

**Approved Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held 25/01/19**

- Present:** Marion Baker, Phillip Colfox, Hilda Dumpleton, Peter Hanley, Christina Smith, Matthew Smith and Rob Whiteman.
- In attendance:** Celia Cartwright (Vice President), Joan Cook (President), Gavin Howell (Youth Coordinator, item 15), David Joseph (Finance Officer, items 9 and 31), Derek McAuley (Chief Officer), Andrew Mason (Minutes)
- Apologies:** Lynne Readett

**Session 1**

Rob Whiteman conducted Opening Devotions with a piece of music (Sanctus Adalbertus) by Henryk Gorenki.

**1. Confidential Items**

Celia Cartwright, Joan Cook and Andrew Mason left the room for discussion of these items.

**- Appointment and Induction of Chief Officer**

The appointment of Elizabeth Slade was ratified by the Executive Committee. The members of the Interview Panel; Marion Baker, Phillip Colfox, Rob Whiteman and Paul Parker, Recording Clerk of The Quakers with support from Diana Fenton, Human Resources Adviser; were thanked for successfully undertaking the recruitment and selection process.

Discussion took place on the induction process and the handover from the current Chief Officer. The Convener reported that this would involve a series of visits to areas outside London along with time at Essex Hall. There would be an opportunity to meet all the members of the Executive Committee individually. Following the Annual Meetings Elizabeth would have some time-out to reflect on her experiences before the final handover on 26 April 2019.

**- Nomination of GA Vice President**

It was **AGREED** that Mrs Anne Mills, a member of the Bury congregation, would be nominated for the position of Vice-President of the General Assembly.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies for absence had been received from Lynne Readett.

**3. Minutes of the 16 November 2019 meeting (Document EC02/19)**

Page 4, item 12, para 4 – The sentence was amended to ‘The Investment Panel were looking at how ethical issues influenced investment’.

Page 6, bullet point 3 – At the end of the sentence the following text was added “, including for UniFest.”

Page 7, Item 18 – This was being dealt with under agenda item 7.

Page 8, Item 24 – Matthew wished to record the name of the organisation who had requested the information on anti-Semitism.

With the above changes, the Minutes of the meeting held 16 November 2019 were **AGREED** as a correct record.

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

UniFest – It was noted that the October Junior Weekend and November Inter / Seniors Weekend had been cancelled as conflicting with UniFest. The original UniFest organisers had indicated that they were unable to progress with the event, yet it had already been advertised on the GA website and in the Nightingale Centre brochure. The Nightingale Centre had raised the issue with the trustees of Unitarian College who were agreeable to organising the event as part of their lifelong learning programme. It was **AGREED** that Unitarian College be appointed to manage the UniFest event.

A question was raised about how this related to Hucklow Summer School. In answer it was stated that the strategic direction was that both Hucklow Summer School and the Worship Studies Course would transfer to the Unitarian College.

#### **EC Action List (Document EC03/19)**

The following updates were given on items on the Action List:

##### September 2017

Page 3, Organisational Effectiveness – this would be kept on the radar.

##### November 2017

Page 7, Grant form – This remained outstanding.

##### May 2018

Page 1, Feedback on AM Workshop – this item was felt to have passed and would be removed from the list.

##### September 2018

Page 7, Small initiatives fund criteria – The criteria was being prepared.

Page 4, Lindsey Press Volunteer – This had been added to the Risk Register.

##### November 2018

Page 1, Issues and Requirements list – This was on the EC agenda.

Page 1, Small Initiatives Fund – see above

Page 2, Competency Assessment – actioned

Page 3, Financial expertise – actioned

Page 4, Gilts – actioned

Page 4, Disinvestment – see agenda

Page 4, Ministers Pension Fund – see agenda

Page 6, Youth Programme – This item remained outstanding.

Page 7, Sustentation Fund – This item remained ongoing.

Page 7, Annual Meetings Panel EC Member– decision required at the May EC meeting.

**5. Issues and Requirements List**

The EC would discuss this with the new Chief Officer, who should keep the list. Phillip and Peter would go through their notes and prepare a list for the new Chief's Officer's induction. **ACTION: Phillip and Peter**

**6. District Associations**

- **“Stirring the Old Giants (Document EC05/19)**

Sir Peter Soulsby's paper was reviewed. It was noted that the Scottish Unitarian Association have a statutory role, to hold a list of those registered to conduct marriages, and to ensure Scottish DBS checks were carried out.

