

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

**Approved Minutes of meeting of Executive Committee
Friday 13th and Saturday 14th January 2017
Essex Hall, London**

Present: Robert Ince (Convenor), Marion Baker, Joan Cook, Philip Colfox, Peter Hanley (Honorary Treasurer), Lynne Readett, Jacky Woodman (from item 7.).

In Attendance: Dot Hewardine (General Assembly President), Derek McAuley (Chief Officer), Barnaby Low from Investment Advisors, Barnett Waddingham for item 8, Rev Daniel Costley item 10, Rev Celia Cartwright, Janet Poole & Joy Foster item 11, Andrew Mason item 12 and Mary-Jean Hennis (Minute taker).

Session 1

Opening Devotions: Robert read a piece from "Humility, Anger and Grace" written by Nancy Crumbine – "Humility – with references to Alice in Wonderland"

1. Apologies

Gwynn Pritchard and Jacky Woodman (Friday morning)

2. Minutes of the meetings held on 14th November 2016 – (DOC EC02/17)
– after a minor alteration the Minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting on the 14th November 2016.

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

There was no Appendix N. The Convenor has two confidential items for item 22. And ethical Investment needed to be re-visited as part of investment item.

4. EC Action List - (DOC EC03/17) - noted and updated

Concern was raised with regard to Safeguarding not being given continuing attention as a serious issue for congregational action **Action: Marion to raise the issue at the LLSG meeting in February.**

5. GA President - (DOC EC04/17)-

EC agreed to the nomination of the Rev Charles VanDenBroeder as General Assembly President for 2017/18. **Action: Chief Officer to respond**

6. Honorary Membership - (DOC EC05/17)

EC agreed to the nomination of Rev Cliff Reed as an Honorary member of the General Assembly. **Action: Chief Officer.** It was noted that there is no fixed number for Honorary membership.

7. Update on Next Steps Priorities - (DOC EC06/17)

An update report was presented by the Chief Officer and progress on priorities considered:

Priority	Update
1. Develop a comprehensive response to explain our identity	It was reported that 11 contractors had been identified and invited to submit an expression of interest. The panel will decide who of the 5 will be invited to interview prior to the February EC meeting. Funding would be from the Millennium Fund.
2. Support a web based spiritual learning resource with UCM	Clarity about the scope of the project was required and the next step would be to conduct a definition workshop with Electric Putty, Rachel Skelton, the Convenor and Rev Kate Dean with a report to the February EC. The objective will be to produce a “minimum viable product” for the Annual Meetings requiring at least 9 days work. Thereafter it would take 6 months to fully develop the site. It was agreed in principle to a proposed limit of £8,000 from the Millennium Fund.
3. Engage with the wider community on today’s issues	Waiting for funding application from Jane Blackall
4. Increase collaboration with other like minded organisations	Needs more work, but positive feedback from Findhorn event at which Rev Martin Whitell had presented “Next Steps” Over £90,000.00 has been raised to date for the British Red Cross Clara Barton Fund and they are willing to send a senior member of staff to speak at the Annual Meetings. EC needs work to map out who we currently collaborate with eg Panel Affairs activities. The Chief Officer is representing the Accord Coalition at a fringe meeting on admissions to faith schools at the Lib Dem Conference in York in March.
5. Promote more Unitarian thought and writing	A guide to publishing work was in preparation for launch at the Annual Meetings by the Lindsey Press.
6. Formulate a plan to undertake Campus Ministry	The Cambridge congregation had indicated that they would not be drawing down the allocated funds for campus ministry as they were reviewing the project following the departure of the worker. Manchester District had expressed disappointment in lack of response to their interest expressed. Joan will be attending the MDA meeting in February. It was understood, however, that the original project was under review.
7. Support a new	Chief Officer to liaise with the Rev Andy Pakula with regard

congregational development	to progress by 2020 and thinking about the future. Districts, as shown in Derby with the East Midlands, could play an important role in any initiative. Church “planting” is widely recognized as essential for overall growth as other communities will close.
8.Grow our volunteer pool	To be progressed by Simon Bland - MCSO.
9.Find more flexible ways of training for Ministry	Linked to the TED project
10.Develop and integrate different forms of ministerial training (including recognised lay ministry training)	Linked to the TED project
11.Work with the Districts to create a new forum for national involvement	Will be progressed after the Annual Meetings.
12.Understand and reduce threats to building and financial sustainability	Simon had been looking at discounts on various initiatives open to congregations eg treasurers’ software, utilities and would be developing. He has met with the newly appointed property officer of the Quakers.
13.Review the effectiveness of our organisation	Philip to come to February EC with ideas as highlighted in ministry discussion (below)
14.Update “Help is at Hand” as an on-line resource	In-house IT resources will be able to offer support. No additional funding required. How this would be promoted at the Annual Meetings was an issue to consider?
15.Reduce our carbon footprint	BAP at Annual Meetings

- a) Cutting on Humanist Weddings provided by Philip - **(DOC EC07/17) noted**

8. Investment Advice - (DOC EC08/17)

Barnaby Low from Barnett Waddingham, Investment Advisors, joined the meeting and introduced the report they had prepared for the Executive Committee. Barnett Waddingham had been selected following a selection process undertaken by the Honorary Treasurer and the Chief Officer with interviews held on 14 December 2016.

Their recommendation was that the Executive Committee consider investing in a broader range of assets classes and changes to the governance structure. This would allow them to achieve a more efficient risk/return profile, a better alignment with ethical and other constraints and greater flexibility to develop the investment strategy over time. It was recommended that there be a move to a discretionary fund manager structure with a segregated approach set up specifically for the General Assembly.

The Convenor indicated that the concern was that once Newton's withdrew their discretionary role and no longer gave advice, were the Trustees acting in a way in which they should or were they in contravention of the Charity Commission guidance and even if they were acting correctly, were they actually getting the best return on the money invested.

A lengthy discussion took place in which the following issues were raised:

- The Unitarian Investment Panel had lots of experience, however, this was not sustainable in the longer-term
- Ethical consideration needed to be given greater attention
- It was agreed that the "mix" of assets could be widened eg property
- Cost of investment management should be clear
- Use of a discretionary fund manager will make the draw down of funds that will be required from the Bowland trust donation easier
- In selecting a discretionary manager the key was finding the "right" manager and Barnett Waddingham could assist.
- The asset types actually matters more than individual shares in improving returns
- Implications for trustees time commitment of more active management?
- Cost of holding a selection process for a new investment manager if the discretionary route was chosen
- Operational implications of the drawdown requirements for staff to fund both current running costs and "Next Steps"
- Professional advice will be required to help the Executive Committee in its decision-making.

The Convenor thanked Barnaby for attending the meeting and Neil Davies for preparing the Report.

It was accepted that there were three options:

1. No change to current arrangements
2. Remain with Newton and the UIP and take advice from an independent financial adviser
3. Discretionary management requiring a selection process

After further discussion, Option 2. was agreed.

It was agreed that the way in which the Trustees would operate was not contrary to due care but required them to take advice, agreed a revised Investment Policy in place as a matter of urgency.

It was agreed that the Trustees would be in a position to invest the £1,5 million donation once they had taken advice from the financial adviser.

Action: Hon Treasurer, the Chief Officer and Marion to progress this item.

The Executive Committee noted that due diligence had been exercised in the appointment process for Barnett Waddingham to give advice on the investment portfolio and they were duly appointed to provide financial advice.

8. (1) Ethical Policy – Appendix G (1) – (DOC EC08/17) – noted with the following;

It was agreed that the EC should develop a fuller policy on ethical investment taking into account Charity Commission guidance and the experience of other charities. It was suggested that this would be a good issue to engage with local communities and could be a focus for the 2018 Annual Meetings.

Action: Chief Officer to investigate an ethical investment policy expert as keynote speaker

It was agreed that a paper outlining the policy issues be produced – **Action: The Hon Treasurer**

Session 2

9. Updates on Strategy Groups

a) Email exchange with Rev Andy Pakula on growth **(DOC EC09/17) - noted**

10. Ministry Matters

a) TED update - **(DOC EC10/17) - noted with the following:**

The Convenor welcomed Rev Daniel Costley to the meeting.

The report of the project manager was received with a Steering group meeting planned for the following week to sign-off a plan which would enable her to produce the signed-off version of the prototype at the Annual Meetings.

A lengthy discussion took place on the relationship between the work of the MSG and the Executive Committee, especially with “Next Steps” project and Training and Education Development. The overarching issue for the MSG was strategic direction and where it came from recognising that clearly in governance terms the MSG report to the EC. Did this imply a need to focus on delivery?

