

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

**Approved Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting  
Monday 11th & Tuesday 12th January 2016  
Essex Hall, London**

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

**In Attendance:** Rev John Clifford (General Assembly President), Derek McAuley (Chief Officer) and Mary-Jean Hennis (Minute taker).

**Monday**

**Session 1**

*Opening Devotions: Joan does not believe in New Year resolutions but rather makes a to do list and read from the list that she used during a sermon she gave during the Christmas and New Year period, she then read from the writings of Jovanka Caires- "Opening your mind"*

**1. Apologies** – Peter will be leaving the EC meeting at 10.30am after Session 5 on Tuesday.

**2. Membership**

The Executive Committee received with regret the resignation of James Barry on 16 November 2015. They thanked James for all his work on the Executive Committee since April 2013.

The Chief Officer and Mary-Jean then left the meeting and a confidential session was held.

**3. Minutes of the meetings held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015 - (DOC EC02/16)** – after a minor alteration – removing "Rev" before John Keats" from the opening devotions read by Gwynn – the Minutes were signed as an accurate record of the EC meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

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

- a) Interview Panel meeting held in first week of January 2016
- b) Replacing the EC Link to the Visibility Strategy Group.

**5. EC Action List - (DOC EC03/16) – Matters Arising**

**17/18 July 2015**

Page 2 item 4 - EC bios – Updated 13/11/15 to be placed on website by next meeting - **Ready to proceed.**

Page 5 item 7 - Risk – safeguarding audit repeated in 2016 – **Keep on the Agenda.**

**18/19 September 2015**

Page 6 item 10 - Enquire at Annual Meeting Panel if numbers attending can be increased? – As a result of an approach by a donor an 80% increase in the discount is to be offered to the age group up to 39 years old.

Page 8 item 18 - Wales – document protection consider how Pdfs for online completion could be produced – **Still outstanding.**

Page 9 item 18 - UCM – contact MSG and UCM to be raised with Rev Daniel Costley – Joan has had a conversation with Daniel – **it was agreed to invite a member of the Ministry Strategy Group, Rachel Skelton and one other along with a member from Harris Manchester College to the February EC meeting to progress this item.**

**13 November 2015**

Page 1 item 5.1 - Emphasis on summer school to be included in plan – Marion has had an email contact with Louise Rogers.

Page 4 Item 9 - Produce a paper on the difficulties of being the GA President without the help of a Vice-President – Still to be completed.

Page 5 Item 15 - Sunday Assembly – to follow-up – **Action: Chief Officer.**

Under Matters arising, a short discussion with regard to the Ministry Strategy Group, the Local Leadership Strategy Group and the 20202 Leadership Group was held.

**MSG** – Joan reported that phase 2 of the Competency project is not yet progressed as the remit had not yet been agreed, and the accredited Unitarian studies element should be removed as they are unlikely to be delivered by an external provider.

MSG to be asked to forward an updated version of Phase 2 to the next EC meeting to enable a decision to be made. **Action: Jacky to review.**

**Local Leadership Strategy Group** – Marion has been in email conversation with Louise who had raised the recent meeting that had been held between the Chief Officer and Summer School. It was explained that this had initially been about finances and the Chief Officer has suggested that Louise contact him directly. All agreed that LLSG should be kept up to date with what is going on with regard to the “Vision”.

**2020 Leadership Group** – Philip is in contact with the Rev Andy Pakula of the 2020 Leadership Group.

**6. General Assembly Annual Report (Doc 05/16) – noted with the following:**

- A few omissions and corrections were noted for Andrew Mason’s attention and correction, before going to print.
- A question was raised as to whether the details of the EC Links should be included – the Chief Officer noted that these details are on the Unitarian website already.
- It was noted that the Local Leadership Strategy Group had sent an incomplete report as Worship Studies course seems to have been omitted and this would be pursued.
- The allocation of investment gains was queried and would be reviewed.
- It was noted that the quality of the photographs was quite poor (this could be because the copies at the meeting were from the office printer), however it was felt that this issue should be considered for the future. The Chief Officer to organise the photographs of EC at the GA. for next year’s report.
- The Report will be going to print on Monday 18 January 2016.

**7. General Assembly Accounts – (DOC 04/16) – noted with the following:**

- Colin Farey the Finance Manager joined the meeting. He has received an email from the Auditors declaring that version 4 of the GA Accounts (the above numbered document) have been agreed as the final audited accounts.
- Philip queried the “withdrawal penalty for leaving the staff pension fund” and it was explained that that the figures in the report are correct.
- Philip inquired whether the table on page 20 showing the consolidated staffing costs of the GA and Nightingale Centre could be separated [Colin produced a table later in the day separating the two for the EC].
- Subject to the changes discussed, the Accounts were **agreed**.
- Colin was thanked for attending the meeting and thanks were extended to him and John Crosskey for their work on the GA accounts.

**8. Sustentation Fund Accounts (DOC 06/16) – Received by the EC, accepted and noted.**

**9. Nightingale Centre Accounts (DOC EC07/16) – noted**

The Nightingale Centre Accounts were **agreed and signed**.

Colin Partington and Michael Tracey were thanked for their work on the Nightingale Centre Accounts.

**10. Nightingale Centre Minutes – (DOC EC08/16) – noted with the following:**

- Delegation arrangements - The Delegation arrangements between the EC and the Nightingale Centre were **agreed**.
- The Centre has now received the outstanding Bowland Trust funds which will enable them to move forward with the capital projects. The Bowland Trust was thanked for their support.

**11. 2020 Leadership Team Report – (DOC EC09/16) – noted with the following:**

- The question is – where do we go from here? Philip to ask the 2020 Leadership Group what their next step is now that Derby has been launched?
- The Chief Officer reported that he has received a request from the East Midland District requesting reimbursement of funds spent by Derby during the launch.

## **Session 2**

**12. Millennium Fund Bid – Dukinfield - (DOC EC10/16)**

It was **agreed** to award Dukinfield Old Chapel, £5,000 from the Millennium Fund. **Action: Chief Officer to inform Dukinfield.**

**13. Finance Update -**

### **Bowland Trust**

It was reported that following discussions between the Bowland Trust and the Executive Committee that it had been agreed that the funding from the Bowland Trust will come to an end this year with a single donation of £1.5M. This represented an amount slightly in excess of what the General Assembly might have expected to receive over the full term of the original agreement. Discussion took place on the opportunities this presented and how this related to the Vision process. In view of the implications it was agreed that an announcement would be made in Key Messages. **Action: Chief Officer**

**Investment:**

Notes of the Joint Unitarian Investment Panel were received. Peter proposed a review of current investment practices, including the role of the Unitarian Investment Panel as it pertains to the General Assembly. The Chief Officer has identified a financial advisor to the charity sector who was not a broker or investment manager and it was **agreed** that an approach be made. A Budget of £2/3k was set. **Action: Chief Officer**

**Legacy Management:**

The Chief Officer had identified a consultant who specialises in Legacies and will have a meeting with him on the 26 January 2016 and would bring a proposal to the February 2016 meeting. **Action: Chief Officer**

**Building Sustainability:**

The Chief Officer would be meeting Historic England (formally part of English Heritage) on a survey of the significance and sustainability of buildings similar to that undertaken recently by The Quakers and would report to the next meeting. He was asked to copy details of this work to EC. **Action: Chief Officer**

**14. Joint Unitarian Investment Panel Minutes - (DOC EC11/16) – noted****Session 3****15. Annual Meeting Panel Minutes – (DOC EC12/16) – noted with the following:**

There will be Annual Meeting Panel meeting on 12 January 2016.

**16. MSG paper – Reception & Welcome of New Ministers – (DOC EC13/16) – noted and accepted by the EC.****17. Constitutional Review Group – (DOC EC14/16) – Motion was agreed as recommended****18. Vision Follow-up – Peter was invited to facilitate this section of the meeting.**

The EC considered what their objectives were. Currently the Movement stands at +/- 3,000 members; the objective must be to reach a substantial number of people outside the Movement. If this was to be achieved this would need a major rethink. The following ideas being discussed drawing upon the feedback from the Vision Day:

- How the EC organises itself and pulls everything together.
- To spend or not to spend.
- Sales/marketing/product development/project management.
- Skills development with volunteers.