- **“Blowing on Embers – District Associations facilitating the Movement from Top to Bottom (Document EC06/19)**

Peter Hanley's paper was reviewed. Discussion took place on the differences between district associations, whether this was the best line of communication with our members, and what we were trying to achieve through Districts. It was felt that this was all part of organisational effectiveness, which needed to be discussed with the new Chief Officer.

It was **AGREED** to revisit organisational effectiveness and growth, including the role of districts, and put together a package for the new Chief Officer to review. **ACTION: Peter**

There was a brief discussion on how to share best practice, and what the barriers were to this. It was suggested that the Ministry and Congregational Support Officer, as well as the Communications Officer and Youth Coordinator, could share some best practice at the Annual Meetings.

**7. General Assembly Annual Report 2017 - 2018**

A draft of the Annual Report had been circulated. Comments were:

Buildings Advisory Group – historic advisors – John Goodchild needs to be removed following his death.

Bios – Phillip wished to update his bio on the 'Our Trustees' page, and would give Andrew revised text to use. **ACTION: Phillip**

The Financial Summaries have been agreed with the Auditors.

Any other changes needed to be sent to Andrew in the next few days, as the publishing date was imminent.

The report was approved.

**Session 2****8. Financial Update (Document EC07/19)**

The Finance Manager presented financial updates for the first two months of the new financial year (to November 2018), and the outlook for the year, as at 31/12/18.

At present, David saw no reason to vary the budget except for the Chief Officer recruitment expenses detailed, which had been revised from £31.5K to £19K due to a significant reduction in dual running costs. This was **AGREED**.

A small legacy was expected from the estate of the late Malcolm Sadler. The quota income was being treated cautiously, as the decreasing trend continued. It was noted that there was a need to improve our processes around the collection of quota.

David would prepare a quarterly set of accounts with commentary and would circulate to EC members and had circulated management accounts for the first two months of 2018 – 2019. A difference on income figures for Summer School on two lines was noted and David would check the spreadsheet for a broken link.

In response to a general question about the current position, David answered that the ledger figures, which cover costs to date, were only partially useful, as there was a need to apportion larger annual costs received at various points during the year. These would be applied to the first quarter's accounts. A more meaningful assessment could be made by the third quarter, as the Annual Meetings had a major effect.

#### Financial Summary of the 2018 Annual Accounts

Apologies were given for minor rounding errors in the previous version circulated, and a replacement copy had been provided.

Grants – There was a variation on the amount of grants paid (£44K instead of £18K last year), which reflected the resolution of backlog payments from the restricted James Speed Trust which had been brought up to date.

Admin Costs – These had increased over last year for three main reasons:

- 1) Sundry expenses in the previous year were in credit, because we had identified £24K of historical credits in the balance sheet. There were no matching credits this year.
- 2) The office space provided by the Essex Hall Trust had been revalued at a higher rate, and there were nine months of the year at the new valuation of £111K per annum. This had meant an increase of £35K against last year. This was not an actual cost, and this figure was matched in the income total.
- 3) Legal and professional fees were high last year but were not anticipated in this year, which had reduced the overall effect on the administration costs.

Gift-Aid – There was still a total of £21K in gift-aid for collection as at the year end. It was noted that some of this had since been collected, and there were plans underway to accelerate collection of the outstanding amounts. Of the 2015 historical balance of £15K, £2.3k had been written off as it was not felt to be justifiable for collection.

Investments – There were unrealised gains from the year-end revaluation of our investments, though it was noted that these had since reversed due to stock market falls.

Cash Management – In the Balance Sheet, David had calculated a quick ratio of short-term liquidity of 8.5:1 which meant that we were carrying too much. Improved procedures for cash management would enable the reduction of the general cash balance to around £30K, but this would need active management. This had been discussed with the Treasurer and Chief Officer, and would be progressed.

Treatment of absorption of the Sustentation Fund – The Statement of Recommend Practice (SORP) states that we need to bring this in as an income item and this had been

confirmed with the Auditor. In the GA's Accounts it therefore stands out clearly. In the Consolidated Accounts it does not, as self-eliminating items are not to be shown.