The Training and Education review as it had developed had highlighted these issues for some time, particularly the link to the UCM project. . The Convenor assured Daniel that the Executive Committee valued the work of the MSG on training and education and that this would continue as both Rev Sarah Tinker and Daniel sat on the TED Steering Group.

It was highlighted that there needed to be greater clarity about what the objectives of the TED project were and this should be addressed at the next Steering Group meeting. This clearly linked to “Next Steps” priorities 9. And 10. (see above) and had major implications for capacity.

It was recognised that the MSG had focused on ministry with LLSG leading on local leadership training. The MSG would continue to focus on ministers in training, leaving the TED project to take forward the wider agenda for the future.

It was noted that there was a need to support “ministry in all its forms” as a key theme which raises issues of “how” this might be governed and delivered, especially given the limited and reducing resources. It was agreed that these issues needed further discussion by both the EC and the MSG.

The Convenor thanked Daniel for attending the meeting.

Session 3

11. Presentation by Women’s League

The Convenor welcomed Rev Celia Cartwright, Janet Poole and Joy Foster to the meeting and looked forward to this opportunity to explore their views of the future and how the Women’s League might be involved in “Next Steps”.

Janet gave a short history of the Women’s League and that currently there were 37 branches and 8 districts. They were the backbone of many churches and chapels and over the last 10 years plus, had raised over £100,000 for various Unitarian and other charities. Membership was, however, in decline and they were changing their focus to attract younger members. It was felt that the League was at a turning-point and “looking after each other and others” was emerging as a purpose. Being proactive in new areas was a challenge as was raising their profile. They appreciated publicity given recently by the Chief Officer and The Inquirer.

Discussion took place on differing perceptions of the role of women within the Unitarian Movement and the role of segregated activities. How differences were celebrated could be a fruitful discussion at an Annual Meeting? Joy emphasised that the original purpose was “to quicken the life of the church” which, despite the language, still remained valid ie to “enliven”.

In response to the question of how to raise their profile in the Movement it was suggested that they put an article in the General Assembly Annual Report. They are in the process of updating their web-site and requested that once this has been done a link from the GA website be established – this can be done.

The Women’s League thanked the EC for the invitation to attend this meeting and will be taking back the discussion held today to their next meeting in February.

The Convenor thanked the WL for attending the meeting.

Session 4

12. Annual meetings – (Andrew Mason attended)

a) Minutes of Annual Meetings Panel - (DOC EC11/17) – noted.

There will not only be a sole photographer and Ed Fordham will co-ordinate a group of photography volunteers linking to social media. .

The impact of the unexpected absence of Andrew Mason had been identified as a risk and previously identified mitigation measures were no longer operational. **Action: management of the risk to be reviewed by the Chief Officer and the Annual Meeting Panel.**

Ed has suggested that Philip, himself and one other person hold discussions at tables during lunch times on social media and congregational growth rather than an organised training stream.

Philip to liaise with James Barry with regard to the Visibility slot.

The Chief Officer and Andrew would be working on the breakdown of the Business Sessions. There will be no separate Strategy Group Report sessions as this would be included in an overall Annual report session with lots of time for questions and answers.

The Chief Officer to liaise with Rev John Harley with regard to the Youth slot.

The Convenor to liaise with Mike Tomlin with regard to the Investment Panel.

The opening ceremony and the Anniversary service have been trimmed down.

b) Survey Results - (DOC EC12/17) – noted with the following:

Disappointing response, however, of the people who responded 80% agreed that the meetings should be changed. The changes in time and format would impact on business activities. Discussion took place on how more electronic communication could save money, reduce environmental impact and improve participants' experience in the digital age.

It was agreed that the EC would propose a Motion to this effect:

“That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches supports changes to the length and format of the Annual Meetings; [as set out in report AGM XX/17]

and therefore, requests the Executive Committee and Annual Meetings Panel to bring forward proposals to the next Annual Meetings, including any amendments to the Constitution and By-laws, to enable such changes to take place for future Annual Meetings.” Text to be discussed with the Steering Committee on 16 January 2016.

The report would be required for the next Executive Committee meeting prior to be circulated in the February mail-out.

The Convenor thanked Andrew for attending the meeting

13. Non – responsive check out

Closing Devotions – Joan read a piece by Susan Manker-Seale – “ Out of Our Yearning”

Saturday

Session 5

*Opening Devotions: Philip recited an old family Unitarian Toast
Here's a health to all those that we love
Here's a health to all those that love us
Here's a health to all those that love them that love those, that love those that love them that love us.*

14. Annual Report 2015/16 - (DOC EC13/17) - noted with the following:

The Convenor indicated that the objective of the Annual Report was to:

- 1) Meet legal requirements.
- 2) Provide the framework for discussion and accountability to the GA.
- 3) Enable people outside the Movement to understand us.
- 4) Acknowledge the work of many volunteers and staff.

Concerns raised about the format and the visually impaired and the Rev John Clifford was to be contacted for advice.

The Annual Report was approved subject to any changes and the insertion of the outstanding Reports.

15. Annual Accounts 2015/16 - (DOC EC14/17) - noted with the following:

David Joseph and John Crosskey were thanked for their work on the Report.

The requirements of SORP had changed with the inclusion of a Consolidated Statement of Cash Flow page. **Action: Marion to enquire from her auditors whether this will also be a requirement from the Nightingale Centre on their Annual Accounts.**

Page 10 – a note with regard to the transfer of £109.412 is needed.

Page 20 should be amended to clarify the sub-totals

It must be highlighted that the principle of supporting Ministerial Students has not been lost.

Travel and subsistence of Trustees to be reviewed.

Issue of property valuation – Nightingale centre was noted.

Subject to the changes the Annual Accounts were approved.

16. Management Accounts - (DOC EC15/17)

The Chief Officer reported that the paper was not presented due to the focus on the Annual Accounts. Philip suggested that delegation of budget management responsibilities could be a key tool for staff to deliver the “Next Steps”. This would require changes to the budget structure. It was reported that the Finance Manager would be working on how to improve the current management accounts to include restricted as well as unrestricted funds.

17. Presidents Report - (DOC EC16/17) - noted with the following:

The President has noted that the Presidential Guidelines were out of date and she would undertake some revision work but was not able to do so until after the next Executive Committee meeting. Difficulties arise when congregations do not look at the Guidelines.

She suggested that a flyer should be sent to congregations when a new President and Vice-President are chosen with a photo, a short summary of the person and their contact email address on it, to enable contact to be made with them.

18. Chief Officer Report - (DOC EC17/17) – noted with the following:

The position on Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status was noted..

The Chief Officer has been invited to Cumberland Lodge in July to speak to a group of Commonwealth and Chevening Scholarship international postgraduate students, who were young leaders from around the world, on religious freedom.

19. EC Link Reports

Derby 2020 project is running well with support of the East Midlands District.

Jacky advised that a new EC Link member to NELUM should make contact as soon as possible.

Session 6

20. Key Messages to be circulated separately

21. Dates of future meetings - 2017:

February - Monday 20th – 9.00 – 5.30pm – Essex Hall, London

May - Friday 19th 9.00 – 5.30 pm & Saturday 20th 9.00 – 12 noon.
Essex Hall, London

July - Friday 14th 9.00 – 5.30 pm & Saturday 15th 9.00 – 12 noon. Essex Hall, London

September - Monday 25th 9.00 – 5.30 pm & Tuesday 26th 9.00 – 12 noon. (arrival at the Nightingale Centre Sunday evening 24th September).

November – Friday 17th 9.00 – 5.30pm Essex Hall, London.

Mary-Jean left the meeting at this point.

22. Confidential Items:

1. Chief Officer's Appraisal – Chief Officer left the meeting at this point

23. Non responsive check-out

Closing Devotions – Lynne Readett

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

Approved Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting
Monday 20th February 2017
Essex Hall, London

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

In Attendance: Dot Hewardine (General Assembly President), Derek McAuley (Chief Officer), Rev Charles VanDen Broeder (GA President Designate) and Mary-Jean Hennis (Minute taker).

Session 1

Opening Devotions: Marion read an extract from Waiting to be Discovered written by Penny Quest – “Each new morning”.

1. Apologies

Lynne Readett.

Rev Charles VanDenBroeder was welcomed to his first meeting as an observer. It was recognised that this would be the final meeting for three members and the current President and they were thanked for their contribution to the work of the Executive Committee.

2. Minutes of the meetings held on 13th & 14th January 2017 (DOC EC19/17) - the Minutes were signed as a true record of the meeting on the 13 & 14 January 2017.

