

**General Assembly of Unitarian
& Free Christian Churches**

**Approved Minutes of Executive Committee
Friday 12th February 2016
Essex Hall, London**

Present: Robert Ince (Convenor), Marion Baker, Philip Colfox, Peter Hanley (Honorary Treasurer), Gwynn Pritchard, Jacky Woodman.

In Attendance: Rev John Clifford (General Assembly President), Dot Hewerdine (General Assembly President elect), Rev John Harley for Session 2 item 13, Rachel Skelton for Session 3 item 14 and 15, Derek McAuley (Chief Officer) and Mary-Jean Hennis (Minute taker).

Friday

Before the session began, the Convenor welcomed Dot Hewerdine to the EC Meeting.

Session 1

Opening Devotions: Philip read an extract from the Vision Document – and ended his devotion by saying “ The way to do something is to really believe it and really see it”.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Joan Cook and Rev Lynne Readett

2. Minutes of the meetings held on 11th & 12th January 2016 - (DOC EC19/16)

Approved with amendments -

page 5 item 18 – Vision Follow-up – “the movement stands at 3,000 to 5,000” was added).

page 7 item 23 - EC Link Reports – Welsh Districts – 5 February was corrected to 5 March.

page 9 – Closing devotions – “Writing Yourself” was corrected to “Righting Yourself”

The Minutes were signed as an accurate record of the EC meeting on 11th & 12th January 2016.

3. Matters arising for noting or to include in Agenda for later discussion:

- a) **Page 5 Item 13 – Legacy Management** – The Honorary Treasurer and Chief Officer met with the consultant, who had then submitted a proposal. It was agreed that further consideration was required..

- b) **Page 5 item 13 – Building Sustainability** – The Chief Officer met with Diane Evans and Linda Monkton from Historic England (previously part of English Heritage) and discussed a strategic assessment of our buildings. There is a two stage plan approach:
 - 1) A feasibility study of how a project may work and may be funded by Historic England.
 - 2) The second stage would be to bring forward a plan drawing upon several funders. .

The meeting was very positive and they are keen to work with us. It was agreed that the Building Advisory Panel should be included in any future discussions.

- c) **Page 7 item 22 – Chief Office’s Report (DOC EC16/16) – Ministerial Pension Fund** – It was agreed to appoint Joyce Ashworth, for a further term, and Marion Baker leaving a vacancy outstanding. John Clifford identified a possible candidate – **Action: The Chief Officer to inform MPF Secretary and pursue.**

4. EC Action List - (DOC EC20/16)

17/18 July 2015

Page 2 item 4.	EC bios – Updated 13/11/15 to be placed on website by next meeting	Actioned January – on the web-site on the Governance page with link to EC Minutes from 2012 – new EC pictures to be taken at 2016 GA
Page 5 item 7	Risk – safeguarding audit repeated in 2016	Scheduled for after 2016 GA.

18 & 19 September 2015

Page 8 item 18.	Wales – document protection consider how Pdfs for online completion could be produced	To action with A Mason
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13 November 2015

Page 4. Item 9.	Produce a paper on the difficulties of being the GA President without the help of a Vice-President	Will be completed within the next two weeks
Page 5 item 15	Sunday Assembly	To follow-up

11/12 January 2016

Page 5. Item 13.	Investment – approach financial adviser	Outstanding
Page 8 item 23.	Transparency – report back to MDMA	Outstanding
Page 8. Item 24.	Vision – graphics – to be explored	Other arrangements made

5. Stipend Review Committee Report – (DOC EC21/16) - noted and approved by the EC for presentation to the Annual Meetings – it was noted that whilst the President had chaired this meeting the Report at the GA will be presented by the Honorary Treasurer.

6.2020 Leadership Group Report – (DOC EC22/16) – noted with the following:

The turnover in membership was noted. The suggestion of project support personnel was also noted and this would have to be a formal request to the EC for funding. It was recognised that further discussions were required on how 2020 related to the “Vision” project and members of the Leadership Group were invited to the July EC meeting. **Action: Chief Officer**

7. LLSG Paper – noted with the following:

There was a conference call meeting held with Louise Rogers, Margaret Robinson and Marion on 6 February 2016.– others were invited but unable to attend. Louise has prepared a to-do list in line with the Vision Document and feels that they are a co-ordinating group for all the other groups.

The changes in the Worship Studies and Unitarian Studies Courses were commended.

C.A.P. – (Congregational Assessment Process) – This service could be revived but would require training of new assessors. This could be an opportunity to work on buildings issues as this was often identified as a major problem. Dot had training materials.

REvolution is still being utilised but a name change has been proposed – LEAP.

Facilitation - The Summer School Team when they met the Chief Officer had identified that there was a training need for small group facilitators and had offered to undertake this.

8. “Vision into Action - The Next Steps”

A lengthy discussion on the booklet was held to finalise the booklet following much work by email.

It was noted that external editing advice had been obtained and changes had been incorporated. The document would be finalised in time for circulation in the February GA Mailing **Action: Convenor**

The Convenor reporting on progress with the film that is being produced for the Annual Meetings.

It was noted that "Next Steps" would be a Report not a Motion and could either be accepted or sent back.