Pensions Trust withdrawal – In response to a question, it was clarified that this item related to the GA Staff pension scheme. In the event that we withdraw from the scheme (either to move to a different scheme or if we run out of contributing members), there would be a charge to cover our share of the pension fund's deficit. This liability was being paid off at a rate of £12K per annum. Matthew Smith declared that he was a beneficiary as a former member of Staff who had contributed to a pension with the Pensions Trust.

#### 9. GA Annual Accounts 2017-18 (Document EC08/19)

It was noted that the income items for Local Leadership were separated on page 15, but there was not a corresponding separation of expenditure on page 16. David would discuss this with the new Auditors for next year.

Phillip indicated that he planned to send some comments to David directly. Phillip raised note 9 on page 22 regarding, the treatment of GA Staff who are also Ministers, querying the statement that there was not any direct liability. The Chief Officer responded that the advice from the current Auditors was not to put as a contingent liability the guarantee of last resort. This would be raised with the new Auditors.

One page 12, note 1 relating to consolidation, it would be specified that the statement about the assets being transferred to the GA related only to The Sustentation Fund.

With these changes, the Accounts were **AGREED** and signed by the Treasurer and Convenor.

The following recommendations from the Treasurer were **AGREED**:

1. There be a finance agenda item on Gift Aid at the July and September 2019 EC meetings;
2. There be a report at the July and September EC meetings on the work to collect about £8K in pre-2016 Gift Aid, which must be claimed before September 2020.
3. Report-writing software to enable Aqilla to produce better financial reports be purchased, along with training on its use. At present the recommended product was Crystal Report Software, though other products would be considered before purchase.

In response to a query on whether we should be accruing uncollected gift aid, David indicated that this was accepted good practice as long as it could be calculated and there was a reasonable expectation of receiving it.

David was thanked for his attendance.

#### 10. Nightingale Centre Annual Report and Accounts (Document EC09/19)

Page 4: Corrections were required to the trustee list.

**ACTION: Marion/Derek**

Page 2, para 3: A query was raised as to what stimulus was required. Marion remarked that Unitarian usage of the Nightingale Centre has not decreased, despite the Movement's reductions. It was **AGREED** to remove the sentence, and address this point with the Nightingale Centre in September.

**ACTION: Marion/Derek**

Other minor comments would be passed on to Marion.

**11. Nightingale Centre Minutes (Document EC10/19)**

The Minutes of the Nightingale Centre Management Committee meeting held 01 December 2018 were circulated.

Page 2: item 7.1, Land sale: Last week, The B&FUA as Custodian Trustee had signed the Deed of Surrender on the sale of the land to Derbyshire County Council (DCC). The delay had been caused by DCC.

Page 2, item 5: The consultant's report would be circulated to the EC. **ACTION: Marion**

Page 2, item 6.1: Living Wage Foundation minimum wage– this was part of ongoing strategic decisions and it was confirmed that the financial effect had been calculated.

**12. Strategic decision-making (Document EC11/19)**

Peter had circulated a document about strategic decision-making, which defined what a strategic decision was and included some suggested actions. Opinions expressed were:

- The decisions we take come within the framework of our society's culture.
- We should make decisions as deliberate actions rather than reactions.
- Timeframe is important, but can be decreased by good communication
- If the answer is to set up an EC subgroup, the question needed to be looked at.

It was **AGREED** to engage with the new Chief Officer before taking action on the paper.

**13. Investment Policy**

- **EC GA Investment Policy recommended Actions (Document EC12/19) and General Assembly Investment Policy 2019 Final (Document EC13/19)**

The Treasurer had prepared reports on the Investment Policy, including recommended actions.

The Convenor expressed strong concerns that the strategic process on finance needed to be taken forward as part of consideration of wider issues, rather than on individual items, incorporating the analytical skills of staff and in concert with the new Chief Officer.

It was clarified that we do currently invest ethically, but would need to take professional advice, including an impact assessment, on what these proposals might entail.

After considerable discussion, the following were **AGREED**:

- The phrase 'the GA' would be replaced with 'The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches' in all cases in document **EC12/19**.
- In draft Investment Policy document **EC13/19** on page 1, objective 5 ("to maximise total returns while balancing what are sometimes conflicting risks in order to meet the objectives of the individual trusts for which it is responsible") would be moved to the top of the list, which would then be changed to a bulleted list instead of a numbered list.
- In draft Investment Policy document **EC13/19** on page 5, at the end of the document, the work 'adopted' was changed to 'endorsed'.
- In draft Investment Policy document **EC13/19** on page 5, item 5 (Policy Review) the following paragraph was added: "The Implementation of this policy is subject to the taking of independent investment advice from a suitably-qualified professional and subsequent adoption by the Executive Committee."