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

4. EC Action List – (DOC EC20/17) - noted and updated

- It was agreed to appoint Martin Ternouth as a member of the MPF Committee.
- The Chief Officer was asked to liaise with Rev Andy Pakula regarding the future of the 2020 congregational development programme in order that there would be some clarity for the Annual Meetings. **Action: Chief Officer.**

5. Training and Education Development Report - (DOC EC21/17) - noted with the following:

The progress and preparation for the presentation at the Annual Meetings was highlighted. It was recognised that more needed to be done to promote the project and it was agreed to reiterate the first paragraph of the key message from the September EC meeting.

Further discussions had been held on the Web Project and the proposal of starting with “permanent beta” state was queried. The Convenor agreed to raise this concern at the planning meeting with the Contractor on 3 March 2017.

6. Next Steps Update - (DOC EC32/17) – noted and updated

Robert helpfully summarised “Next Steps” as having four cornerstones:

1. Our identity.
2. Communication – the web project is part of this.
3. Education and Training.
4. Sustainability.

Priority	Update
1. Develop a comprehensive response to explain our identity	Kate Eden, a former head of brand with Cancer Research has been appointed to assist following a competitive tendering process. The Convenor would be meeting her on 24 February 2017 to discuss the project objectives, initial thinking and a revised timetable. Between 4 and 7 stakeholders have been identified for Kate to have individual conversations with to enable insight to the Movement. The need for a wider age range of interviewees was highlighted.
2. Support a web based spiritual learning resource with UCM	A meeting was planned with Electric Putty, web designers 3 March 2017 and the timetable to present at the Annual Meetings would be achieved. The EC would then need to consider the longer-term sustainability of the project.
3. Engage with the wider community on today’s issues	Still waiting for funding application for engagement group training. It was suggested that a member of the new EC needed to champion this priority.
4. Increase collaboration with other like minded organisations	Comprehensive report received from Rev Dr Ralph Catts with regard to Findhorn. Nearing the £100,000 mark for the British Red Cross Clara Barton Fund.
5. Promote more Unitarian thought and writing	A guide to publishing work will be launched by the Lindsey Press at the Annual Meetings.
6. Formulate a plan to undertake Campus Ministry	Joan had attended the meeting of the Manchester District Association with the President as one of the speakers. There remains the possibility of a bid for funds to move forward some form of “outreach” but it will probably not be chaplaincy or campus ministry.
7. Support a new congregational	The Chief Officer to liaise with the Rev Andy Pakula with regard to the future.

development	
8.Grow our volunteer pool	Pool information Handed over to Simon Bland to manage.
9.Find more flexible ways of training for Ministry	See TED project
10.Develop and integrate different forms of ministerial training (including recognised lay ministry training)	See TED project
11.Work with the Districts to create a new forum for national involvement	Will be progressed after the Annual Meetings.
12.Understand and reduce threats to building and financial sustainability	Simon Bland to take the opportunity at the GA to introduce his role and outline proposals to assist congregations.
13.Review the effectiveness of our organisation	Work in progress. It was suggested that there was a need to integrate the spiritual with the organizational if we were to succeed.
14.Update “Help is at Hand” as an on-line resource	In-house IT resources will be able to offer support. No additional funding required, however, how it would be promoted was an issue to consider?
15.Reduce our carbon footprint	Building Advisory Panel workshop to be held at the Annual Meetings

7. LLSG Update – a verbal update of teleconference of 14 February 2017

LEAP - the introduction to LEAP has been posted on Facebook and will be circulated in a general mail-out. It will be launched at the GA by Margaret Robinson and Rev John Harley.

Help is at Hand – Louise Rogers working on this and will be doing a presentation at the Annual Meetings. It was suggested that it would be a good idea for Louise and Simon Bland to discuss and that information on Governance with regard to behaviour at meetings should be included. **Action: The Chief Officer to follow-up.**

Safeguarding – LLSG were organising a one day conference with safeguarding as one of the items on the agenda. They were asked to look at the language being used as safeguarding was not a health and safety issue but a part of Unitarian mission. It remains the highest risk area. **Action: The Chief Officer will contact CCPAS to enquire about a video on Safeguarding that could be shown during the plenary session at the Annual Meetings. The Convenor will also include this issue in his report.**

8. MSG Notes - (DOC EC22/17) – noted with the following:

It was noted with regret that the Rev Daniel Costley has resigned from the MSG due to other work commitments and he was thanked for his contribution.

The Recommendations of the Ministry Strategy Group and Interview Panel were approved

1. that the following be approved for Ministry training commencing September 2017:
 - Michael Allured - to be trained for the ministry based at Harris Manchester College, Oxford over 3 years
 - Melda Grantham – to be trained for the ministry based at Harris Manchester College, Oxford over 3 years.

2. that having successfully completed their probationary period; the Rev John Carter, Rev Dr Maria Curtis, Rev Jo James, Rev Anna Jarvis, Rev Matthew Smith and Rev Kate Whyman be added to the Roll of Ministers with Full Status.

Discussion took place on the wider implications of the TED project outcomes for the current structures around Ministry. Greater clarity about standards and delivery would be valuable. There were organisational and governance issues which needed to be looked at. It was agreed that EC and the MSG needed to work together on these issues as they emerged. **Action: Chief Officer to co-ordinate.**

Session 2

9. Executive Committee Co-option Process

The outcome of the EC election process and the process required to fill the three vacancies that remained were discussed. A lengthy discussion took place on a response to the lack of EC candidates. It was agreed to initiate the process for co-option to enable nominees to be considered by the EC at the May meeting. This would include a trustee skills audit of the incoming EC to identify any skill gaps which would be used to encourage those with particular skills to come forward. The need for nominations to be supported by congregations (s) with ten or more members was reinforced. **Action: Chief Officer**

10. Executive Committee Motion on Governance

A discussion took place on the failure to secure sufficient nominations to ensure an election was held. It was recognised that this was a denominational problems with congregations, districts as well as the national movement finding it difficult to fill positions on committees. This required positive actions and therefore was reflected in the “Next Steps” priorities about sustainability and volunteering. It was noted that any changes to the appointment processes would require Constitutional amendments to be agreed and submitted six months before the Annual Meetings in 2018.

It was also felt that there needed to be greater understanding more widely within the Unitarian Movement of the purpose of the Executive Committee and

the commitment required and all the efforts of the Committee members over many years to improve this had not been successful. The legacy of the past was highlighted. There was general acceptance that the suggested Motion was not likely to be the best way to achieve its objective of engaging the Movement in the wider problem and it was withdrawn.

11. Annual Meeting Report – (Future arrangements) – (DOC EC23/17)

The report of the Annual Meetings Panel in support of the Motion was approved for submission to the Annual Meeting. It was agreed that Jacky would propose and Rev Martin Whitell second.

12. Stipend Committee Report - (DOC EC24/17)

The Report of the Stipend Review Committee was approved for submission to the Annual Meetings.

13. Update on Annual Meetings – 2017

The Chief Officer reported:

- There were no major changes to the programme.
- The absence of Motions will create space for various other presentations reporting back on past Resolutions::
 1. British Red Cross – talking about their work in Syria and with refugees in this country and a Q&A session.
 2. Rev Feargus O'Connor on Dr Hadwen Trust.
 3. Gold mining in Transylvania– Rev John Midgley had been approached to report back.
- Simon Bland would speak to his role and Rev Sarah Ascher would have more time to speak on ICUU.
- Chairs for the various EC slots were chosen as follows:
 - Identity – Robert
 - TED - Jacky
 - Campus Ministry – Joan
 - EC “Next Steps” – Robert
 - Visibility – Philip to ascertain the position.
- All EC members to attend the newcomers reception – **Action: Chief Officer to invite Rev Matthew Smith to this session.**
- Dot and Marion to liaise with regard to the EC handover section.
- EC has identified someone to do the Anniversary Appeal – Marion to liaise.

Session 3

14. Follow up on Investment Management - (DOC EC33/17)

The Honorary Treasurer presented a report commissioned from Barnett Waddingham on “Investment Advice and Portfolio Objective Considerations” dated 17 February 2017.

A lengthy discussion took place on the recommendations in the report and the next steps suggested. It was agreed that the charges that might be incurred

to placing funds with Newton would be checked as it was understood that these would in fact be zero. **Action: Hon Treasurer/Chief Officer.** Marion reported back on the meeting of the Unitarian Investment Panel held on 15 February 2017 and the defensive strategy adopted by Newton in this very uncertain period.

The relative performance of the Newton SRI Fund for Charities and the Newton Growth and income Fund for Charities. There are also other Newton funds available. The risks in the short-term were highlighted, particularly as the General Assembly would need to draw down funds over time to support current and anticipated spending on "Next Steps". In the current year up to £150,000 was budgeted on the former and it was likely £100,000 on the latter; although this may slip into the 2018/19 financial year.