- The continued use of the title “Strategy Group” to deliver activities. If the groups are created as a result of the Vision document, then there will be a need to relook at who reports to whom in current structures.
- A paper was received – Ministry in all its forms – and discussed. This raised the issue of where the boundary was between Professional Ministry and other forms of Ministry. There was a need to include UALM in discussion. Should we separate training and development including the Colleges from other Ministry issues such as the Rolls?
- The Convenor noted that £5,000 had been raised at the Anniversary Service Appeal at the 2015 GA, this was treated as general income. He proposed that at the 2016 GA the appeal should stipulate a specific project and that an appeal be made to create a “Spiritual Learning Web” which could be used by anyone not just Unitarians. He has already had a discussion with UCM in this regard and been advised that they were also prepared to put some resource behind this idea. It was agreed that a proposal be brought to the February EC meeting. **Action: Robert Ince**
- It was noted that the Visibility Strategy Group had no Chair and the whole issue of how we addressed communications and social action needed review as they were different issues.
- Changes around learning would affect the remit of the LLSG which would be reduced quite considerably. **Action: Marion to review the report received from Louise Rogers to look at current activities.**
- Lindsey Press the Convenor suggested that the Lindsey Press remit should be expanded to encourage Unitarian thought and writing. The Chief Officer considered that The Linsey Press were producing high quality books with limited volunteer capacity and that there were also other publications that would welcome contributions.
- In terms of future structure should all groups report directly to the EC as opposed to being sub-groups of a main group?

## Session 4

### 19. Vision Follow-up continued:

Mary-Jean left the meeting at this point.

Discussion took place on the implications of the Vision for the staffing capacity. It was noted that several proposals for additional staff posts had been made at the Vision Day during feedback. It was **agreed** that the current staffing complement merely allowed the maintenance of the current activities and whilst some changes could, and indeed had been, made over time that there was no room for major reductions if we wished to maintain and indeed expand the support we gave centrally.

### 20. Non-responsive checkout

*Closing devotions – Jacky sang a Gospel Song – Blue Grass style – “Two Coats”*

## Tuesday

### Session 5

*Opening devotions – Lynne read from “The Uncarven image” written by Phillip Hewett*

#### **21. President’s Report (DOC EC15/16) – noted with the following:**

The President reported his positive experience at the MDA event. He was developing his online presence, including using twitter, and learning about new developments. The Chief Officer explained that he kept abreast of Unitarian online activities via his Li paper and as few British Unitarian twitter accounts were active we had a limited profile, His google alert on the term “unitarian” confirmed this.

#### **22. Chief Officer’s Report - (DOC EC16/16) – noted with the following:**

- **Ministerial Pension Fund** – Three GA appointees were retiring in April 2016 and only one had agreed to continue. Marion agreed to be appointed Action: EC to make a decision at the February EC meeting and explore who might also be appointed.
- **ICUU** – The Chief Officer has received an email from Rev Steve Dick and Jill McAllister with regard to the crisis affecting the Unitarian community in Burundi asking for advice on whom to approach for support for any refugees who might enter the UK. The GA President has a contact in Scotland whom he has agreed to liaise with before responding to Rev Steve Dick. **Action: John Clifford**

Philip has agreed to set up an internal mailing list for volunteers working with refugees. **Action: Philip Colfox**

#### **23. EC Link Reports - (DOC EC17/16) – noted with the following:**

##### **Welsh Districts –**

Gwynn reported that the Welsh Department is holding an extraordinary meeting on the 28 January 2016 to discuss the Vision document and will be holding a one day conference on the 5 February 2016 bringing the two Districts together – the two topics of discussion will be “Communication and Service to humanity” The theme for the Welsh slot at the GA has been agreed – a “Celebration of the life of Rev Jacob Davis” who will be celebrating his centenary in 2016.

##### **NELUM –**

Jacky reported that she will be unable to attend the next two meetings of NELUM, and asked whether there would be any scope in cross cover while

EC members are unable to attend District meetings. It was agreed that it is important to keep the lines of communications between the EC and Districts open.

**MDMA -**

It was agreed that the issue of transparency would be explored in detail at a future EC meeting. There was merit in building upon the recent efforts to involve grass-roots Unitarians. **Action: Lynne to inform the MDMA that this item is under review.**

The Chief Officer noted that he was working to ensure that the EC Minutes from 2012 were all available on the GA website in an easily accessible form from the governance page under the new bios of EC members.

**Eastern Union** – a special meeting will be held on 19 March 2016 – either the Convenor or the Chief Officer will be in attendance.

**LDPA and Eastern Union** – with the resignation there was now no EC Link for these two Districts. Jacky has agreed to be the named EC link for the LDPA and the Convenor will be the named EC link for the Eastern Union until a new member of the EC is co-opted.

**24. Vision follow-up continued -**

The Convenor reported that a 12/15 minute video had been commissioned for the Annual Meetings from a professional film maker, West Creative. Gwynn would be working closely with her providing oversight and he was impressed by her previous work. The film will be available for use after the Meetings and be broken down into smaller elements. There will be cost implications but it will be done professionally and in a very tight timescale.

Marion, who had been asked to review the LLSG strategic plan, highlighted the implications of changes to learning and development. **Action: Marion to report back to the EC feedback from the next LLSG meeting**

It was agreed that promotion was needed to get the Vision off to a start – firstly need to clarify the Unitarian identity and the how we explain ourselves? A task group with a professional input should be put together.

It was agreed that during the period of transition, groups should carry on to avoid disruption to the work already being done, without the need of the Strategy Groups getting involved, with EC as ultimate decision-maker.

**Action: The Convenor to draft a “The Next Step” paper and circulate to EC members for views to be in a position to agreed at the February EC meeting**

Volunteer forms to be reviewed and thanks offered. A “The Next Steps” graphic to be explored. **Action: Philip Colfox**

Mary-Jean Hennis and Peter Hanley left the meeting at this point.

**Session 6**                      **11.00 – 12.00**

**25. MSG Follow-up**

It was noted that further information was required to enable a decision to be made on the MSG Stage 2 proposal (see above page 2/3). **Action: Jacky to bring a proposal to next Meeting.**

Joan explained that due to the change in timing she wished to resign as EC MSG link. **She was thanked for her work. Lynne agreed to act as link**

**26. Key Messages to be distributed separately**

**27. Confidential Items**

John Clifford left the meeting. The Chief Officer outlined the situation regarding the recruitment process for the Director of Ministry and discussion took place.

It was agreed that a co-option be pursued for the vacant EC position.

**28. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

It was noted that Lynne and Joan had offered their apologies.

**29. Non responsive check-out**

*Closing Devotions – Marion Baker read from “Writing Yourself” by Francis Quarles and a piece by Rev John Clifford.*

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

**Approved Minutes of Executive Committee  
Friday 12<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> 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 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> 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”*

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

**Approved Minutes of Executive Committee  
Friday 13<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

**Essex Hall, London**

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

**In Attendance:** Dot Hewerdine (General Assembly President ), David Joseph (Finance Manager) for Session 1 item 9, Rev Daniel Costley for Session 2 item 10, Derek McAuley (Chief Officer) and Mary-Jean Hennis (Minute taker).

**Friday**

**Session 1**

*Opening Devotions: Robert read from "Through the Prism" a book written by Lucy Harris and Tony McNeile – "Self in Community"*

**1. Apologies**

Rev Lynne Readett, Jacky Woodman (for Friday morning) and Dot Hewerdine (for Saturday morning)

**2. Appointment of EC Convenor**

As the longest serving member Joan took the chair for the appointment of a Convenor for 2016 – 2017. Robert Ince was unanimously re-appointed as EC Convenor for the year 2016 – 2017.

**3. Minutes of the meetings held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016 (DOC EC30/16)**

The Minutes were signed as an accurate record of the EC meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

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

Item 13 page 5 – Philip raised the two issues identified by the Rev John Harley at the previous EC Meeting. It was noted that an event was being held supported by the Nightingale Centre on improved marketing of the Youth Programme.

**5. EC Action List (DOC EC31/16)**

Reviewed and updated.

**6. Co-option of EC member (DOC EC32/16)**

The Executive Committee decided not to make an appointment.

**7. Strategy Group Updates**

LLSG will be holding a teleconference on the 21 May 2016 to review their programme of work which Marion would be attending.

It was recognised that the role of the Strategy Groups in relationship to the 15 “Next Steps” projects should be reviewed. It was accepted that the Strategy Groups were actually working at an operational level and this would continue however the term “Strategy” Group was no longer appropriate.

**8. Nightingale Centre Minutes - (DOC EC33/16) – noted with the following:**

The marketing and social media event to be held by the Youth Programme will be from the 16 – 18 September 2016 and the Nightingale Centre has made 12 places available. EC thanked the Nightingale Centre Management Committee for undertaking this venture with the Youth Department. It was noted that their strong financial position enabled such support to be given to Unitarian initiatives.

Improvements in IT were underway including room-master which has the capacity to link in with the computer systems currently in use.