- From document **EC12/19** recommendations 2-6 were referred to a Finance Committee consisting of the Convenor, Chief Officer, Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer (if appointed) and the Finance Manager.

The Honorary Treasurer was thanked for his thorough work on this issue.

### Session 3

#### 14. Safeguarding Report (Document EC14/19)

Gavin Howell attended for this item, and presented a Safeguarding Report. Areas to bring to EC attention were:

##### Designated Safeguarding Leader (DSL) wellbeing.

Gavin's role to DSL's is advisory, and he had identified the stress caused to DSL's when issues were raised with them. He had suggested a pastoral role to allow DSL's to be able to talk to someone about how issues were making them feel (but not discussing the particular case). There were issues around people offering support being properly-qualified, staying up to date on training and confidentiality concerns. It was **AGREED** that Gavin would investigate finding an independent company / professional to offer support for DSL's on a pay-on use basis, billed to the GA. **ACTION: Gavin**

##### Transition arrangements and Record keeping at chapel level

Gavin was concerned about poor record-keeping, particularly when there was a transition between DSL's. He suggested a brief plenary item at the Annual Meetings on 'have you considered this about Safeguarding' or having a slot asking CCPAS to come and discuss the types of training they offer. Gavin was asked to liaise directly with the Annual Meetings Panel to arrange this. **ACTION: Gavin**

##### Internal Safeguarding Register

Gavin had raised the idea of keeping an internal list. It would require expert guidance before setting up.

There were concerns about:

- Whether there was a line of communication to groups that weren't formally affiliated to the GA.
- If this was a responsibility we ought to take on.
- Confidentiality
- Data protection
- Whether we could realistically deliver an appropriate service on the half day per week allocated to Gavin for acting as Safeguarding Lead.

Peter offered to have work with Gavin looking at a possible system, what it would accomplish and assess how practical it was, and this was **AGREED**.

**ACTION: Peter and Gavin**

##### 2019 Annual Meetings

GA Zette – Gavin had some concerns and had approached the FOY Society. They would review their Safeguarding Policy and put a statement that minors should be accompanied at all times, but had not felt that a designated supervisory person was required.

Gavin was thanked for his attendance.

**15. Minutes of the Annual Meetings Panel Meeting  
(Document EC15/19)**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2018 had been circulated, and the Annual Meetings Panel had met again on 24 January 2019. In summary:

- The Panel were proceeding on the practical arrangements.
- The Opening Celebrations had gone back slightly but were being progressed.
- A marketing and communications plan had been discussed. An advertisement was being placed in the next edition of The Inquirer. A Social Media Plan was in operation.
- Martin Whitell was working on the Worship Leader's plan.
- The Keynote Speaker would be Lord Mark Price. There had been some comment on Facebook, one email, and some questions from The Inquirer (to which Derek had responded) about the selection. The Panel had reviewed the comments but did not intend to disinvite the speaker, who was felt to have something to say on meaning in the workplace drawing upon his experience of leading one of the largest social enterprises in the country. Criteria on the selection of Keynote Speakers had been adopted, drawing from a paper written by Matthew Smith, one of the most important being that the person brings fresh perspectives.

**16. Findhorn Unitarian Network – application for Affiliated Body status  
(Document EC16/19)**

Following consideration of a request it was **AGREED** that the EC would put a motion to accept the Findhorn Unitarian Network with Affiliated Body status (Proposer: Peter Hanley, Seconder: Matthew Smith).

**17. Stipend Review Committee Report 2019 (Document EC17/19)**

Rob and Matthew declared an interest, as recipients of a ministerial stipend.

There had been a request to appoint two congregational representatives onto the Committee. It was **AGREED** we would advertise for two volunteers on Uni-News for this at some point after the Annual Meetings in time for the 2020 Committee meeting.

It was **AGREED** to amend item 12, paragraph 2 to read "The Committee would like views on whether the rate for pulpit supply can be raised".

Comments received about the financial challenges facing congregations were noted.

The creation of a scale for Lay Pastors was noted. There were currently no active Lay Pastors, but some congregations were paying Lay Leaders at the Lay Pastor rates.

With the amendments, the report was **APPROVED**.