It was agreed to invest £1.2 million in the Newton Growth and income Fund for Charities.

It was also agreed that the Executive Committee would retain Barnett Waddingham as investment adviser.

It was noted that the Honorary Treasurer would bring forward proposals for ethical investment to the next Meeting. **Action: Honorary Treasurer.**

It was agreed to appoint the following as authorised signatories for Newton for both the General Assembly and the Nightingale Centre:

- Derek McAuley
- Peter Hanley
- David Joseph
- Marion Baker.

and to remove Robert Ince and Martin Whitell.

The Convenor, Chief Officer, Hon Treasurer and Marion were thanked for their considerable work over recent months.

15. Nightingale Centre Minutes – (DOC EC25/17) – noted with the following:

It was agreed to appoint John Rowland to the Nightingale Centre Management Committee.

16. Nightingale Centre Accounts – (DOC 26/17) – noted

The achievements and performance report was commended. The Nightingale Centre Accounts were formally approved by the EC.

17. Sustentation Fund Accounts – (DOC 27/17) - noted

It was reported that the merger of the Fund with the General Assembly was proceeding with legal advice having been obtained.

18. Management Accounts to 31 December 2016 – (DOC EC28/17) – noted with the following:

The Finance Manager had included in the report additional information with a balance sheet and a note showing the movement affecting designated, restricted and endowment funds. This would enable the draw-down of the Bowland Trust donation to be tracked.

It was highlighted that the substantial increase in funds held by the General Assembly, with an anticipated further restricted donation, reinforced the responsibilities of the Executive Committee members as trustees.

Session 4

19. Presidents Report - (DOC EC29/17) – noted with the following:

The Convenor thanked Dot for attending the EC meetings and for her valuable input and advice.

20. Chief Officer Report – (DOC EC30/17) – noted with the following:

The Chief Officer highlighted item number 6 in his report. Support was given to the Assembly of Unitarians in Europe (AUE) 2-5 June 2017 and it was agreed that an Executive Committee member should attend and that the H Winder restricted fund be used to offer two bursaries for young people.

21. EC Link Reports – (DOC EC31/17) - noted.

The Convenor gave a short update from Sheffield District Association who had agreed to meet annually. Jacky reported that she had received thanks from several people in NELUM for her work as EC Link.

22. Report from Findhorn Unitarian Network (FUN) Experience Week – (DOC EC32/17) – noted with the following:

It was noted that the project highlighted the importance of collaborative working and that Matthew Smith had attended and may have feedback for the May EC meeting.

23. Key Messages – to be distributed separately.

24. Non responsive check-out

Closing Devotions – Jacky Woodman

meditation on a poem by NP van Wyk Louw.

*Ek sit 'n klippie op 'n rots:
- mens moet jousef vergewis:
'n beitel moet kan klip breek
As hy 'n beitel is –'*

*Loosely translated as:
I place a stone, upon a rock:*

*I need to satisfy myself:
A chisel must break stone
If it is a chisel.*

The GA President, GA President designate and Mary-Jean left the meeting at this point.

25. Confidential Items

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

**Approved Minutes of Executive Committee
Friday 19th and Saturday 20th May 2017
Essex Hall, London**

Present: Marion Baker, Philip Colfox, Peter Hanley (Honorary Treasurer)
Matthew Smith

In Attendance: Charles VanDenBroeder (General Assembly President),
Derek McAuley (Chief Officer), Robert Ince and Kate Eden (Session 3 item
14) and Mary-Jean Hennis (Minute taker).

Session 1

*Opening Devotions: Marion read from the poem "God knows" by Minnie
Louise Haskins"*

1. Apologies and Resignation of Member

Lynne Readett

The resignation of Gwynn Pritchard for health reasons on 15 May 2017 was
received and he was thanked for his contribution to the Executive Committee.

2. Appointment of EC Convener

Marion Baker was appointed as the Convener for 2017/2018

3. Minutes of the meetings held on 20th February 2017 - (DOC EC36/17)

The Minutes were signed as a true record of the EC meeting held on 20
February 2017

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

Appendix Q – (DOC EC52/17)

5. Co-option of members – Mary-Jean left the room at this point

Nominations were received and considered. It was agreed to co-opt Sheena
McKinnon, Christina Smith and Rev Dr Rob Whiteman.

The new vacancy arising from the resignation of Gwynn Pritchard was
discussed and it was agreed that Peter Hanley and Matthew Smith form a
nomination group to identify suitable candidates who would be required to
complete the nomination papers used in the recent co-option exercise. There

would not be a further round of public advertisement on this occasion. **Action: Peter Hanley and Matthew Smith**

6. EC Action List - (DOC EC37/17)

17/18 July 2015

Page 5 item 7	Risk – safeguarding audit repeated in 2016	CO	Re-scheduled for Spring 2017
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12/13 September 2016

Page 7 Item 13.	Ministerial Roll decision-making to be reviewed	Hon Treasurer and Philip	Delegated to Simon Bland
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14 November 2016

Page 4 Item 11.	Contribute 20% of the costs of the research report	CO	CO to check whether issue is still relevant
Page 4. Item 12	NC – Critical Incident Plan	MB	The Plan had been prepared and would be presented to July EC

13/14 January 2017

Page 5. item 8 (1)	Ethical Policy – investigate ethical investment policy expert for 2018 Annual Meetings	CO	To be raised at next AM Panel
Page 8, Item 15.	Nightingale Centre Accounts – SORP changes. Check with auditors	Marion	Marion has checked with the auditors, who had confirmed that due to the asset threshold, does not affect N/C

Updated 11 May 2017

7. Next Steps update - (DOC EC38/17)

The Chief Officer summarised the background to “The Next Steps” and lessons learnt from the previous strategy objectives. The “Next Steps” evolved from the two Vision days held in Manchester and Sheffield. After discussion it was agreed to amend the format of the update document to incorporate two further columns ie “Champion/Contact person” and “Actions “ and “people

involved” as part of the Project Plan” which should energise people to move forward.

Appendix Q – DOC EC52/17 – National Growth produced by Martin Ternouth was discussed at this point – **Chief Officer to respond to Martin consider how this might be further discussed.**

Priority	Progress	Agreed Funding
1. Develop a comprehensive response to explain our identity	Project progress with workshop at Annual Meeting. See reports on EC agenda and decisions required.	Robert Ince would continue as lead (see item 14.)
2. Support a web based spiritual learning resource with UCM	Demonstrated at a workshop at the Annual Meetings in April 2017 although there were technical issues. Need to consider the long-term sustainability of the project.	Robert Ince would continue as lead (see item 14.)
3. Engage with the wider community on today's issues (<i>today's issues, should be altered to read spirituality and social issues</i>)	Summer school Team asked to prepare a proposal for training in facilitation skills for running engagement groups Asked to send a request for assistance toward the cost of the February meeting to do initial planning for your “Facilitation Summit” within the next week. Template sent for completion but still not yet returned. Suggestion of EC Champion.	No progress as yet, The question is “how will it be different to facilitation in the past?” Matthew and Chief Officer to liaise.
4. Increase collaboration with other like minded organisations	Linked to priority 1. Findhorn Unitarian Network supported in leadership training Collaboration on fund-raising with Red Cross and Dr Hadwen's Trust successfully showcased at the Annual Meetings in plenary. Plaque from the Red Cross will be displayed in the Reception of Essex Hall. This was displayed as a news item on home page of GA website after the Meetings.	After the success of collaborating with Findhorn, which other organization could we collaborate with? We already work with Liberty as a faith body. It was agreed that a paper on current collaborations be prepared for EC. Action: CO
5. Promote more Unitarian thought and writing	Linked to priority 1. Lindsey Press view is that their focus is on high quality publications of which we can be proud. Current funding models enable costs to be covered on initial internal sales. The main challenge is marketing externally. An updated online version of “How to publish your work” was launched at the annual Meetings with review in the latest	

	Inquirer.	
6. Formulate a plan to undertake Campus Ministry	Cambridge Unitarian outreach project was presented at the Annual Meetings. Possibility of a bid from MDA for some form of "outreach" but not in form of chaplaincy or campus ministry	It was noted that the MDA will not now be making an application.
7. Support a new congregational development	Need to liaise with Rev Andy Pakula on future	Further discussion at next EC
8. Grow our volunteer pool	Volunteer Pool listing identified and handed over to Simon Bland to manage	Philip to lead and present ideas to July EC
9. Find more flexible ways of training for Ministry	See Training and Education Development Project (TED) report on agenda	See items 9 & 10
10. Develop and integrate different forms of ministerial training (including recognised lay ministry training)	Linked to priority 9.	
11. Work with the Districts to create a new forum for national involvement	A few responses to requests for views by Marion Baker. Will be taken forward after Annual Meetings in April 2017	It was agreed would be incorporated into Priority 8. (above)
12. Understand and reduce threats to building and financial sustainability (noted this issue is not just about the buildings but also about the people)	Support Officer to progress specific initiatives eg utility, financial software for congregations. See report Building sustainability being pursued by MCSO with discussions held with The Quakers and Historic England	Simon to be invited to the July EC meeting to talk about strategic opportunities as well as practical support.
13. Review the effectiveness of our organisation	Longer term priority.	Philip to resend his email to EC
14. Update "Help is at Hand" as an on-line resource	Update shown at workshop at Annual Meetings	Needs to be in place by Annual Meetings in 2018.,
15. Reduce our carbon footprint	Building Advisory Group workshop at Annual Meetings in April 2017	CO advised BAG to purchase one set of monitoring equipment as a pilot, to observe its effectiveness.