The rebuilding of the roundhouse was being supported by the Peak District National Park in seeking a Heritage Lottery Grant for repairs. Proposals for Barleycroft were being developed.

**9. (10am) Management Accounts and Investment Report - (DOC EC34/16) – noted with the following:**

(David Joseph – new Finance Manager attended)

David was introduced and welcomed by the EC. Issues raised in the management accounts to the 29 February 2016 were discussed. The Outlook showed a year end deficit of £32,439 as no legacy was expected and quota would be less than budgeted. This would be refined for the next meeting. Diversification of income is important. It was noted that the Annual Meetings were likely to make a modest surplus but the accounts had not yet been finalised.

The Chief Officer reported that Essex Hall Trust is in a healthy financial position with full occupancy of the building and he expected increased support to be forthcoming at their AGM. The Chief Officer thanked David for attending the meeting.

The Hon Treasurer gave a presentation on the position with Investments and his view of the services currently provided by the Investment Manager. The

money received from the Bowland Trust was temporarily invested and would be available for re-investment on 7 June 2016.

He recommended the development of:

1. A five year strategy for the Vision plans and investment.
2. We seek a full discretionary investment management service.
3. Cash-flow forecasting on a weekly/monthly basis would be required.

The Chief Officer suggested that an independent financial adviser specialising in the charity sector could be used to support the review process, In the meantime a decision needed to be made quickly on investment of the new

funds. It was agreed that once cash-flow projections were available that a decision be made by the Honorary Treasurer and Chief Officer on the amount to be invested.

The Convenor thanked the Hon Treasurer for his presentation.

## **Session 2**

**10. Ministry Training – agreeing a common vision (DOC EC35/16) – noted with the following:**  
(Rev Daniel Costley attended).

The President and Marion Baker declared their interest as committee members of Unitarian College Manchester (the latter as a General Assembly representative).

Daniel reported in progress with the MSG's review of ministry training. Both UCM and HMCO had mapped their training against the ministerial competencies and identified gaps. "Next Steps" had several priorities affecting ministry training. Independent accreditation on the Unitarian studies elements was required and possibilities could be explored by the external consultant. He asked that the EC affirm its commitment to work closely with the two Colleges as the two continuing providers and co-ordinators of ministerial training or alternatively be explicit about the possibility of moving to another mode of training.

It was noted that the Competencies would evolve the needs of congregations change but that they needed to be embedded in current arrangements. Each college had its strengths, therefore we should be working collaboratively. The need to ensure ongoing feedback on the quality and relevance of the training was recognised.

It was agreed to continue to work collaboratively with the two Colleges and to broaden and deepen our relationship. The General Assembly will encourage them in filling any gaps in the competencies, utilising outside providers as needed.

EC agreed to the appointment of Kay Millard to the Ministry Strategy Group (MSG).

The Convenor thanked Daniel for attending the meeting.

## **11. Annual Meetings**

### **11.1 Survey feedback and discussion - (DOC EC36/16) – noted with the following:**

The Survey Methods results were received which were very similar to the previous year. There was a strong feeling that the Meetings should be more

inspirational rather than business orientated. It was noted that social media was more in use this year than previous years. Different views of the social evening remained with some people wanting a quiet place to sit and chat and others the lively music and dancing. The hotel was extremely busy with the other user groups.

### **11.2 Annual Meeting panel minutes 11 Feb 2016 - (DOC EC37/16) – noted with the following:**

An Annual Meeting Panel meeting took place on Thursday 12 May 2016. Rev Sarah Tinker has agreed to be the preacher at the Anniversary Service in 2017. A keynote speaker had been identified and was being invited.

### **11.3 Resolutions**

**(DOC EC38/16)**

The Resolutions approved at the Annual Meetings were reviewed and an update on actions received:

- CIO status – referred to the Constitutional Review Committee.
- Constitutional Changes – reported to the Charity Commission by the Chief Officer and reply awaited.
- Surveillance – Chief Officer and Penal Affairs Panel members are attending the Liberty AGM on Saturday 18 June 2016.
- Syria Appeal – an update on financial contributions is to be obtained from the Red Cross.
- Climate Change – Buildings Advisory Group is to circulate to congregations in the next Mailing an Annual Energy Consumption Form for completion.

## **Session 3**

### **12. Presidents Report - (DOC EC44/16) – noted with the following:**

The President noted that since her report she had attended the Scottish Unitarian Association AGM, taken a service in Glasgow and had attended the Asparagus lunch in Evesham.



**14.6 UNIFEST/PUFF/Family Fest -(DOC EC42/16) – noted with the following:**

A proposal was received from Lorna Hill and Rev John Harley. It was noted that this issue had been raised when the EC met at the Nightingale Centre Management Committee meeting in September 2015. It was suggested that at this stage a more detailed proposal was required with more discussion on the practicalities and costings with the Nightingale Centre and that the Foy Society might be interested in being involved. **Action: Chief Officer to reply.**

**Session 4**

**15. Vision Next Steps - continued**

The Next Steps – a lengthy discussion took place to identify the key outcomes or objectives expected for each priority:

<p><b>1.</b>Develop a comprehensive response to explain our identity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be able to explain in a simple way in different circumstances who are we, what do we believe in</li> <li>• The Liberal Vision</li> <li>• Be able to promote identity Internally as well externally</li> <li>• The end product would be us being better known to the outside world</li> <li>• Must work nationally and at a personal level</li> <li>• We want the world to know who we are</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.</b>Support a web based spiritual learning resource with UCM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rachel Skelton at UCM has purchased various “thespacetosearch” names</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.</b>Engage with the wider community on today’s issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change “today’s” to “Spiritual”. issues</li> <li>• The end product would be congregations engaging with social issues from a spiritual perspective working with their local communities</li> <li>• How to guide</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.</b>Increase collaboration with other like minded organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social action – are we having an impact, is the world a better place because of what we have done?</li> <li>• Develop a “toolkit” to help people move from a non-collaborative perspective to collaboration</li> <li>• The benefit is that we share platforms with other organisations</li> <li>• Reputation Capital – capitalise on the reputation we build.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5.</b>Promote more Unitarian thought and writing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the development of Unitarian thought requires time and space to think and write</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lindsey Press and Unitarian publications are avenues – how do we going increase their profile? People are supported in their writing eg sabbaticals, development opportunities</li> <li>• Think about creating a writers group – (contact Louise Rogers)</li> </ul>
<b>6.</b> Formulate a plan to undertake Campus Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure is people involved in campuses not in congregations</li> <li>• Collaborate with and learn from UUA.</li> <li>• Keep in mind that you are sowing seeds.</li> <li>• Recognising that Unitarian values are the important thing.</li> </ul>
<b>7.</b> Support a new congregational development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support 2020 objectives but with increased involvement. and integration</li> <li>• Bigger congregations helping smaller congregations</li> </ul>
<b>8.</b> Grow our volunteer pool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have enough people with the right skills to step in and run with projects</li> <li>• Systems and processes encourage and develop volunteers</li> </ul>
<b>9.</b> Find more flexible ways of training for Ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on student needs</li> <li>• Maintaining quality at all levels</li> <li>• Encourage more people to train for ministry both professional and lay</li> <li>• Training provision is recognized and accredited and is sustainable</li> </ul>
<b>10.</b> Develop and integrate different forms of ministerial training (including recognised lay ministry training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accredited Lay Ministry training, not just for professional ministers</li> <li>• The quality of students is high</li> <li>• Integrated model of training</li> </ul>
<b>11.</b> Work with the Districts to create a new forum for national involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome will be the new forum working</li> </ul>
<b>12.</b> Understand and reduce threats to building and financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand where we are and define what we mean by sustainability</li> <li>• Action plans to address issues that are identified</li> </ul>
<b>13.</b> Review the effectiveness of our organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The outcome is an organization that is fit for purpose</li> </ul>
<b>14.</b> Update “Help is at Hand” as an on-line resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the “Help is at Hand” document</li> <li>• Ensure mechanisms are in place to keep it up to date</li> <li>• Need to integrate the “help for Officers” with “Help is at hand” on GA website with a link to the Safeguarding document</li> <li>• Need officer training</li> </ul>
<b>15.</b> Reduce our carbon footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out at some level what our current carbon footprint is</li> <li>• Compare ourselves to the Church of England and others</li> <li>• Improve performance</li> </ul>

**16. Non – responsive check out**

*Closing Devotions – Joan read from “The Fields of Promise” written by V. Emil Gudmundson*