**18. EC Activities at the Annual Meetings**

Presentation of newer Staff – The four newer Staff members (Rory, Gavin, Simon and David) would all be invited to do a small 5 minute presentation, possibly on their motivation, what they sought to achieve and how Unitarians as a whole can help them.

Presentation of the Annual Report and Accounts – The Accounts would be presented, with some basic financial information covered about how our income and expenditure was going, rather than more strategic issues. David Joseph would be asked to assist with this.

It was suggested that Rory could do a 'Frequently Asked Questions' bit, possibly taking questions as part of the EC workshop, with a more conversational than presentational feel.

EC Handover – Lynne would be asked to arrange the EC Handover, which would take place during Plenary IV on the final day.

**ACTION: Lynne**

### Workshop

Christina would facilitate the FAQ questions and answers at the Workshop, and would also ask for questions on Facebook, and then coordinate with Rory.

**ACTION: Christine**

### Recognition of the change of Chief Officer

This would take place during Plenary IV on the final day.

### **19. Possible Honorary Member Nomination**

The Manchester District are planning to submit an Honorary Membership motion request. The eight other district signatories had not yet been obtained, but were expected to have been by the deadline. It was **AGREED** to accept this as a motion the EC would put forward, providing the signatories were received by the deadline of 19 February 2019.

### **20. Ministers Pension Fund GA Appointees**

It was **AGREED** that Karen Hanley, Hilda Dumbleton and Marion Baker be appointed as GA appointees to the Ministers Pension Fund. The MPF secretary would be informed.

**ACTION: Chief Officer**

## **Session 4**

### **21. Ministry Strategy Group (MSG) – Actions for EC (Document EC18/19)**

It was **AGREED** that the new Unitarian College Director Helen Mason, would be invited to join the Ministry Strategy Group with someone of a comparable level to represent HMCO.

Rob withdrew, under protest, as a result of a conflict of interest with his position as a Minister with probationary status taking part in decisions regarding admission to the Roll with Full status.

### Roll of Ministers

- Revs Phil Waldron and Kate McKenna were accepted on the Roll of Ministers with Full status
- Rev Maria Pap was accepted on the Roll of Ministers with Probationary status.

### Ministerial Students

- Robin Hanford was accepted for training at Harris Manchester College Oxford.
- Rory Castle Jones was accepted for training at Unitarian College.
- Laura Dobson was accepted for training at Unitarian College.

### Other Matters

Simon had met with the Tutor at Harris Manchester College Oxford and would be asked for more information on the outcome of the meeting.

**ACTION: Chief Officer**

The Ministry Strategy Group's request to take over responsibility for strategic work with paid lay leadership was **AGREED**.

The Ministry Strategy Group's request for funding of £3,000 for a mentor training residential to be delivered by Unitarian College was **AGREED**.

**22. Guidelines for Ministers & Congregations**

Lynne Readett had requested an update on the proposed review of Guidelines for Ministers and Congregations. It was reported that the MSG were aware of the need for updating and would be focusing on the legal requirements with the assistance of the HR Consultants. The MCSO would present a report when this matter had been progressed.

**ACTION: MCSO.**

**23. Collaboration & Partnerships (Document EC19/19)**

This paper was noted. The Chief Officer was thanked for the update which would be useful for his successor.

**24. European Unitarian Together (EUT) gathering 2021 (Document EC20/19)**

An invitation to participate in EUT2021 was received and noted. Whilst the General Assembly would be happy to encourage attendance it was not felt that changing the Annual Meetings in order to facilitate one large European event was practical, particularly as a hotel booking was already in place for 2021.

**25. President's Report (Document EC21/19)**

The President's Report was noted. The President highlighted the Interfaith event in Hull.

**26. Chief Officer's Report (Document EC22/19)**

The Chief Officer's Report was noted. Work would be needed on the EC elections but his external commitments would be reducing from early March.

**27. EC Link Reports (Document EC23 and 23b/19)**

The EC Link Reports were noted.

**28. Bridport Citizen's Charter (Document EC24/19)**

This was deferred to the next meeting.

**29. Key Messages**

As circulated.

**30. Confidential Items**

Celia Cartwright, Joan Cook and Andrew Mason left the room for discussion of these items.

A presentation was received on the implications of the appointment of new Auditors and other emerging proposals, including the request to provide services for Unitarian College, on financial resources.