8. TED report - (DOC EC39/17) – noted with the following:

Update on TED and Web Project with the deadline of 30 September 2017 for current phase noted. A conference on assessment will be held on 12/13 June 2017, including the Chief Officer and the Convenor.

The proposal from the UCM Committee to the EC for a strategic direction for learning and development was approved. The importance of clarity for potential ministerial students was recognised.

9. LLSG Notes - (DOC EC40/17) - noted with the following:

The proposal to Safeguarding Training in November was discussed. **Action: Chief Officer to liaise with Rev John Harley regarding the programme.**

10. Worship Studies Course Proposal - (DOC EC41/17) - noted with the following:

Rev Winnie Gordon was thanked for her work as administrator on the Worship Studies Course.

It was noted that the assessment process was set out in the Ministerial Guidelines. **Chief Officer to respond.**

It was agreed that the EC should approve admission to the Roll of Lay worship Leaders as it did with the Rolls of Ministers and Lay Pastors. **The Convenor to report back to WSC.**

Session 2

11. Annual Meetings

a) Minutes of Panel held on 21 February 2017- (DOC EC42/17) - noted

b) Review of Annual Meetings 2017 – some points

- Good feedback generally
- Opening Celebration by Welsh Districts was outstanding and sets a high standard for the future
- Visibility session did not work as well as expected due to technical problems
- Disappointment that there was little coverage of the Business sessions in the GA zette which was raised by the FOY Society in their review.
- Resolution follow-up had worked well. The need for EC being more pro-active with future Motions was accepted if we were to have a real impact.

c) 2018 Annual Meetings:

- There were some thoughts about who will do the Anniversary Service, not confirmed.
- It was noted that there were not enough training sessions in 2017 and LLSG should lead on this in 2018.

- Rev Martin Whitell had again agreed to co-ordinate worship.
- The Chief Officer and Andrew Mason will visit the proposed venue to finalise the contract.
- It was agreed that Liz Button and Sue Catts be appointed to the Annual meetings Panel with Matthew as the EC link member.

12. Nightingale Centre Minutes of 11 February and 1 May 2017- (DOC EC43/17) – noted with the following;

- Bookings are well above budget with significant bookings from non-Unitarians and proportionally better from Unitarians than in the past resulting in a secure cash flow.
- Five year insurance check was 100%
- Renovations are being completed in BarleyCroft.
- A Grant of £18,000 had been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a World War I project.

13. Management Accounts - (DOC EC44/17) – noted with the following:

- Noted that there is now full occupancy in Essex Hall resulting in additional Grant support from the Trust to the General Assembly yet spending on professional fees, mainly due to investment management advice was above budget.
- It was noted that if a congregation is growing, it's quota payments should reflect this.
- David Joseph was thanked for his work.

Session 3

14. Identity project (Kate Eden and Robert Ince attended)

a) Cover report - (DOC EC45/17) - noted

b) Identity Guidelines - (DOC EC46/17) – noted with the following:

The most important aspect of identity was “What do we stand for? which then has to be expressed in words and images. The Guidelines needed to be widely available. There was also a need to be more pro-active on social media such as FaceBook.

The following seven points were highlighted and agreed:

- 1. Strapline:** It was agreed that a decision on the strapline would be made during session 5 item 18 on Saturday morning.
- 2. Lower case:** it was agreed to use lower case lettering in keeping with the current Unitarian logo.
- 3. Lower case:** It was also agreed to use lower case place names in the logo's eg “bristol unitarians”.

4. Website: Agreed to a budget to transition the website to the colours, graphics and messaging of the new identity, whilst preserving the website's underlying structure

5. Social media: EC agreed to look strategically at communication.

6. Testimonial campaign: It was agreed that Robert would explore and give the EC options on how this item can be implemented and how it would be linked to the roll out of the new identity.

c) Identity Proposal - **(DOC EC47/17) - noted**

Implementation and management: Robert was asked to prepare proposals for the July EC meeting.

The Convenor thanked Kate for her work.

Robert gave an update on the Website Project; the design was completed and he was concentrating on acquiring content and ensuring sustainability. The project will not require GA funds. He is bringing together six volunteers who want to be part of the project's development. Rachel Skelton is checking the modifications required after the GA before final payment is made to Electric Putty. Robert to report to the Chief Officer on progress.

15. Investment Management Update –

The Hon Treasurer updated EC on the meeting held with Counsel which he and the Chief Officer had attended. A Guidance Note for the Unitarian Movement on investment matters is being prepared which should also clarify the role of the Unitarian Investment Panel.

Session 4

16. EC ways of working

Discussion took place on how to encourage people to volunteer to serve. There was a need to be clear about which decisions needed to be made by the EC. Reducing the length of the meeting to one day (except in September) was agreed and would require better control of the Agenda with the Minutes from other groups generally taken as read, with points needing to be raised in advance. Action points to be produced within 2 weeks of the EC meeting. Papers to support Agenda items to reach MJ and Derek two weeks before the EC meeting.

District Links were discussed and will be confirmed after new EC members co-opted.

Chief Officer to produce an organisational chart, showing interconnection between groups.

15. Non – responsive check out

Closing Devotions – Philip read from Earl Morse Wilbur – “The meaning of the lesson of Unitarian History.

Saturday

Session 5

Opening Devotions: Peter read an excerpt from “Prism” by Robert Hooker – “Problem of the one and the many”

16. Follow-up to day 1

The Strap-line was accepted with the colour combination still to be agreed on. It was agreed that Kate would be asked to look at the colour combination already suggested to ensure that it does not trigger negative connotations and look at the palette.

17. Past Presidents Report - (DOC EC48/17) - noted with the following:

The Guidelines for President visits/role etc has been reviewed by Dot and the Chief Officer wished to consider it further before presenting it to the July meeting. **Action: Chief Officer**

. Dot was thanked for her work on this project.

18. Presidents Report - (DOC EC49/17) - noted

19. Chief Officer Report - (DOC EC50/17) – noted with the following:

Item 2 – Lancashire Collaborative Ministry CIO – Chief Officer’s recommendation to accept the invitation to become a nominating body was agreed.

It was observed that this proposal raised the question of how do you encourage further “live giving” from others after such a generous donation.

Item 4 – Joan Kereki Legacy – The need to be creative in developing the collaboration with the Hungarian Unitarian Church and the colleges was highlighted. The Chief Officer’s recommendation that the funds be placed in a Newton Growth and Income Fund for Charities separate account was agreed,

More generally it was agreed that the GA should levy a charge for the administrative costs for such larger restricted funds as the B&FUA currently does.

20. EC Link Reports - (DOC EC51/17) – noted with the following; The Convenor gave a verbal report on the ECU

- ECU have decided to develop their Facebook page.
- Mossley Church which has now closed had discussed the dispersal of funds and had appreciated the advice from the Chief Officer.

Session 6

21. Key Messages to be circulated separately (Matthew has volunteered to look over the key messages before publication)

22. Dates of future meetings - 2017:

July - Friday 14th 9.00 – 5.30 pm Essex Hall, London.

September - Monday 25th 9.00 – 5.30 pm & Tuesday 26th 9.00 – 12 noon.
(arrival at the Nightingale Centre Sunday evening 24th September).

November – Friday 17th 9.00 – 5.30pm Essex Hall, London

23. Non responsive check-out

Closing Devotions – Matthew read from “Towards Beloved Community” by Cathal Courtney

24. Confidential Items – Mary-Jean left the room at this point. The Chief Officer left prior to consideration of staff remuneration.