**Saturday**

**Session 5**

*Opening Devotions: Jacky read a poem “Breathing Underwater” by Jared Mackey*

**17. Role of Vice-President - (DOC EC43/16) – noted with the following:**

Rev John Clifford had produced a paper on his reflections on the role of the GA Vice-President. He suggested re-titling the post as President elect. This view was generally welcomed although this would require a change to the Constitution and could be addressed as part of the move to a CIO. **Action: Chief Officer to respond to Rev John Clifford**

**18. Chief Officer Report - (DOC EC45/16) – noted with the following:**

C C Grundy Trust

**EC agreed to appoint Councillor Chris Henig as a Trustee, nominated by the Lancashire County Council.**

**19. EC Link Reports - (DOC EC46/16) - noted with the following:**

- Northern – it was noted that the Vision document was mentioned more than eight times during the course of a recent meeting. They valued the visits from the GA President.
- Sheffield – reported that there is a lack of volunteers and they have not managed to appoint a secretary. Churches in the District are doing fine.
- Midlands – the AGM on 26 March was attended by Jacky. Very active District with a sense of mission and purpose and a District Minister.
- North East Lancashire – Jacky had informed them she would be stepping down when she leaves EC. It is essential that a new link EC member is appointed who is able to regularly attend meetings recognising that there was not support for the vision process nor engagement with the EC.
- East Cheshire Union – It was decided at their AGM that all future meetings will take place in the evening. Marion will not be able to attend all of these meetings because of the travelling involved over the Winter months.
- Wales – Gwynn outlined the current levels of engagement across the two Districts and also the Bangor group. He suggested that the Welsh

Department Secretary should be involved in discussions about the new District forum. It was agreed at the extra-ordinary meeting held on 28 April 2016 that the two Districts will lead the Opening Celebrations at the 2017 Annual Meetings.

- Overall there was a view that the EC would have to review the link role when the District forum was up-and-running to avoid duplication.

## Session 6

### Vision - continued

The Chief Officer handed round a template for “Next Step” priorities. This will be sent to the EC leads for completion and will then form the basis of a plan for the July EC and project management for the future.

<b>Summary Priority Title</b>	
<b>Description of the Priority (purpose)</b>	
<b>Current Position/Context</b>	
<b>How will be success be measured?</b>	
<b>Key areas of work to be undertaken</b>	
<b>Timescales</b>	
<b>Links to current work or other priorities</b>	
<b>Who needs to be involved?</b>	
<b>Who will take the work forward?</b>	
<b>What are the future financial implications?</b>	
<b>What are the future staffing implications?</b>	
<b>What are the future volunteer implications?</b>	
<b>Policies and guidelines required</b>	
<b>Communications implications</b>	
<b>Theological and/or spiritual implications</b>	
<b>Notes</b>	
<b>Form completed by</b>	
<b>Date completed</b>	

Gwynn suggested that a new 20 minute film be commissioned aimed at non-Unitarians people following the success of the “Vision: Next Steps.” It was agreed that a technical specification would be drawn up by Gwynn and Peter and a procurement process then take place with individuals and/or companies invited to put forward bids.

Joan had contacted people at the Annual Meetings and compiled a list of contact details of people willing to take part in campus Ministry. There has been discussion with Geoff Levermore of Manchester District and there was

also interest in Cambridge and Glasgow. She was encouraged. **Action: Joan agreed to send the template to those interested to gather initial material and to report to the July EC meeting.**

Marion indicated that the new forum for national involvement working with Districts would engage Districts in national decision making and dialogue.

2020 Group priority **Action: The Chief Officer to ask the 2020 Leadership Group to complete the template**

Philip asked what would this look like when it is completed? It was agreed that when the EC member has finished completing their forms they should circulate amongst each other for comment but ensure that the completed forms are with Mary-Jean by 28 June at the latest.

The Convenor reported that the UCM Management Committee fully endorsed the direction the GA are moving with the Web-project and their involvement and will put resources towards it. It is yet to be resolved where the responsibilities will lie between the General Assembly and UCM.

## **20. Key Messages to be circulated separately**

**21. Confidential Items** – Mary-Jean left the meeting at this point

### 21.1 Pay Policy

The following pay policy was agreed:

“Staff remuneration is set to reflect the following criteria:

Fairness – this criteria is used to ensure that salaries take into account levels of inflation and remain in line with the voluntary sector more generally. Whilst there is no London weighting, consideration has to be taken of pressures facing staff based at Essex Hall including the London living wage. The relationship between the highest and lowest paid staff will be not more than 4:1 ratio (as with the Religious Society of Friends).

Affordability – the overall financial position of the General Assembly and its ability to pay will be considered to assess the collective impact of any proposed salary increase

Staff salaries are reviewed annually at the May Executive Committee meeting and implemented from 1 July each year.

Levels of pay for individual posts will be reviewed when new staff positions are established or as part of the recruitment and selection process for each post reflecting requirements of the job description and person specification.”

21.2 Staff remuneration – the Chief Officer left the meeting at this point

Staff were awarded a salary increase of 1% from 1 July 2016.

**22. Non responsive check-out**

*Closing Devotions – Gwynn read a meditation “Tributaries” by the Rev Cen Llwyd.*

**Approved Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held 14 July 2016**

**Present:** Marion Baker, Joan Cook, Peter Hanley (Honorary Treasurer), Robert Ince (Convenor), Gwynn Pritchard, Lynne Readett, Jacky Woodman

**In attendance:** Derek McAuley (Chief Officer), Andrew Mason (Minutes), David Joseph (Finance Officer, item 5), Andy Pakula and Aleks Zglinska (2020, item 7)

Marion Baker read a passage from Paul Parker's keynote speech given at the Keele 2012 Annual Meetings and the meeting started.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies for absence had been received from Philip Colfox and Dorothy Hewerdine.

**2. Minutes of the meetings held on 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

The Minutes of the meeting held 13-14 May 2016 (Document **EC48/16**) were **AGREED** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**3. Matters arising for noting / EC Action List (Document EC 49/16)**

Ministerial Pension Fund Appointment – There was a Vacancy for a GA Representative.

No response had been received from the Red Cross regarding the requested update on financial contributions to the Syria Appeal. The Convenor would contact them.

**ACTION: Convenor**

EC photos on website – members were happy with their existing photos. Ed would be asked for a firm commitment to come and take a group photo at the November meeting.

**ACTION: Chief Officer**

A letter had been received regarding the co-option and the Chief Officer would reply.

**ACTION: Chief Officer**

UNIFEST – John Harley has emailed since the discussion referred to in item 14.6 of the last Minutes, asking to whom UniFest would be responsible.. It was noted that Louise Rogers had included this under LLSG for budgetary purposes and this was supported.. A grant of £1,500 (over two years) was being sought from the GA, plus funding from the FOY Society and the Hibbert Trust. The event was proposed for 26-29 October 2017.

**4. Vision Projects (Document E50/16)**

Robert indicated that the Executive Committee needed to understand each of the priorities in terms of financial requirements, risks, who would lead (at least initially), what the objectives were and interdependencies between priorities.

**Priority 1: Develop a comprehensive response to explain our identity**

Philip Colfox had submitted a paper, which was circulated at the meeting. This priority was felt to be important for communicating effectively externally, though this had already started with the creation of the new videos, one of which had been watched over 1200 times. A Mission Statement was not felt to be the objective. There were fundamental tensions about who and what we are, and this was not just a branding exercise. This was likely to need external expertise, and could be expensive, particularly if not managed well. The Treasurer estimated a cost of around £5K for this project.

Philip Colfox and Peter Hanley were tasked to take this forward. **ACTION: Peter & Philip**

Priority 2: Web-based spiritual learning project

Some progress had already been made by UCM, who had bought domains for 'spacetosearch' variations (.com, .org etc.). Money had already been set aside. The project would not currently require more money from the GA itself, but would have to fundraise from Unitarian sources. This project would require professional input, not just volunteers. The idea was that a minimum viable project would be developed, and then develop organically. There would be a need for ongoing moderation. The structure for the project's management structure needed to be agreed..

The Treasurer noted the risk of the GA having to pick up funding if ongoing financial support could not be obtained. The ongoing annual project cost was estimated as £10K on the basis of work for one day a week to maintain it, plus a committee structure.

Priority 3: Engaging with others.

This required training of facilitators. Summer School had offered to assist with training facilitators, though this would need to be run as a separate event.. Jane Blackall had previously written a paper, which would need to be revisited with her and Margaret Kirk, Dot Hewerdine and Alison Thursfield were all interested.

The Treasurer had estimated a £10K initial training cost, and £20K annual cost, though others estimated much lower costs, and it was possible Districts might contribute.

It was **AGREED** that Marion Baker would contact Dot Hewerdine to attempt to progress this project.