**31. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

**32. Dates of future meetings**

Friday 17 May (9.00 – 5.00pm) and Friday 26 July (9.00 – 5.00pm)

**33. Non responsive check-out**

This took place.

Closing Devotions – Derek McAuley gave a Benediction from Rev Kimberley Quinn-Johnson and words by Cliff Reed based on JRR Tolkien, and the meeting closed.

**Approved Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held 17/05/19**

- Present:** Marion Baker, Phillip Colfox, Jim Corrigan, Hilda Dumbleton, Peter Hanley, Robert Ince (by Video), Lynne Readett, Matthew Smith and Rob Whiteman.
- In attendance:** Celia Cartwright (President), David Joseph (Finance Officer, Item 10) Elizabeth Slade (Chief Officer), Andrew Mason (Minutes), Sarah Tinker (Items 1-7)
- Apologies:** Lynne Readett

**Session 1**

Rob Whiteman conducted Opening Devotions by reading a small piece from a discussion on the concept of success in ministry, followed by a short reflective silence.

**1. Appointment of EC Convener**

Marion Baker was appointed as the EC Convener.

**2. Checking in**

This took place and the meeting started.

**3. Apologies**

Robert Ince was not present, but was video-conferencing in to the meeting. All other members were present.

**4. Minutes of the 25 January 2019 meeting**

With a minor amendment under item 13, the Minutes of the meeting held 25 January 2019 (Document **EC26/19**) were **AGREED** as a correct record and signed by the Convenor.

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

Page 9, item 21 – A full report of a meeting the Tutor of Harris Manchester College was still required from Simon Bland.

Page 10, Item 28 – The Bridport Citizen’s Charter item would be covered under Any Other Business.

GA Contribution of £3K for legal affairs relating to investment advice – This would come up under the Finance item.

Safeguarding – the practicality of Gavin Howell going out to do training to areas requiring long travel periods was raised.

**6. EC Action List (Document EC27/19)**

The Convener noted that there were several historic items.

25/26 Sept 2017

Pg 3, item 6b Organisational Effectiveness would be removed.

17 November 2017

Pg 7, Item 18 Grant form – a larger conversation on grants was needed, and this item would be dropped from the action list. The Chief Officer would look at the Minutes and the policy and come back with her thoughts.  
**ACTION: Chief Officer**

### 23-25 September 2018

Pg 7, item 8 – Small initiatives fund. This linked to other items. The Chief Officer would speak to Simon Bland.  
**ACTION: Chief Officer**

### 16 November 2018

Pg 1, item 4 – Tabulated issues and requirements list – A wider discussion on strategic direction would be undertaken, with checking and monitoring of this list following on an ongoing basis to pick up on unfinished projects.

Pg 6, item 15 – Youth Programme journeys for young people to adulthood. The Chief Officer would chase this.  
**ACTION: Chief Officer**

Pg 7, item 22 – AM Panel EC Member – This was on the agenda for this meeting.

### 25 January 2019

Pg 3, item 6 – Role of Districts – This was complete.

Pg 3, item 8 – Financial update – This was complete.

Pg 5, item 9 – Accounts issues with Auditors – This was complete.

Pg 5, item 9 – Gift Aid Progress – This was on the agenda for this meeting.

Pg 5, item 11 – Consultant's Report – Marion had asked the Nightingale Centre Treasurer to send this report on to her, but it had only been sent to the GA Treasurer. Marion would chase this.  
**ACTION: Marion**

Pg 6. Item 12 – Strategic Decision-making – This was work in progress.

Pg 6. Item 13 – Investment Policy Amendment – The amendments had been made and an updated version of the document provided to EC members.

Pg 6. Item 13 – Investment Policy Recommendations 2-6 – The Finance Committee needed to meet.

Pg 7. Item 14 – Safeguarding Report, External Support Options for Safeguarding Lead – The Chief Officer would follow this up with Gavin Howell.  
**ACTION: Chief Officer**

Pg 7. Item 14 – Safeguarding Report, Annual Meetings slot – This was ongoing, as the Annual Meetings Panel had not met since then.

Pg 7. Item 14 – Safeguarding Report, The Register needed designing – This was ongoing.

Pg 8. Item 17 – Stipend Review Committee Report, recruit two new members – This would go on the agenda.  
**ACTION: Chief Officer**

Pg 9. Item 21 – Ministry Strategy Group (MSG) Update – This would be covered later in the meeting.