9. Annual Meeting Panel Update - (DOC EC23/16) – noted with the following:

The Chief Officer gave an update on issues affecting the EC. The 40 minutes for the EC "Next Steps" Report will include the 15 minute video and opportunities for question and answer. The EC Q&A workshop would be a chance for detailed consideration and there will be a 5 minute slot for the vote later in the Meeting. There will be an article in the next Inquirer about the Keynote Speaker.

It was agreed that Philip will present the Visibility Strategy Group Report – to liaise with James Barry. So far 6 Motions have been received – there is not much time allocated for contingency. A new event manager is in place at the venue.

Session 2

10. President's Report – (DOC EC24/16) – noted with the following:

The President does not feel overloaded time wise on the lead up to the GA, however, noted, that the only downside has been the travelling given his home location. It is a busy schedule but not overly so but he felt that the expectations on future Presidents will increase.

11. Chief Officer Report – (DOC EC25/16) – noted with the following:

The EC agreed to the appointment of Mrs Val Forrest, Mrs Bernadette, Cowley, Councillor Roger Bingham and Mr Louis Shaw as Trustees to the CCGrundy Trust.

12. GA Appointments to the Ministerial Pension Fund – dealt with under matters arising.

13. Youth Programme Report – Rev John Harley gave a verbal Report.

The Convenor welcomed John to the meeting. John handed out an article from the Inquirer which illustrated how much the youngsters enjoyed themselves whilst attending youth events; it was written by a youngster who had attended a youth event for the first time.

He is constructing a questionnaire to be sent out to find out what events/interests the youngsters would like the programme to include.

He identified two areas of concern:

- 1) Information on youth events is not reaching young people as paper information sent out in mail-outs is not being advertised enough by congregations. Would like to see some resources put into social media given its importance to young people.
- 2) He would need more IT and admin support as this was not a good use of his time.

There is a possibility of collaboration between the Nightingale Centre and the Youth Programme, **Action: Marion and Dot have agreed to approach the Nightingale Centre Management Committee on Monday to enquire whether they could offer to host an event free of charge to develop this project further.**

It was agreed that marketing and publicity are a big issue for the programme.

The Convenor thanked John for attending the meeting.

Session 3

14. Unitarian College Manchester (UCM) Presentation – Rachel Skelton gave a presentation.

The Convenor welcomed Rachel to the meeting. She provided background to UCM and the implications of the partnership with other Colleges. Unitarian students can mix with students from other denominations and have greater choice of course modules during their training.

She then introduced the Vision for the future of UCM. A College Development Project was being taken forward and she had been appointed as project manager for a two year period. She worked two days a week dedicated solely to the project accountable to a committee of eight people with the principal being actively involved on a daily basis. There is a long term vision to create a vibrant centre for spiritual and religious learning with a Unitarian ethos but accessible to all. There is no intention to take over or replace current provision.

There will be a GA slot entitled “Doing Ministry Together, how can we help?” the information gathered at the GA will help put together a curriculum.

An online centre for spiritual development is also being looked at and this will link in with the Anniversary Appeal.

It was agreed that there should be no duplication of work with the MSG and that it would not be a problem to work parallel to their work. The project is committed to working in collaboration with the MSG and to this end a Focus group was suggested.

The Convenor thanked Rachel for attending the meeting.

15. Spiritual Learning Web – (DOC EC28/16) – noted with the following:

The proposal at the GA will be that the Anniversary Appeal will be directed to this project; something that the UCM is already looking at. The Convenor and Rachel will liaise on the publicity for the web-based spiritual learning resource.

Action: Convenor

16. Ministry Strategy Group notes - (DOC EC28/16) – noted with the following: *

The EC endorsed the MSG/ Interview Panel recommendations of –

- Mark Hutchinson be trained for the ministry based at Unitarian College, Manchester, over 2 years,
- Duncan Voice be trained for the ministry based at Harris Manchester College, Oxford, over 2 years
- Lewis Connolly be trained for inclusion on the Roll under route 3 iii of the Policy on Ministers from another Denomination or Religious Movement with his studies managed by Harris Manchester College, Oxford and a probationary ministry to be obtained through the Ministerial Vacancy system.

The EC recognizes and accepts the difficulty in the timing of these announcements given the scheduling of meetings and reiterated current guidance that conditional offers should not be publicised.

[*It was subsequently noted that there had been an error in the report which has been corrected]

17. Ministry Training Stage 2 – Proposal

Jacky reported back as requested at the last meeting. They are agreeable to approving the £3000 for Stage 2 subject to the following:

1. That the MSG is assured on quality
2. That point 2 has fully delivered on –the resources mapped to the competencies. Paperwork on Stage 1 to be requested.
3. The points systems mapped out in point 3 and in point 4 needs full exploration
4. Cost comparisons for existing courses have been listed; some financial modelling will need to be included to deliver on point 7 and 8.

Action: Chief Officer to contact Chair of MSG and Jacky Woodman would follow-up.

Session 4

18. EC Link Reports – none.

19. Key Messages – to be distributed separately.

20. Confidential Items - none

21. Dates and times of future EC meetings:

May 13 & 14 – London

July 14 – London

September 12 & 13 – The Nightingale Centre – Great Hucklow

November 14 – London.

22. AOB

Rev John Clifford was thanked for his service as President which has followed four years as an Executive Committee member.

23. Non responsive check-out

Closing Devotions – Peter read out a few quotes and then read from “The Law of Light” by Lars Muhl – a Danish mystic and concluded by reading “Desiderata”