**ACTION: Marion**

Priority 5: Promoting Unitarian Thought

This project would involve several aspects, not simply about publications electronic-media. Freeing up time to do the thinking as equally important. A lot more work was needed on this and Gwynn was tasked with taking this forward.

**ACTION: Gwynn**

It was noted that the quality and style of our existing material within the Movement, printed or otherwise, could be improved.. Lindsey Press was recognised as currently providing a high quality distinctive contribution.

Peter suggested retitling this as 'Raising the public profile of Unitarians and their thinking' and estimated a cost of £15K per annum.

Priority 6: Campus Ministry

Cambridge Unitarian Church and Manchester District Association were both hoping to be involved. Cambridge had allocated £10K for a six-month project. Manchester were exploring a five-year project, with a paid post, which they were estimating at £35k per annum, seeking matched funding from the GA. The Treasurer had estimated £40K per annum.

There were questions about how success in this project could be measured. It was not felt to be likely to increase membership but might be considered potentially successful if it encouraged Unitarian-style thinking in the young people involved.

It was noted there were issues with this, including access to campuses and that a significant number of people felt that campus ministry was not what we should be doing. It was not originally part of the Vision document and could be considered the "hobby horse"

of a few individuals. It was suggested that this could be dealt with by going back to the Assembly.

In the meantime, Joan would continue to take this forward.

**ACTION: Joan**

#### Priority 8: Volunteer Pool

There was no current database of volunteers. Joan had contacted Rosemary Ruston re. Associate Members and had received a response. It was felt that getting 40 possible volunteers to provide details was realistic.

The Treasurer remarked that a system would be needed to collect and keep data up-to-date, not just the initial setup. He estimated an annual cost of £100K, though the Chief Officer remarked that this was excessive and a discussion was needed on this.

It was **AGREED** that Joan would keep progressing this project.

**ACTION: Joan**

#### Priority 9: Flexible ways of training for Ministry.

Feedback would probably come at the end of September. UCM would put their proposals forward, though it was not clear what work Harris Manchester College, Oxford was undertaking. The risk of there not being full involvement from both colleges was noted.

There was a need for more certainty as potential ministerial students at the recent enquiry weekend were unclear about what training would involve. This was heavily tied in with priority 10, on integrated training, and the two needed to be discussed together as life-long learning should be our aspiration.

#### Priority 10: Integrated Training

Having agreed the competencies the important issue was how to assess when people have completed training or education and this still needs to be worked through. This required assessment tools to be developed with an assessment group, which was probably two years away.

It was recognised that people considering training should have a reasonable idea of what was involved, and that the work done by the Ministerial Strategy Group (MSG) retain its momentum. It was therefore **AGREED** that Lynne would speak to the MSG to confirm approval to proceed with implementation of the competency framework. **ACTION: Lynne**

When estimating costs, it was noted there were links in with existing ministerial training funding and for an online learning process generally. It was estimated that £5-6k would be needed for curriculum development, with a further £5K for the assessment development work (though this would also be usable for all future online learning programmes). The Treasurer added a further £5K for the integration of training, giving a total project estimate of £15K.

#### Priority 11: Creation of new district forum for national involvement

There was work needed to enable Districts to contribute ideas, though it was seen as best to ask the Districts themselves how we might best structure this. It was noted that this was not necessarily be seen as a single meeting with all Districts in attendance to meet the EC.

It was hoped that the forum could be part-funded by the Districts, though possibly with some form of travel pool to smooth out differences in travel costs in different venues.

Marion to progress.

**ACTION: Marion**

Priority 12.1: Sustainability - Buildings

The congregations own around 150 church buildings. Discussions had been held with Historic England, about trying to create an Asset Register of Unitarian Buildings, and their condition and sustainability. It was estimated this would cost around £20-25K, with 50% being our contribution. This did not include Wales or Scotland, and more work was needed to see if a similar arrangement could be reached with similar organisations in those nations. There would be a need to persuade churches of the benefits of this to gain the necessary cooperation. The Treasurer estimated a total cost of £40K, allowing for the same arrangement in Scotland and Wales, meaning a 50% contribution of £20K.

Priority 12.2: Sustainability – Financial

There was an issue knowing which churches have “excepted” status and which are separately registered with the Charity Commission. It was **AGREED** that Robert and another volunteer would spend two days going through Annual Reports & Accounts previously submitted to HQ to review the information and look at their sustainability. The estimated cost for travel and accommodation for two people for two days was £1K.

**ACTION: Convenor**

Priority 13: Organisational effectiveness

More work needed to be done on defining the project. This was a long-term aspiration. Robert would speak to Philip about this.

**ACTION: Convenor**

Priority 14: Help is at Hand

Louise Rogers and LLSG were pursuing. The information provided in Help is at Hand needed to be updated, with a built-in mechanism for keeping it up to date (which could require ongoing paid support). The Chief Officer remarked that a better online solution was needed, where this information was incorporated directly into the website, making it easier for to update and also to use for people to use. A pdf booklet was not appropriate for this purpose. If the text could be produced, GA Staff could put it on the website.

It was **AGREED** that Marion would take it forward at the next LLSG meeting.

**ACTION: Marion**

Priority 15: Reduce our carbon footprint

The Buildings Advisory Group had circulated a letter and survey. Depending on responses, they would be able to move this forward.

Confidential Item - Staffing implications of “Next Steps”

Andrew Mason left the meeting.

Discussions took place on the staffing implications of some of the priorities.

**5. Finance Report**

David Joseph, Finance Officer, attended for this item.

The report (Document **EC51/16**), along with an additional page submitted at the Meeting, covered the 8 month period to the end of May and contained the Management Accounts and along with information about investments and the budget.

Currently the outlook for the year end was a deficit of around £7K. This was based on a forecast income of £693K and expenditure of £700K.

After discussion, it was clarified that the £5,867 from the Annual Meetings Special Collection should be put into a designated fund for the web project, not donated directly to Unitarian College Manchester. David would arrange this. **ACTION: Finance Manager**

Governance – The increase in costs was partially because the EC Link meetings have raised travel costs. The GA President’s costs were included in this item and in future should be separated out..

Essex Hall Trust – The additional grant was welcomed and it was felt that the work to produce this should be acknowledged.

The Chief reported that as usual the budget for 2016/17 would be presented at the next meeting and required considerable work over the summer.

Next Steps – The Treasurer’s estimates were for a start-up cost of £8K and annual cost for projects of £240K.

It was clarified that the one-off donation from the Bowland Trust meant that matching funding to donations for youth and ministerial students fund would not continue.

Bury letter – A letter had been received from the Bury congregation requesting clarification about the Bowland Trust money and the availability of funds for project bids. The EC would need to communicate that the GA would be managing money and projects differently, going forward, and there was not a new pot of money. The projects referred to were those in the Vision document, which had been given strong support at the Annual Meetings. The Chief Officer would respond. **ACTION: Chief Officer**

#### Investment Panel

The GA’s investments needed to be considered for several reasons:

- There were a number of members of the GA’s Investment Panel looking to retire.
- There was a desire to simplify matters by having various Unitarian bodies invest collectively (leading to a reduced strain on volunteers, as well as administrative cost reductions).
- The GA, and the Movement generally, needed to make good use of our collective funds.
- The Bowland Trust single payment meant a large investment was needed.
- The implication of the Bowland Trust payment, and the new projects, meant there were now greater cash flow considerations than previously.

It had been suggested that separating the management of investment monies from the operating groups which spend it would allow for a better use of volunteer skills.

The Treasurer and Convenor described the existing arrangement. The GA currently invests directly in pooled funds through Newtons who could not offer a discretionary

service. This therefore placed responsibilities upon the trustees and would require the GA to give buy and sell orders for immediate action, usually based on information given by Newtons at three-monthly meetings of the Investment Panel. The current return was believed to be good.

The alternative model to consider was to invest through a discretionary Fund Manager, who would then trade at their discretion within the policies agreed by the Executive Committee.. There could be sufficient monies between the various Unitarian bodies to have a 'GA Fund'.

It was noted that there had been a difference of opinion between the GA and the British & Foreign Unitarian Association over investment management when Newton's had stated that they could not give discretionary advice in investments for legal reasons. The B&FUA had decided this did not meet the requirements for trustees to take proper advice on investment matters and had switched to a discretionary Fund Manager. This depended on interpretation of the word 'advice' in several pieces of regulation & legislation.

A brief for Counsel had been received from Roderick Ramage to take legal advice.

A decision was needed before September, when the significant Bowland donation would be rolling three-month money market arrangement. This was currently earning a very small return and a more suitable investment was required.