General Assembly of Unitarian
and Free Christian Churches

Approved Minutes of Executive Committee
Friday 14th July 2017
Essex Hall, London

Present: Marion Baker (Convenor), Philip Colfox,
Peter Hanley (Honorary Treasurer), Christina Smith, Matthew Smith,
Sheena McKinnon, Lynne Readett and Rob Whiteman

In Attendance: Charles VanDenBroeder (General Assembly President),
Derek McAuley (Chief Officer), and Mary-Jean Hennis (Minute taker).

Session 1

Opening Devotions: Lynne read from All the Gifts of Life written by Gary Kawolski – “Knots” – See things from another point of view.

1. Welcome to new EC Members

The Convenor welcomed Rob Whiteman, Sheena McKinnon and Christina Smith to their first EC meeting having taken up the position formally at the meeting.

2. Apologies - None

3. Minutes of the meetings held on 19th & 20th May 2017- (DOC EC54/17)

The Minutes were signed as a true record of the EC meeting held on 19th and 20th May 2017.

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

Pg. 4 item 7 – Next Steps – no 14 Help is at Hand – concerns about the timescales were noted at the Merseyside District meeting and could revision be possibly staff led?

Pg. 8 item 19 Chief Officer Report – (DOC EC50/17) – no 4. – Joan Kereki Legacy – the funds have been received and placed with Newton.

5. EC Action List – (DOC EC55/17)

Executive Committee Action List

17/18 July 2015

Page 5 item 7	Risk – safeguarding audit repeated in 2016	CO	To be included in forthcoming
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			mailing for return by end of 2017
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19/20 May 2017

Page 3.	Next Steps – engage with community	M Smith and CO,	Discussions have been initiated
Page 4	Next Steps – building and financial sustainability	CO	Simon Bland to attend Sept EC meeting
Page 4.	Next Steps – review effectiveness of organisation	P Colfox	To re-circulate his email
Page 5.	LLSG – WSC	CO	LLSG to discuss at August meeting

6. Identity

a) Implementing the Identity Project - (DOC EC56/17)

There was a lengthy discussion on the document submitted by Robert Ince on implementing the next stage of the “Identity” project. It was acknowledged that the identity guidelines would be helpful in initiating conversations within the wider Unitarian and Free Christian community and that there would undoubtedly be a creative tension which reflected our diversity. This was positive and EC links would be seeking to involve Districts in discussions on how we saw ourselves and then how this is reflected in the way we present ourselves to the outside world.

Two options were offered for consideration regarding professional help, it was agreed to support Option 1 (to employ an experienced person in brand management) with some caveats and a draft job description and person specification for a temporary staff position was requested for the September Executive Committee meeting. **Action: Chief Officer to liaise with Robert Ince.**

The other proposals were supported in the following order of priority; testimonial campaign, consistent identity, photo competition and updating leaflets.

b) Identity Guidelines – (DOC EC57/17) –

It was noted that the document has similar content to that previously distributed, but re-ordered. The fist image has been replaced with a scale.

c) Comments regarding Strapline – (DOC EC58/17) - noted

7.TED Project

a) Update - (DOC EC59/17) – noted

b) Proposal – (DOC EC60/17) –

A proposal from the TED Project Support Team was presented to take the project forward from October 2017.

It was agreed to:

1. Work with stakeholders, including the Ministry Strategy Group, in developing the Ministerial training pilot programme to begin in September 2018
2. Continue the work of the TED Project from 1 October 2017 for the financial year 2017-18 to further develop the Framework for Lifelong Learning encompassing ministerial learning and development.
3. Set up a Foundation CIO, independent of the General Assembly, and do the preparatory work required for the Foundation ultimately taking responsibility for all Unitarian Learning and Development.
4. Allocate Next Steps funding for the costs of this development work.

A detailed proposal for the governance of the development work was requested for the next meeting of the Executive Committee in September 2017.

It was noted that the CIO would be responsible for co-ordinating delivery of education and training and the GA would retain responsibility for assessment. The implications for current providers was highlighted and raised complex issues that needed to be carefully considered in any change process.

Session 2

8. 2020 Congregational Growth Report – (DOC EC61/17) – noted with the following: Christina declared an interest in this item

A progress report was received from the Leadership Team of the 2020 Congregational Growth Project on Derby Unity, an initiative supported by the East Midlands District. Over the first 16 months attendance has risen to between 16-22 and a core group of 8 has formed. The learning to date has been shared at the Annual Meetings. The views of the team on future expansion were presented.

It was recognised that to roll-out the 2020 Congregational Growth Project to other locations, which was an integral part of the original aspiration and now a “Next Steps” priority, required additional capacity and finance and this would be considered at a future EC meeting.

It was agreed that the 2020 Leadership Team would be asked to present a detailed plan to the November EC meeting. **Action: Chief Officer to liaise with Rev Andy Pakula and invite him to the November EC meeting.**

9. Next Steps – Collaboration – Presentation

The Chief Officer gave a presentation on current collaboration with other organisations, including key bodies and individuals. These had included BHA, ICUU, CLAS, Accord Coalition, Liberal Judaism, Liberty, the Quakers and RADAR. The key themes were education, religious freedom, penal affairs, LGBT, animal welfare, international and inter faith and ecumenical. He discussed what we were trying to achieve with these partnerships and given the likely impact, what should the priorities be?

It was recognised that we needed to do more thinking about maximising the potential of work with other like-minded groups.

The mapping was useful in identifying what is “missing” from the wider community dialogue and this could give Unitarians the opportunity to lead, as in Assisted Dying .

The Convenor thanked the Chief Officer for his presentation. It was noted that this work needed to be linked with a communications strategy being discussed at the September EC.

The Chief Officer circulated an update of the Next Steps Action Plan, re-formatted as requested at the last meeting.

10. Next Steps Volunteering

Philip introduced a short discussion on volunteers with the following issues being highlighted:

- There is a structural issue; are we going to use volunteers to manage volunteers? Or should we use paid people to manage them?
- Must pay attention to the needs of our volunteers as part of a strategy to manage them eg; follow up after projects.
- Matthew indicated that he had access to volunteering material through one of his congregations and he will ascertain if he can share this material with Philip.

11. Funding requests

a) Unitarian Theology Conference – (DOC EC62/17)

It was agreed to award the sum of £1,000 from the Chalice Fund CPD to support the forthcoming Unitarian Theology Conference at Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds by funding “Faith and Freedom” journal to publish the papers that are to be presented. This would be a contribution to the “Next Step” priority of encouraging more Unitarian thought and writing. **Action: Chief Officer to inform Rev Jim Corrigan.**

b) Findhorn Unitarian Network – (DOC EC63/17)

Sheena and Peter declared an interest in this item.

It was agreed to award £990 to the Findhorn Unitarian Network from the Chalice Fund to provide three bursaries for people in leadership roles in Unitarian societies and districts to attend the Findhorn Unitarian Experience Week in January 2018. It was also agreed that the deposit of £2856 would be paid by the General Assembly to assist with cash flow and to be repaid in

December 2017. This would support the “Next Steps” priorities of encouraging collaboration with other bodies and providing enhanced training opportunities.

Action: Chief Officer to inform Riena Jackson.

It was agreed to give further consideration to grant giving processes and place on a future EC Agenda.

12. Management Accounts to end May 2017 – (DOC EC64/17) – noted with the following:

- New members of the EC were invited to have a briefing with the Chief Officer with regard to the accounts.
- The Chief Officer noted that the accounts show the General Assembly in a healthy and stable position. We are drawing down funds from the Bowland Trust donation as planned.
- There will be a more extensive discussion on the budget for year commencing 1 October 2017 at the September EC meeting.
- From the next report the Gabor Kereki Trust will appear in the list of restricted funds and be reflected in the balance sheet.

David Joseph, Finance Manager, was thanked for his work on the management accounts.

Session 3

13. Email from Bangor Unitarians – Constitutional Status - (DOC EC65/17) - noted with the following:

Correspondence was received from Bangor Unitarians on their position as a “small congregation” which meant they had no vote at the Annual Meetings yet smaller congregations of long-standing membership in fact did. It was acknowledged that this seemed unfair but is a consequence of the rules in the current Constitution.

EC accepted that this should be changed and would bring a Constitutional amendment to the 2018 Annual Meetings. **Action: Chief Officer was asked to present draft amendments to the GA Constitution to the September EC meeting to address the anomaly and to inform Bangor of this decision.**

14. MSG notes 7 June 2017 – (DOC EC66/17) – noted

15. President/ Vice- President

a) Thoughts on the Future of the Presidency – (DOC EC67/17) – noted with the following:

Dot Hewardine presented some reflections. Discussion took place on whether the focus should change to a “President –Elect”. It was recognised that the Vice-President position was a Constitutional requirement and any change should await more substantial consideration. The Chief Officer would be seeking nominations for President and Vice-President and EC Links should be looking for potential nominees.

b) EC Guidance for President and Vice-President – (DOC EC68/17) – revisions noted.

c) Guidelines on arranging a Presidential visit – (DOC EC69/17) – revisions noted.