Pg 9. Item 22 – Revision of Guidelines for Ministers and Congregations – This was ongoing.

### 7. EC ways of working

#### Declaration of non-disqualification

All EC Members were required to sign the form confirming they were not disqualified from action as Trustees

#### Declaration of interests

Trustees were required to sign the form declaring their interests. As the form was lengthy, some trustees would complete this after the meeting and email these to Andrew Mason.

**ACTION: All**

#### Timing of meetings and papers

Meeting dates to Jan 2020 have been decided. The Convenor highlighted the importance of sending papers by the required deadline, so that they can be collated and distributed in good time for them to be reviewed properly. Also when papers are submitted, recommendations or actions should be clearly included so that they can be considered.

Communication between the EC and the wider Movement could be improved, in addition to the key messages, and the confidentiality of items not mentioned in the key messages was slightly unclear. Some of these questions would hopefully be answered in the next session, but good communication was essential.

#### Allocation of EC roles

District Links:

Marion Baker – East Cheshire and Sheffield

Matthew Smith – Midland Union

Hilda Dumpleton – S Wales and SE Wales (and Bangor).

Peter Hanley – None at present

Rob Whiteman – Scottish and Northern

Phillip Colfox – Southern and Western (and Salisbury)

Lynne Readett – Merseyside and NE Lancs

Jim Corrigall – London & East Midlands.

Robert Ince – Manchester & Yorkshire Union

Another way of coordinating with districts might be needed to reflect the major differences between districts. This would be considered under strategic direction.

#### Links on other groups

Ministry Strategy Group (MSG) – Lynne Readett

Local Leadership Strategy Group (LLSG) – Marion. The group hadn't met for a year and Marion would therefore speak to the LLSG to see how they could be helped in their future direction.

**ACTION: Marion**

Visibility Strategy Group (VSG) – The main functions of the VSG were now being met by the Communications Officer, so there was no need for a link at this time.

Stipend Review Committee – Following feedback, there was a desire to include lay people from the North and South respectively, particularly at Treasurer level. The GA Treasurer would speak to The MSG Chair, Sarah Tinker about this.

**ACTION: Peter**

Finance Sub Committee – This consisted of the Treasurer, Convenor, Chief Officer, Finance Manager and one appointed EC member. It was **AGREED** that Phillip Colfox would be the EC appointed member.

### Location of Meetings

It was **AGREED** that the EC members found it most convenient to meet in London for the majority of their meetings.

It might be possible for people to contribute to meeting electronically, though face to face meeting was still seen as the main medium.

### Facilitated session

Sarah Tinker had been asked to facilitate a discussion as this was a new group of EC members working together, and a new Chief Officer. The EC was responsible for detail, as well as strategy and vision – both were needed.

There were two main aspects for the session:

- 1) Establishing the quality of how the EC works together; and having a conversation about a covenant to guide its work (a code of conduct was known to be in place already).
- 2) Small group discussion in groups of 3 or 4 as to how this would effect our Movement.

### 1. Qualities suggested for a behavioural covenant

- |                                |   |  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| • Listening                    | • Openness / Honesty  | • Role of convening  |
| • Joy / enthusiasm             | • Determination   | • Self-moderating of contributions.  |
| • Acknowledging Success        | • Creating space for something to emerge                              | • Awareness of representing people who are not in the room.                          |
| • Respect                      | • Patience  | • Integrity of group   |
| • Confidentiality / Discretion | • Different perspectives, skills and ways of thinking                 | • Behaviour for input and output modes. Bringing together instead of how to produce. |
| • Tradition vs innovation      | • Shared objective  |  |
| • Service                      | • Safe place – free to speak out                                      |  |
| • Clarity and Purpose          | • Underpinned by Unitarian values, tradition, narrative and practices |  |
| • Focus                        | • Empathy and compassion  |  |
| • Ambition                     |   |  |
| • Share / collaboration        |   |  |
| • Walking together / team work |   |  |
| • Thinking of others           |   |  |

### 2. If the EC is satisfied / successful, what will it look / feel like for.....

This was recorded in a separate document and would be circulated for the next meeting.

## Session 2

### 8. Strategic direction

#### Update from the Chief Officer

The Chief Officer gave a PowerPoint presentation of her initial reflections after the first three weeks in post, and having made visits to various districts and congregations.