Several trustees indicated other interests as trustees of other Unitarian bodies involved in the current Investment Panel arrangement. As did the Chief Officer as a director of the B&FUA.

It was **AGREED** that the Bowland Trust money (after drawdown of operating costs) be put into the Newton Growth and Income funds in September as a temporary measure, until such time as an investment review took place. Gwynn and Peter both abstained.

## **6. Risk Management (Document EC52/16)**

The Treasurer had added a positive "desired working outcome" to each possible risk item indicating what we were attempting to achieve. The Risk Register was then reviewed, with the following changes to be made.:

- Item 12 – The Ministerial Students Fund: The fund would lose the Bowland Trust doubling, representing a loss of income, however, It was well-funded at present with limited demands.
- Item 13 – Falling membership: The responsible body was changed to the Executive Committee rather than the Local Leadership Strategy Group.
- Item 16 – This was clarified. It was noted that the assumption of matched funded seemed to be more prevalent from Unitarian organisations making donations for youth projects, the Ministerial Students Fund etc., rather than those seeking funding for their projects.

**ACTION: Chief  
Officer**

## **7. 2020 Update**

Andy Pakula and Aleks Zglinska attended for this item.

Andy and Aleks reported on the achievements of the 2020 group, which had been to try to promote growth through the creation of new, and rekindling of old, congregations and was included in "Next Steps". This was an expensive process, estimated at £100K per congregation, to create a congregation with an average of 15-16 people. A key strategy had been to try to reach non 'standard-church' people as new participants.

The other thrust of the group had been training. The 2020 group strongly believed strongly that the only possible way to turn around declining congregations was through training for better congregational health and culture. There was a limit to how much training volunteers would be able to do, The group were therefore recommending that we hire a Growth Officer and a paper on this was circulated.

The Derby project was discussed. Derby had been supported by existing congregations and the East Midlands District Association. The group felt that plans for new congregations would likely come from churches that were already doing well. When considering new congregations, it was important to look at the culture of the area. These projects would be less likely to work in isolation and a team and infrastructure were required. Low running costs were also needed. The Derby congregation was using a multi-faith centre on Sunday at low cost, with no funds or effort required on a building.

There was a two-pronged model required. The first involved working with those congregations deemed to be viable (taking into consideration factors like demographics of the area, viability of their buildings etc.) and this required a person to undertake this role. The second involved where to start new congregations.

It was important that the success story of Derby be promoted.

It was **AGREED** that the 2020 group would come back with a template for growing a small number of new congregations.

#### 8. Ministry Strategy Group Notes

It was **AGREED** that Ralph Catts, Katie McKenna and Rob Whiteman be added to the Roll as a Minister with probationary status.

It was **AGREED** that Cody Coyne and Winnie Gordon be added to the Roll of Ministers with full status.

#### 9. Nightingale Centre Minutes

The Minutes were reviewed. At the end of June, the centre was in net profit.

#### 10. Local Leadership (LLSG) & Visibility (VSG) Strategy Groups Update

VSG – It was **AGREED** that a request for a grant for speakers to Unicomms would be accepted. Derek would notify James Barry. This would be from next year's budget.

**ACTION: Chief Officer**

LLSG – Marion mentioned the teleconference in the link report. The LLSG was not producing notes from these meetings, so there was no record of discussions only the plan updates

. This was a concern.

#### 11. Annual Meeting Panel Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held 12/05/16 (Document **EC55/16**) were presented. The Panel had met yesterday. They would be bringing a discussion paper on the future of the

Meetings to the next EC meeting. This would need agenda time. Rev Prof Ralph Waller had agreed to be the 2017 Keynote Speaker.

2017 – There was a desire from the Panel to have more training in the 2017 programme, and of a professional nature. A reduction in time for reports was being considered, along with how breakout sessions groups could inspire delegates at their slots. It was noted that there was very little quality control for these events. The Evening sessions (Anniversary Service - 1 hour 15 mins and Opening Celebrations – 1 hour) have both been reduced in duration to try and create a more focussed event.

**12. President's Report**

The President's Report (Document **EC56/16**) was received. Marion Baker had deputised for the President at Rev Dr Len Smith's funeral and Neville Kenyon would deputise at Rev John Roberts' funeral.

**13. Chief Officer's Report**

The Chief Officer's report (Document **EC57/16**) was received. The statement on the referendum appeared to have been well-received.

**14. EC Link Reports**

The reports were accepted. Joan stressed the need to ensure that issues affecting Wales and Scotland were in communications.

Gwynn and Marion left at this point

**15. Key Messages**

The key messages were agreed

**16. Non responsive check-out**

The non-responsive check-out took place. Lynne Readett gave a reading by Robert Walsh in closing devotions and the meeting closed.

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

**Approved Minutes of Executive Committee  
Monday 12<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016  
The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow**

**Present:** Robert Ince (Convenor), Marion Baker, Joan Cook, Philip Colfox,  
Peter Hanley, (Honorary Treasurer), Lynne Readett, Jacky Woodman.

**In Attendance:** Dot Hewardine (General Assembly President ), Derek McAuley (Chief Officer), Nightingale Management Committee members and Centre Manager for Session 3, item 8 and Mary-Jean Hennis (Minute taker).

## **Monday**

### **Session 1**

*Opening Devotions: Peter Hanley read from Studs Terkel on "Hope".*

#### **1. Apologies**

Gwynn Pritchard  
Jacky Woodman for Tuesday.

#### **2. Minutes of the meetings held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016 – (DOC EC60/16)**

After minor alterations the Minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting on 14 July 2016

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

None

#### **4. EC Action List – (DOC EC61/6) - noted and updated**

#### **5. Investment Management - (DOC EC62/16 and EC 77/16)**

An informative informal discussion had been held on Sunday evening 11 September 2016. The position of the Ministers' Pensions Fund was noted. The Honorary Treasurer presented a detailed briefing paper.

A lengthy discussion was held. There was a need to take account of Charity Commission Guidance CC14. The EC has to take appropriate advice in dealing with investment matters. It was agreed that the Chief Officer would approach Charles Russell Speechlys, the General Assembly's legal advisers, for advice on the duties of trustees in light of the Unitarian Investment Panel arrangements and on the donation – **Action – Chief Officer.**

It was thought that any advice received would be applicable to other charitable bodies in how they managed their considerable resources.

The Chief Officer was asked to inform the Ministers' Pension Fund of the decision – **Action – Chief Officer.**

## **6. Vision Update –**

### **6.1 Report of College Development Project – (DOC EC63/16) – noted with the following:**

An outline proposal was received from the UCM Development Project Support Group on Unitarian Ministry Training and Education. There was recognition that there is a sense of urgency and impatience to get things up and running, The project is to be seen as a Denominational project. It has the support of the Reverends Sarah Tinker and Daniel Costley.

It was agreed that a formal secondment agreement will be needed between the EC and UCM for the project manager position. It was agreed that Dot would clarify the division of the work split.

It was agreed in principle to fund the project from restricted funds as this was a one-off cost and the sum of £16,500 was agreed.

It was agreed that no less than four and no more than six people would be identified as part of the detailed negotiations to form an advisory team. These people would consist of two people from UCM, one person from HMCO, one member of the MSG, one EC member and an independent person with the Chief Officer as the ex officio line manager.

It was noted that this proposal would be put before the next UCM meeting for approval.

### **6.2 Cambridge Campus Ministry - (DOC EC64/16) – noted with the following:**

A Campus Ministry proposal was presented by Cambridge Unitarian Church. It was noted that this involved supporting outreach through establishment of a university society rather than a ministerial post. As funding was limited it would have to be a pilot.

The EC was keen to stress that the knowledge and experience learned and to a certain extent publicity would be valuable for other congregations to learn from. Support was given on the basis that a workshop would be held at the Annual Meeting (booked by EC's part of "Next Steps") and other material produced to disseminate the lessons such as a manual and a video. The team were asked to produce clearly defined deliverables for each area of work that had been identified. A link to BUYAN was suggested.

It was agreed in that £10,000 would be awarded to this project on this basis and the Chief Officer to communicate with them on EC requirements.

**Action – Chief Officer**

The position regarding the Manchester proposal, where more discussions were to be held, was noted.

**6.3 Volunteering - (DOC EC65/16) - noted with the following:**

It was noted that whilst the details of volunteers were being received there were presently fewer in number than hoped for. The list was starting to take shape, broken down by districts and areas of expertise.

The Chief Officer noted that the new staff position would have a responsibility to promote volunteering and develop our policies, drawing upon the information received from a visit to a major charity which he and the Convenor had undertaken.