16. Nightingale Centre Critical Incident Plan – (DOC EC70/17)- noted with the following:

Peter to liaise with Colin Partington with regard to the decision on when to seek help.

17. Annual Meeting Panel Minutes - 18 May 2017 – (DOC EC71/17) – noted

The Chief Officer gave an update on the Annual Meeting Panel meeting held on Thursday 13 July 2017.

The date and venue for 2018 have been agreed, Staverton Estate, Northampton from 4 – 7 April. The new venue is an alternative after three years at the Hilton Metropole, Birmingham. Discussions are however underway for a three years contract with the Metropole, taking into consideration that the GA has not yet decided on the length of future meetings. The Panel has agreed with this approach and the Chief Officer would proceed to finalise.

18. ICUU Council Meeting - February 2018 – (DOC EC72/17) – noted with the following:

The General Assembly normally funded two attendees at ICUU Council meetings and this was agreed. The Chief Officer would be attending and those EC members interested should contact the Convenor and Chief Officer. There will be a young adults programme and there are funds available to support the attendance of one British person.

Session 4

19. President's Report – (DOC EC73/17) – noted with the following:

The President had also attended the London Pride 2017 which was very well attended and successful.

20. Chief Officer's Report – (DOC EC74/17) – noted with the following:

- **Ministers Stipend Augmentation Fund** -the wish to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association to accept the funds and responsibilities of the MSAF was supported.
- **Sustentation Fund**– The Fund will be ending their separate Charity Status and transfer their funds to the General Assembly by a Deed of Gift.
- The Chief Officer to enquire whether Joan Cook and Robert Ince the two previous EC members who were two of the trustees of the Fund would stay on until 11 October 2017.

21. EC Link Reports – (DOC EC75/7) – noted with the following:

The EC District Links

Philip Colfox	Western & Southern
Lynne Readett	NELUM & Merseyside
Marion Baker	Sheffield & Cheshire
Matthew Smith	Midland Union & Eastern Union
Rob Whiteman	Scotland & Northern
Christina Smith	East Midlands & London
Sheena McKinnon	Yorks & Manchester
It was acknowledged that the resignation of Gwynn Pritchard left a gap on the EC and as a link to the two Welsh Districts. As an interim measure, until the vacancy was filled, the Chief Officer will work with the Welsh Department Secretary to ensure two-way communication is maintained.[Agreed with Convenor]	Wales

22. EC ways of working and future meeting arrangements –

Next EC meeting to be held on 25 and 26 September at The Nightingale Centre. Arrival on Sunday evening for dinner at 6.30pm followed by an informal session. On Monday evening there would be a session after dinner. Tuesday departure after lunch (12.30pm).

EC meeting 17 November at Essex Hall from 9am to 5.30pm.

EC meeting 19 January (may need a two day meeting tbc) at Essex from 9am to 5.30pm. There would not be a meeting in February, therefore, Stipend Review Committee had to meet in time for the January meeting.

Communication Policy will be on agenda of September meeting as would a review of structure and the pattern of how the EC works.

The Chief Officer and Convenor were meeting on 26 July 2017.

23. Key Messages – to be circulated separately.

24. Non responsive check-out

Closing Devotions – Marion read from Aleks Zglinska’s Chalice Lighting “A sacred flame burns in my heart”

25. Confidential Items – The President, Rob Whiteman (who declared an interest) and Mary-Jean left the meeting at this point

MSG – Interview Panel Recommendations – (DOC EC76/17)

Executive Committee agreed to the inclusion of Andy Philips and Claire MacDonald on the Ministerial Roll with Probationary status subject to confirmation from their Tutor/Principal that they had successfully completed the academic requirements of their course and that they had completed safeguarding training.

It was acknowledged that the processes for approval required further consideration with Sarah Tinker and Simon Bland.

General Assembly of Unitarian
& Free Christian Churches

Approved Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting
Friday 17th November 2017

Essex Hall, London

Present: Marion Baker (Convenor), Philip Colfox, Peter Hanley (Honorary Treasurer), Matthew Smith, Sheena McKinnon, Lynne Readett and Rob Whiteman

In Attendance: Derek McAuley (Chief Officer), and Mary-Jean Hennis (Minute taker). Simon Bland (MCSO) at 12 noon and Rev Andy Pakula and Aleks Zglinska at 2.00pm

Session 1

Opening Devotions: Peter invited the EC to listen to the sound of a bell ringing and to go with the simplicity of one tiny initiating action creating so much radiating energy. He then read two short pieces from Alexis de Toqueville and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

1. Apologies

Rev Charles VanDenBroeder (President) and Christina Smith

2. Minutes of the meetings held on 25th & 26th September 2017 (DOC EC106/17) the Minutes of the meeting held on the 25th and 26th September 2017 were signed as a true record.

3. Matters arising for noting or to include in Agenda for later discussion:
Pg 3 – item 6 (b) Organisational Effectiveness - *The Risk Register should be used to prioritise actions to address areas of weakness.* – It was agreed that how this might be done would be explored at a future EC meeting.

Pg 6 item 15 – Budget 2017 -2018 *It was suggested that the matter of legacies should be raised by the Hon Treasurer at the 2018 Annual Meeting –*
Action: Hon Treasurer. – EC to consider this issue at the January EC meeting.

Pg 8 item 24 – ICUU Nominations - The nominations submitted by the EC have been accepted by the Nomination Committee of the ICUU which included Rev Celia Midgely as a member of the Nominations Committee and the Chief Officer Vice-President.

4. EC Action List (DOC EC107/17) - updated

5. Next Steps – TED Report (DOC EC108/17) – noted with the following:
Lynne reported on the position at Unitarian College Manchester and that a special meeting of governors proposed for 29 November 2017 had been

cancelled to enable interested parties to make comments after receiving a detailed statement. They will have a three month period to digest this information before the committee move forward with a firm proposal.

The impact of the UCM decision on the Interview Panel and options for the 2018 student intake was discussed. Support was offered to the Panel in their decisions relating to the new pilot and places at HMCO. **Action – Chief Officer to convey this to the Interview Panel – with a lengthier discussion to be had at the January EC meeting.**

- **MSG Notes 20/9/2017 (DOC EC109/17) - noted with the following:**
It was agreed to ensure MSG was given advance notice of EC decisions on Ministry matters before announcements to the wider Movement.

6. Next Steps – Organisation Effectiveness (DOC EC110/17) – noted with the following:

A paper was presented by Philip Colfox. It was noted that there is a link between the papers submitted by Philip and the Chief Officer's paper on Communication Strategy which drew upon the "Vision: Next Steps" and remained the priorities for the EC. Greater clarity on the role of the General Assembly as an institution was suggested

It was agreed that further work was required to take these ideas forward and that two members agreed to consider and bring a paper to the January 2018 EC – **Action Peter & Philip.**

7. Next Steps – Communication Strategy (DOC EC111/17) - noted with the following:

A strategy paper was presented by the Chief Officer. It was noted that other like minded organisations could be competitors and also collaborators at the same time. Matthew suggested that strength would come from greater coherence which would require internal dialogue involving the different strands with the Movement and also discussion of how this affected our interface with society, Questions were raised of how do we measure our own success which was difficult with communications activity at a national level.

Discussion took place on the staff capacity required to deliver the strategy which required high level skills as well as operational delivery. The resignation of the IT/Communications Officer would allow a focus on web content and social media and engagement with volunteer resources as IT support was now out-sourced. The Chief Officer had produced a copy of a draft job description it was agreed that he proceed to recruit – **Action – Chief Officer to recruit to a post of Communications Officer.**

The need for high level advice and support was highlighted; particularly in light of some of the proposals in the Identity Project. It was clear that there was not support for a full-scale top-down marketing initiative as had been suggested rather support needed to be built from the bottom-up. It was agreed that a proposal be prepared for the next meeting. **–Action – Chief Officer**

There was a lengthy discussion on the “Next Steps” process and what flexibly existed on implementation. The Chief Officer and Convenor explained that after the Next Step Vision was presented at the 2017 Annual Meetings and accepted, it gave the EC the authority to move forward in a certain direction but with freedom to adjust to respond to changing needs and conditions.

