new CF representative for Milton Mount Foundation

By who; GS to inform MMF and Sara Iles

By when – asap

2. The Robinson Charity is looking for a new CF representative. Area Reps should share this with churches so that a volunteer can be found.

Action – Information on the Robinsons Charities to be shared at next Area meetings

By who – Church Support Committee Representatives

By when – next area meeting

3. Thanks were given to Philip Clark, acknowledging his ten years of service as the CF representative for Christian Aid. The General Secretary will write offering formal thanks on behalf of the CF. A new representative is now required – Area Reps are to make churches aware so that a new volunteer can be found.

Action – Letter to be sent to Philip Clarke

By who – GS

By when – asap

Post meeting update: Joy Leathers has put her name forward as the new representative

Christian Aid Partnership

The £12,000 target for the Christian Aid No Lost Generation appeal has been reached. Thanks go to all churches and Areas for their fundraising efforts to achieve this.

There are now two new Christian Aid partnerships to consider supporting:

- **Malawi** – A project working to lift households out of extreme poverty. Any funds we raise will be 7x match-funded.
- **Kenya** – Support for orphans and vulnerable children. Donations will be x 19 match-funded.

In both cases, alongside fundraising we will be able to interact with the communities supported by the projects via Zoom.

The committee discussed both projects.

Recommendation: Support both projects for 12 months and split the funds raised equally between the two.

Proposed: Ruth Green

Seconded: Steve Richards

Agreed: Unanimous

After some discussion, including of the current financial difficulties for churches, the fundraising target was proposed as £6,000.

Proposed: Ruth Green

Seconded: Joy Leathers

Agreed: 7

Abstained: 3

CWM update

- **MSP4** Work on MSP4 is continuing smoothly. We have received our first installment and the steering group has begun work. The Project worker hopes to be in place in the new

year

- **Gift of Grace** A second grant as been written to CWM for a further £14,000 to assist churches affected by Covid-19. It is planned to divide this possibly into 14 or more parts, in order to give a significant grant to 14 churches. Comments on the bid are welcome.

World day of Prayer

Thanks were given to Beryl Cosens for her hard work around World Day of Prayer. Churches are encouraged to support World day of Prayer in whatever form they can.

Date of Next Meeting: 20th March 2021

The meeting was closed in prayer by the Chair.