The challenge of young volunteers and the benefits for individual well-being of volunteering was highlighted by Philip

Marion's observations on fast moving change as it affected "Next Steps" (DOC EC66/16) were noted

## **Session 2**

### **Vision Update Continued –**

#### **6.4 Identity**

This issue had been explored in the informal discussion the previous evening which would be drawn together by the Chief Officer. **Action – Chief Officer.**

It was agreed that Philip would explore how "Brand Management" could assist and he and Peter Hanley agreed to consider further the process we might need to go through. It was necessary to ensure a clear link between the "what" and the "why". They were asked to bring a proposal to the next meeting. – **Action – Philip and Peter.**

#### **6.5 Web-based Resource**

Whilst linked to UCM proposal it was moving forward. A professional group will create the website as a "minimum viable product" but funding for longer-term maintenance needed to be identified.

#### **6.6 Engagement**

Marion and Dot have discussed actions. Dot has the original paperwork and will contact those involved in the original engagement group processes to

ascertain whether they would be interested in volunteering. This would include Summer School leaders who used the engagement group methods – **Action – Marion and Dot.**

The issue of Summer School accountability and how it linked to EC had emerged and was important to the achievement of this “Next Step” priority. **Action – Marion to talk to LLSG.**

### **6.7 Flexible Ways of Training and Integrated training**

See above.

### **6.8 New District Forum(s):**

A few responses from Districts but unlikely to be much progress by the Annual Meetings.

### **6.9 Sustainability - Buildings**

The Chief Officer would be contacting Historic England. Buildings Advisory Group was looking for more volunteers.

### **6.10 Sustainability - Financial**

Philip and the Convenor to work on this item and bring back to the November EC meeting – **Action – Philip and the Convenor**

### **6.11 Organisational effectiveness**

How volunteers are managed to undertake important tasks remains a key question and the EC should aim to have a proposal by the 2017 Annual Meetings.

### **6.12 Help is at Hand**

Louise Rogers had provided considerable detail for changing to a web resource. Marion to liaise with her on timescales and resources required for it to go “live” at the Annual Meetings. – **Action – Marion.**

### **6.13 Reduce our carbon footprint:**

The Building Advisory Group was pursuing but needed more support.

## **Session 3**

### **7. Nightingale Centre** (to be joined by management committee members and the centre manager)

Following a tour of the building the Centre Manager introduced planned development work of the Barleycrofts Cottages.

The Nightingale Centre Minutes (**DOC EC67/16**) were noted. The Budget would be presented to the November EC meeting.

Mary-Jean was absent from this session

## **Session 4**

### **8. Financial Report and Budget 2016/17**

The Management Accounts to the 31 July 2016 were noted. Marion highlighted the achievement of getting figures that were up to date.

The reason for the high figure in net movement in funds is due to receiving the money from the Summer School but not their expenditure.

A gift of £700 had been received from the United States for youth work.

Discussion took place on the implications of the decisions on investment on the funds held. It was agreed to rescind the instruction to invest in Newton Funds made at the previous EC meeting of 14 July 2016. The funds would be reinvested in Moneymarket until 8 October 2016 and on the basis of the advice received would be considered by Marion, the Hon Treasurer and the Convenor. They would have delegated authority to make a recommendation to the EC in November and take decisions on the £1.5million in the interim.

**Action – The Chief Officer, Marion, the Hon Treasurer and the Convenor.**

The Budget for 2016/17 was presented. David Joseph, Finance Manager was thanked for his work.

It was noted that the quota figures needed to be validated by December 2016. The increase in the Essex Hall Management fee and Grant reflects the lettings income of the building. The doubling in the Legacy column is due to an expected legacy about which we have been notified.

The Chief Officer recommended that the amount of £5,000 for support for the Ministry Training Project be removed from the budget and that the expenditure be taken from Restricted funds.

It is intended to improve reporting of the use of restricted funds and for spending on “Next Steps” priorities.

The EC formally **approved** the Budget 2016/17 and there would be no increase in the Quota in this budget.

### **9. Letter from Stephen Lingwood on Fossil Fuel Disinvestment – (DOC 69/16)**

The Convenor declared an interest in this item.

Stephen had written about investments in fossil fuels in a public letter which had appeared in The Inquirer. The use of collective funds made assessment difficult and information would need to be obtained from Newtons. Members expressed differing views on the merits of the proposal. There was a positive case for investment in renewables. It was felt that this issue required a General Assembly decision by way of a motion. This would give congregations and members the opportunity to discuss drawing upon a prepared paper.

It was agreed that Stephen would be encouraged to use the democratic processes of the Assembly to pursue this matter. **Action: Chief Officer**

**10. Annual Meetings Panel Minutes – (DOC EC70/16) – noted with the following**

Andrew Mason has been on site visits for the 2018 Annual Meetings.

BUYAN members are arranging the opening celebrations in 2018.

**Non-responsive check-out**

*Closing Devotions – Jacky – Our devotional piece today is a soundscape commissioned by one of the TED Fine Acts fellows, Bahia Shehab and is a sound recording of a female voice performing the Islamic call to prayer – a reflection on how things can change.*

After dinner there was an informal session to discuss the annual meetings paper - **(DOC EC71/16)**

**Tuesday**

**Session 5**

*Opening Devotions: Joan – read the Unitarian Ethos to reconnect everyone to this Ethos.*

**11. Follow up on Annual Meetings**

The Chief Officer to feedback the notes taken at the meeting last night to the Annual Meetings Panel who were asked to review the initial paper and to undertake consultation **Action – Chief Officer.**

**12. LLSG Current Activity – (DOC EC72/16) – noted with the following**

Marion to thank Louise Rogers for her work on Help is at Hand which is an ongoing task of important work and to clarify an end date. There will be no Strategy Reports at the GA, but a session on Help is at Hand will be planned as a “Next Step” priority. **Action – Marion.**

**13. MSG- Ministerial Roll decision making**

The implications of the current processes for the Ministerial Roll involving Interview Panel, MSG and EC was considered. It was agreed that if the Ministry Strategy Group can demonstrate their own confidence in the process, the EC would be happy to delegate full responsibility to them. Hon Treasurer and Philip to review the issue and bring back to EC. **Action – hon Treasurer and Philip.**

**14. Chief Officer Report – (DOC EC73/16) - noted**

It was agreed to promote the “What is a Unitarian?” video, which had received nearly 2000 views in three months, via Key Messages. **Action: Chief Officer**

**15. International Report – (DOC EC74/16) - noted**

The participation in the International Council of Unitarians and Universalists Conference in July 2017 and the International Association for Religious Freedom Europe and Middle East Regional Conference in August 2017 was noted.

**16. Presidents report – (DOC EC75/16) - noted**

**17. EC Link Reports – (DOC EC76/16) – noted with the following:**  
**Northern** – Newcastle upon Tyne in discussions on selling their church building.  
**East Cheshire** – Mossley unfortunately to close.

**Session 6**

**18. Key Messages to be distributed separately.**

To be issued when decision from UCM on development project.

**19. Confidential Items**

**19.1 Support for Ministers**

Discussion took place on support available to ministers within the Denomination. It was agreed:

- 1) that the MSG be asked to review the current position on conflict resolution, prevention and mentoring **Action: Chief Officer**
- 2) that the Ministerial Fellowship be asked to identify current support being used by their members **Action: Lynne**

**Non responsive check-out**

*Closing Devotions – Robert Ince on Unitarian ethos*

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

**Approved Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting  
Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016  
Essex Hall, London**

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

**In Attendance:** Dot Hewardine (General Assembly President), Derek McAuley (Chief Officer), Simon Bland, Ministry and Congregational Support Officer (item 14.) and Mary-Jean Hennis (Minute taker).

**Session 1**

*Opening Devotions: Gwynn read out the statement from the Rev Wyn Thomas, Chair of Unitarians in Wales, on the morning of the 9 November 2016, after the results of the American election were made known, in which he appealed for Unitarians and supporters to put their values and ethos into practice.*

**1. Apologies - None**

**2. Minutes of the meetings held on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> Sept 2016 – (DOC EC78/16)**

The Minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

**3. Matters arising for noting or to include in Agenda for later discussion: None**

**4. EC Action List - (DOCEC79/16) – noted and up-dated**

It was agreed that the safeguarding audit be postponed until 2017 with 31 March as a deadline for return of audit forms.

**5. President/Vice-President 2017/18 -**

There has been an oral nomination received from a District, however, this needs this to be an official communication accompanied by a statement from the nominee outlining their message for the General Assembly, particularly how they will support “The Next Steps”. The Chief Officer to liaise with the District Secretary and the Convenor to liaise with the nominee with a decision being made at the January EC meeting.