Action – Chief Officer to bring Next Steps Progress Report to January EC meeting

- VSG and other Groups (DOC EC112/17) - noted

8. Penal Affairs Panel (DOC EC113/17) – response was noted

EC agreed to the proposals put to them by the Penal Affairs Panel; social responsibility survey, expand publications, annual presentation, moving to four meetings and changing name to “Penal and Social Affairs Panel” **Action – Chief Officer to inform the Penal Affairs Panel of the EC decision.**

Session 2

9. Nominations for President/ Vice-President (DOC EC114/17)

It was agreed that Joan Cook be nominated as President for 2018/19 and The Rev Celia Cartwright as Vice-President 2018/19 followed by President 2019/20 **Action – Chief Officer to inform them and proposers.**

10. Nominations for Honorary Membership of the General Assembly (DOC EC115/17 and DOC EC116/17):

It was agreed that The Rev Dr Ann Peart and Alan Ruston be nominated. **Action Chief Officer to inform them and proposers.**

11. Co-option of EC Member (DOC EC117/17):

It was agreed to co-opt Hilda Dumpleton as a member of the EC until April 2019 - **Action Chief Officer to contact Hilda.**

12. Update from Ministry and Congregational Support Officer (MCSO) – Simon Bland joined the meeting

Simon gave a update on his first year in the position. He has received a warm and accepting welcome within the Movement and noted the following:

- Recognises that the post can be a force for change affecting both ministry and congregational support.
- The TED project had been taking up much of his time and once completed he could focus more on congregational support.
- Untapped well of activity and need within the congregations.
- Home working has worked well as his location to the A1 has been very beneficial.
- Only a minority of congregations can support a full-time minister; some were growing, others were unfortunately “constrained by comfort”.
- That peer pressure is always going to “trump” advice from Essex Hall.

- Has dealt with a number of sensitive and confidential matters which were stressful.
- Hopes that this first year has endorsed the decision to create the position.

Areas still to explore:

- TED – General Assembly Roll and different models of ministry
- “Excepted” Status likely to end in 2021 therefore greater clarity on governance will be required. Congregations will however need to be informed of the need to change with a positive message.
- CIO offers opportunities for change.
- Lay Leadership needs to be considered.

Simon updated members on the successful Ministry Inquiry Day. TED appeared to appeal to potential students however there is a challenging timescale ahead he would be attending an Apprenticeship Trailblazer meeting to assess the feedback from the Institute of Apprenticeship on its suitability to be a faith based apprenticeship. **Simon agreed to liaise with Peter on the apprenticeship scheme.**

Asked by the Hon Treasurer if he had three wishes, what would they be:

1. Ensure that resources are in a place where they can be used.
2. Ensure that we are more visible.
3. More time, to get a sense of a programme of activity.

The Chief Officer thanked Simon for his update and made the EC aware of the stressful nature of the staff roles, such as the MCSO and that support mechanisms should be included in annual reviews. **Action – Chief Officer to add this item to the Risk Register.**

Session 3

13. Next Steps – Growth & 2020 – Andy Pakula and Aleks Zglinska joined the meeting.

The Convenor welcomed Andy and Aleks to the meeting. Andy used the metaphor of the NHS to highlight the problems he saw that face the EC in promoting growth in the Movement. He likened the EC to an NHS commissioning body in that they have the funds to address ill-health but needed clinical expertise on how it is spent.

He presented a paper on “Growth of the GAUFCC and Congregations” outlining the congregational and systematic challenges to growth and how the centre could take specific actions. The EC needed to access expert support.

The Convenor thanked Andy and Aleks for attending the meeting.

Growth Paper (DOC EC118/17) - noted with the following:

A paper was received from Matthew and Peter as requested at the previous meeting. This complemented the paper from 2020 but with a particular focus on how to change culture. This would include training, consultancy and Input.

There was a clear view that one off interventions will not work and there needs to be systemic change. As well as transferring financial assets to the Growth programme, knowledge assets needed to be transferred as well. It was suggested that there needed to be a coalition of change in the Movement.

Simon referred to the 4 Ps for growth:

- Purpose - unless there is a vision for growth it will not engage people. This is the “pivot point” which leads to a commitment to change
- People – there needed to be a conscious decision for change
- Pounds – resources and energy
- Perception.- changing mind-sets

It was noted that congregations that are growing have made a conscious decision to grow,

Action – Matthew, Peter and Aleks to liaise and bring a paper o the January EC meeting. Simon to take completed paper to the Assessment Group as it would be helpful in exploring roles.

Matthew and Peter thanked the EC for a constructive discussion, concentrating on what is being done and on best practice.

14. Annual Meetings – 3 day meeting (DOC EC119/17) - noted with the following:

The proposed Motion, including for Constitutional change, which had been considered by the Steering Group and Annual Meetings Panel, was approved.

Notes 21/ 9 /2017 (DOC EC120/17)- Noted with the following:

- The GA President had asked for support with chairing the Business Sessions and Dot Hewerdine has offered to assist
- There has been progress on the opening ceremony which would be undertaken by young adults presenting the experience of moving from Juniors through the national youth programme to BUYAN.
- Social evening – David Kent will be presenting “David & Ruby’s little big show”.
- A video has been produced to promote the 2018 GA which will be circulated in late November.

15. Management Accounts to 30 September 2017 (DOC EC121/17) – noted with the following:

It was agreed £87,000 would be drawn down from the Bowland Trust for 2016/17, which was less than budgeted.

A legacy of £35,000 has been received in 2017/18.

The EC thanked David Joseph, Finance Manager for his work on the accounts.

16. Nightingale Centre notes 26/10/2017 (DOC EC122/17) – noted with the following:

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It was reported that the Management Committee had received a letter from Rev David Shaw inviting two of their members to become Trustees of the Old Chapel, Great Hucklow as the Congregation and Trustees had decided to merge and that services will cease in the Chapel on the 12 December 2017.

It was noted that Sheffield District Association was the Custodial Trustee not the British and Foreign Unitarian Association Incorporated. It was thought that it would be anomalous for a committee of one set of Trustees to appoint two Trustees of another separate Trustee body and suggested observer status would be more appropriate. **Action – Chief Officer to produce a letter of explanation for the Convenor to send to the Rev Shaw.**

17. Sustentation Fund notes 10/10/2017 (DOC EC12317) – noted with the following:

The Resolution to transfer the assets of the Sustentation Fund to the General Assembly was noted. The reference to independent examination (Pg 1 item 5) was noted. **Chief Officer to liaise with the retiring Treasurer with regard to an inspection of the closing accounts.**

A process for awarding grants in 2018 would be brought to the January EC meeting. **Action: Chief Officer.**

The Trustees past and present of the Sustentation Fund were thanked for their service.

18. Grant Form (DOC EC124/17) – noted with the following:

EC approved the principles of a new Grant Form and agreed to turn the paper into an organisational template for use when congregations or other bodies are asked to apply for grants. **Action – Andrew to be approached to help with the template.**

Action – Rob to formulate a template for individuals to apply for grants with current forms to be provided by the Chief Officer.

Session 4

19. Presidents Report (DOC EC125/17) - noted

20. Chief Officer Report (DOC EC126/17) - noted with the following:

An updated letter has been received from the Rev Alex Bradley with regard to arrangements for Rev Dr Eniko Ferenzi who will be utilising the Gabor Kereki Fund in 2018 – **Action – Chief Officer to liaise with Rev Bradley with regard to reimbursement of expenses.**

Welsh Districts were interested in holding a Safeguarding training day in 2018.

He was revising the presentation he had given to the Australia and New Zealand Unitarian Universalist Association Biennial Meeting in Adelaide 20-22 October 2017 and would circulate.

21. EC Link Reports (DOC EC127/17) - noted.

22. Youth Report (DOC EC128/17)- noted with the following:

The report from Lorna Barry, Chair of the Youth Panel fed back on the strategy event and explored many key issues. The recognition of the value of day events for districts was welcomed.

EC authorised the Chief Officer to proceed with the recruitment to the position of Youth Co-ordinator.

23. Key Messages

To be distributed separately

24. A.O.B.

Lancashire Collaborative Ministry

CIO Status had been confirmed. The EC agreed to the appointment of Dot Hewardine as Trustee and Chairperson **Action – Chief Officer to inform LCC.**

25. Dates of Future Meetings in 2018:

Jan - 19th - 9.00 am – 5.30 – Essex Hall – London

May – 18th - 9.00 am – 5.30 & 19th – 9.00 am – 12 noon Essex Hall London

July – 20th - 9.00 am – 5.30 – Essex Hall – London

September – 24th - 9.00 am – 5.30 & 25th – 9.00 am – 12 noon – The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow – arriving Sunday evening for dinner on 23rd and informal session

November – 16th - 9.00 am – 5.30 – Essex Hall – London

26. Non responsive check-out

Closing Devotions – Matthew offered a prayer to close the meeting