

Minutes of the Council Meeting
13-14 July 2018
Nottingham

Present

Sandra Turner

Janet Wootton
Paul Davis
Martin Spain
Peter Butler
John Bentham
May-Kane Logan
Marion Kerr
Margaret McGuinness
Chris Gillham
Jill Stephens
Eric Fenwick
Stella Wallace-Tween
Betty Bentham
George Crossley
Hilary Biggin
Sue Wade
Paul Matthews

Representing

Acting Chair of Council
& South West
President Elect
Presidents Group
Prev. Past President
Chair of F&SS Comm.
Chair of C S Comm.
CF Scotland
CF Scotland
CF Scotland
CF Wales
CF Wales
Eastern
East Midlands
North East
North West
North West Midlands
South East
South West Midlands

Participant Observers

Yvonne Campbell General Secretary
Mark Tucker Operations Manager/
 CFL Company
 Secretary

Absent

Reiltin Hart CF-XTRA

Friday 13th July 2018

Opening Worship and reflections were led by the Martin Spain. This included readings from Hebrews chapter 10 and 2 Corinthians chapter 7.

Martin reflected on the question, what does God want? Rather than what do we want?

William Barclay said “Godly sorrow leads to repentance which brings us back to God”.

Session 1

1. Welcome and Introductions

A warm welcome was given to all attendees by Sandra Turner the Acting Chair of Council. Sandra specifically welcomed Paul Matthews representing the South West Midlands Area.

2. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

3. Introduction to the Format and Purpose of the Meeting

Acting Chair of Council stated that the purpose of the meeting was to share thoughts and feelings from the recent events. This was to be a safe space for honest, open discussion.

4. Group Reflections (1)

Discussion of the report from Collective Headspace along with the notes from the Round Table event at St. Katharine’s took place firstly in small groups.

Betty Bentham led a time of prayer and reflection.

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Further discussion of the report from Collective Headspace along with the notes from the Round Table event at St. Katharine's took place in medium groups.

Plenary from the first group reflections followed – what did the report say to us?

Three words were requested from each group these were:

- Planning
- Planning not challenged
- Challenge/Interrogate
- Review
- Communication was poor:
 - Churches
 - Staff
 - Each Other
 - Gagged
 - Trusteeship
- Openness
- Governance
- Hindsight

Prayers led by Paul Davis.

5. Group Reflections (2)

Assembly was discussed in small groups.

The evenings meeting closed with worship and prayer led by the Chair

Saturday 14th July 2018

Morning worship was led by Janet Wootton. This included readings from Isaiah 40 v 5 and Revelation 3. Janet shared, with prayers, about the delights and frustrations of home churches.

Session 2

6. Group Reflections (3)

Discussion and reflection took place on the responses initiated by Collective Headspace at Assembly firstly in small groups.

Martin Spain led worship and prayers based on Matthew chapter 5.

Further discussion and reflection took place on the responses from Assembly in medium groups.

Plenary from this group of discussions and reflections followed with (three word) points being feedback from the groups:

- Should we have a two day Delegate Assembly – a worship day & business day?
- Clarity and communications – professional minute takers and publish minutes publicly and quickly (not to undermine the minute takers at the

Chair agreed

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moment). Minutes then used to produce and action plan. Minutes that are reflective and include discussion points.

- Lots of pointers are in place in the documents – Truscott, Allen Report, Distinctive, Survey 2015.
- Therefore; good process to allow for a vision.
- Assembly numbers worked out to be 2.5 % of membership.
- Local and Area level need to take back responsibility and engage with churches.
- Commitment and engagement is needed not numbers.
- Genuine debate is needed in Council.
- Honest decision making.
- Respect each other.
- Mismatch of what CF centrally offer and what churches think or need.

Paul Davis led prayers based on Exodus 3 – did we need to have our attention grabbed by God?

7. Formal thanks to Margaret Morris

Eric Fenwick read an email he had written to Council to recognise Margaret's hard work and dedication.

Discussion took place about sending a vote of thanks to Margaret for all that she did as chair of council.

Council agreed to thank Margaret formally through a letter to Churches, through the website and the Congregationalist as follows.

“Council members would like acknowledge and thank Margaret Morris formally for all her hard work and dedication serving the Congregational Federation in many ways as Chair of Council for the past 3 years.”

8. Consideration of Apologies – to whom and for what?

Discussion took place, leading to the production of the following:

Statement:

Some actions that have been taken over the past 2 years have caused damage to the Congregational Federation.

As council we have tried to work with integrity; good intent; competence and credibility.

However we acknowledge that there has been hurt along the way and we are saddened by this.

Decision: This statement to be made public

Proposed: Sue Wade

Seconded: May-Kane Logan

Motion carried with one abstention

Action: General Secretary to arrange circulation of the statement when wording finalised by Council.

Timescale: ASAP

Chair agreed

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Discussion took place relating to HR matters during the period reviewed.

Mark Tucker stated HR advice was taken at every step of the way and that during the review he spoke with Sue Heatherington about the need to review governance as reflected in Collective Headspace's report. He noted the reviewers did not check the HR advice received, and had not spoken to our HR advisor during the review.

The meeting endorsed Mark Tucker and recorded their sincere thanks to him; noting all actions were taken with the upmost integrity on Council's behalf.

Proposed: Eric Fenwick

Seconded: Jill Stephens

Motion carried unanimously

Discussion took place regarding making minutes available on the website

Decision:

The summary sheet of Council Minutes in future to include that full minutes will be available on the website (Chair approved minutes only)

Action:

Chair of Council to include wording on all summary minutes of meetings.

Timescale: for all future minutes.

Motion carried unanimously

9. Where do we go from here (1)

9.1 Chair of Council

Yvonne Campbell clarified that there are three people who may be interested in being Chair of Council.

Discussion took place as to whether Council wants the process to take place. It was noted that having a Vice-Chair in the role of Chair is unconstitutional; therefore Council want to appoint an interim Chair. Sandra Turner was appointed Interim chair

Martin Spain concluded the discussion and stated that Council should communicate with the churches.

Council will be advertising the position of Chair of Council.

Decision:

The Interim Chair and Presidents Group will act will take forward letter to all churches.

Motion carried unanimously

9.2 Council Members

Decision: Chair of Council to contact all Areas to ask them to reaffirm

Chair agreed

who their representatives on all the Committees and Council within the Congregational Federation are.

Motion carried unanimously

10. Where do we go from here (2)

The review of structures and powers as per resolution and the remodeling of the Constitution was deferred to the November 2018 meeting of Council. Sandra asked all members to read and have as much knowledge and understanding as they can before the next meeting.

The following will be made available online for download:

- The Truscott Report
- Peter Allen Report
- Distinctive Report
- 2015 Survey results
- Collective Headspace Report

Sandra Turner closed the meeting with Worship and prayer.