**6. MSG & LLSG Notes - (DOC EC80/16) – Noted with the following:**

**6.1 MSG** - The concerns of the MSG have been noted by the EC and it was agreed that Lynne would have a conversation with Rev Sarah Tinker.

It was noted that the MSG had only five members rather than seven as required which may be increasing the pressure. The Chief Officer to invite Rev Daniel Costley and Rev Sarah Tinker to the January EC meeting.

The recommendation by the MSG that the EC consider providing funding for improved facilitation training of mentors was supported with a proposal required. **Action – MSG and Simon Bland**

**6.2 LLSG** – The issue of the Summer School and accountability was being addressed and Janet Costley was in touch with Louise Rogers. Louise has been advised that the Chairs of the Groups will not be required to speak at the GA but should be ready to answer questions.

It has been noted that the LLSG is engaging with “The Next Steps” and the Help is at Hand manual update is progressing, with particular attention to the role of Treasurer to be included. **Action: Marion to liaise with Louise and to have a conversation with Margaret Robinson on the LEAP programme.**

**7. Training and Development Project – (DOC EC81/16) - report from Rachel Skelton – Noted with the following:**

The Project Organisational Structure report was received. It was proposed that some form of higher level purpose be included in the strategic plan “first point of reference in matters of spirituality” or “default denomination that people gravitate to”.

It was agreed to invite Rev Daniel Costley to the TED meeting as a representative of the MSG. Rachel will continue to liaise with HMCO.

EC thanked Rachel Skelton for producing the report and approved the project structure.

Discussion took place on the web project. There was a requirement for work by a professional web developer. The Hon Treasurer highlighted the need for a procurement process. It was reported that the Hibbert Trust had recently gone through a similar procurement process and it was agreed given the timescales involved that the company they had selected and subsequently used, who had proved very effective and now understood the Unitarian ethos, be approached for a proposal to undertake this work.

**8. Volunteer Pool – (DOC EC82/16) - noted with the following:**

It was noted that the flow of offers has now stopped and that once people see the list being used, it's worth will be recognised. There are many people who are already volunteering who do not appear on the list. The Pool would be promoted by EC members to link districts and at the Annual Meetings. Simon Bland would be managing it in future and he was asked to liaise with Melda Grantham, Welsh Department Secretary with regard to volunteers from Wales. Philip stressed the need to generate excitement amongst those who had already volunteered and that they needed to be contacted.

## 9. Next Steps Update

**9.1 Engagement Groups** – There has been an offer from the Summer School to lead facilitation training and there will be an exploration meeting to look at ways in which to progress this. This will need support and funding; they already have material and the original training documents. The EC indicated that it was open to a discussion with the Summer School team with regard to this offer and it was agreed that people attending the meeting will be able to claim travel expenses. This would then enable the EC members to step back.

### Session 2

**9.2 Identity** - It was agreed that the identity priority should be progressed and that professional help would be procured. Philip was thanked for the proposal he brought to the meeting. It was acknowledged that ultimately this was a deeply theological issue; our objective being a free and inquiring religion; rather than simply a branding exercise

It was agreed that the specification for the work and possible contractors need to be identified and delegated the Chief Officer, the Convenor, Philip and Lynne to liaise on the process. The individual or company would ideally have previously worked for a not for profit organisation. These recommendations to be emailed to the EC for a decision or brought back to the January EC meeting. It was agreed that an amount of £6,000 be made available

It was agreed that the Chief Officer would reserve a single slot session at the Annual Meetings on “Ethos and Identity”.

**9.3 Campus Ministry** – Joan had responded to the MDA and she will be attending a meeting on the 11 February 2017

**9.4 Building sustainability** – The Building Advisory Group chaired by Mike Barber will need more help on the priority but was very positive.

More generally it was felt that there was good progress being made on “The Next Steps”. Gwynn reported that he had withdrawn from any direct input to “Next Steps” as he is prioritising his congregation and their new minister.

### Session 2

**10. Financial Report – (DOC EC83/16) -noted with the following:**

Management Account to the 30 September 2016 was received. The Finance Manager is working to validate the congregational quota figures. The financial profile is moving away from live giving to increased support from the Essex Hall Trust and the B&FUA. Trustee expenses will be defined separately in the Annual Report.

The Convenor had raised some questions which the Chief Officer will be answering outside the meeting after he has spoken with the Finance Manager.

**11. Trustee Duties regarding Investment Matters – (DOC EC84/16) – noted with the following:**

Advice had been received from Charles Russell Speechlys on Trustee duties regarding investment matters. The Chief Officer was thanked for his work on this item. The recommendations were accepted.

The document produced by the Hon Treasurer was distributed (Appendix G (2)) – EC members were asked to consider the paper and email comments to the Hon Treasurer.

It was agreed that EC would obtain advice from an Independent Financial consultant or advisor. The Chief Officer and the Hon Treasurer were tasked to liaise with regard to a shortlist as a matter of urgency and commission the work .

It was agreed to reinvest the donation back in the money market for another month and thereafter at the discretion of the Chief Officer and the Hon Treasurer decisions would be made.

It was agreed to pay 20% of the costs of the research report commissioned by the MPF as it had proved useful in seeking the legal advice.

**12. Nightingale Centre Minutes - (DOC EC85/16) – noted with the following:**

It was noted that the Critical Incident Plan, when developed, would be presented to the EC.

The Centre Manager, Stella Burnley will be discussing issues affecting the youth programme with Rev John Harley.

**13. Nightingale Centre Budget 2016/17 – (DOC EC86/16) – noted with the following:**

The success of SACH (Send a child to Hucklow) was highlighted and could provide stories of the difference the Centre makes.

EC formally approved the Nightingale Centre Budget for 2016/17.

### **Session 3**

#### **14. Financial Sustainability -- (DOC EC87/16) – noted with the following:**

Simon Bland joined the meeting at this point and was introduced by the Chief as the newly appointed Ministry and Congregational Support Officer. The EC in turn introduced themselves.

The Convenor and Philip had produced a paper indicating the financial status across the Districts and Congregations having reviewed Annual Accounts that were available. Overall the summary showed that there were substantial resources and a surplus was being produced. This should help change the conversation at the Annual Meetings. Congregations need to be convinced to play their part and share in the vision the EC has for the future of the Movement. There needed to be a change to the current culture so that their money works for them and the Movement. Selling a building should be seen as a long-term loss, despite an immediate financial gain. .

Surprisingly, legacies have a very small part in congregational finances which opens opportunities at all levels.

Simon suggested starting an efficiency review could be valuable using principles of mutual support. He had already been in discussion with a major utility company with potential savings for congregations of 25%.

There are many ways to take this forward, by a coalition of the willing and good property management.

It was agreed that the Convenor would work with the Chief Officer and Simon on this issue for the January EC meeting.

The Convenor and Philip were thanked for doing this body of work.

Simon Bland left the meeting at this point.

#### **15. Conflict Management System – (DOC EC88/16) - note of meeting with Chief Officer – noted with the following:**

It was agreed that the report of the meeting held by the Chief Officer which highlighted the need for a process to address culture change rather than simply a traditional policy and training approach is to be forwarded to the MSG. The LLSG are also to be encouraged to work with this. **The Chief Officer to action.**

#### **16. Sustentation Fund Request - (DOC EC89/16)**

EC agreed to the request from the Sustentation Fund to be accepted as a restricted fund (thereby ending it's separate charity status). **The Chief Officer to respond.**

**17. Chief Officer Report – (DOC EC90/16) – noted**

The Chief Officer reported that he had met with Charles Russell Speechlys to obtain legal advice on the implications of CIO status.

Mary-Jean Hennis and Jacky Woodman left the meeting at this point

**18. Presidents Report – (DOC EC91/16)**

The President reported on the Ceremony at the National Cenotaph the previous day which had been an enormous privilege.

**19. District Reports – (DOC EC92/16)**

The difficulty in filling posts, particularly that of treasurer, had been highlighted at several districts.

It was noted that seventeen participants had been confirmed for the Findhorn Unitarian Network Experience Week and that the Covenant was a useful tool to ensure beneficiaries of grants reported back. This declaration would be circulated.

**Session 4**

**20. Annual Meeting Minutes – (DOC EC93/16) – noted**

It was noted that a consultation paper on future arrangements for the Annual Meetings had subsequently been issued.

**21 .Key Messages – as agreed**

**22. Confidential Items**

Discussion took place on issues of accountability for volunteer led groups outside of formal structures, particularly if funding support from the General Assembly was requested or liabilities incurred.

**23. Non responsive check-out**

*Closing Devotions – Marion Baker “In the Holy Quiet of This Hour” by R S Gilbert*