- We tend to hold on to a 'status of outsiders'. There was a confidence issue in knowing we needed to change, but not knowing how. This could lead to being collectively constrained by being inward-looking, and it would be useful to look outward for new ideas on our future direction.
- Role of districts – there was still some dissatisfaction over the Executive Committee direct election model replacing the geographical representation model of the old GA Council. They had some anxiety as to what their role was. There was a question as to whether districts were still the main connector between congregations, or whether other factors better linked churches (e.g. size, rural v urban location etc.).
- There was a need to foster feeling of togetherness as a larger group. Being inward looking creates imagined boundaries, which then constrain, and make it harder to be bold. We were presently looking at an overall picture of decline, and it was therefore time to act if we were to survive and thrive. There had been a cultural context of fewer people going to church for several decades, but this was a reflection on how well faith organisations were servicing needs, rather than there not being needs.
- Need to focus on our mission and purpose, and be outward-looking.
- There was a need to grow. The obvious target was the 50% plus of the population who are not religiously-affiliated but have spiritual needs. In order to this, we would need to focus on our mission and purpose, and be clear about who we are in a way that seems exciting, generous and relevant to those people. New thoughts were needed, and to plug into the wider conversation in society about how we live.

#### Important factors:

- Getting the message out: The GA Website was trying to do many things, but looked dated. Uni-News would benefit from more inspiration as well as information. In general communication, the overall language we use, expressing the sacred to the non-religious, and being positive about our ethos were important.
- Being welcoming: This was a journey we invite others to come on with us; we need to remain welcoming and inviting.
- The way we work: There was a risk to having a small number of people involved in them running out of energy. We should therefore help give support and inspiration. Good chairing of meetings is a practical skill we could help with.
- Supporting our people: Staff, Ministers and Lay People are all undertaking roles which can be emotionally or physically draining, and need support.
- Money: The Essex Hall Trust grants and investment income hide weak quota income, which is more closely linked to how well we're doing as a Movement. We need to look ahead and consider sustainability when the Bowland Trust grant money runs out.
- Importance of growth: If we are not trying to grow, we are simply managing decline.

### Perspectives from EC members on vision and strategy

The following comments were made during the discussion:

- The people we tend to attract at present are not young people.
- The delivery mechanism is also important. The committee and strategy group system is not working well. How do we better engage with activists?
- Individuals start their own initiatives, which can sometimes work well because they capture the mood. We need to find mechanisms to capture what's happening that will help with growth, communication etc.
- Growth requires an alignment of passion and purpose.
- Our denomination often lacks a common voice, due to our focus on autonomy, are there common positions we can speak on?
- We were doing a lot right, but cannot do everything at once. Following initiatives through hadn't always been done well.
- Effectiveness – was the use of churches for worship on a Sunday the best measure of effectiveness? Or did other activities (and other user groups) enabled by our churches help people live a more Unitarian life?
- Was worship an obstacle to people? Were there other methods, such as tuning into the spiritual side of life in other ways, or enacting social justice?
- The Chief Officer wanted us to be effective in improving the spiritual health of communities and individuals.
- Districts have a role, though it wasn't fully clear what it should be, particularly with the divergent strength of districts.
- Plans going forward need to be achievable in the initial period.
- There was need to meet people's unmet needs. It could take work to find these, as the UK was culturally poor in expressing needs.

### Planning towards September meeting focussing on Budget and strategy

It was suggested the EC put Strategic Direction on every agenda until we had an outcome, though some mechanism was needed to eventually convert direction into action.

When coming to implementation, the Chief Officer remarked that it was important to note the differences between volunteers and Staff – volunteers were more about emergence and influence, which contains more uncertainty, including communication with the wider Movement. It was important to be responsive to volunteers, balanced against our need for forward momentum.

It was noted that plans, while needed to inspire volunteers and imagine desired outcomes, must be fluid as in our context reality tends diverge from ideal plans.

It was **AGREED** to have a session on strategic direction which focusses on our passions, leading into the planning for the September meeting.

### Unitarian College

Opportunities and risks were discussed. It was noted that the GA and Unitarian College were separate organisations, and there was therefore a risk that they could diverge in the future.

There were questions about our future relationships; the GA’s role providing back-office services; and the dual roles in setting strategy and vision, and also providing practical support.

Harris Manchester College Oxford (HMCO)

A fuller report on progress in respect of the competency framework, as per the action item, was still needed for the next meeting.

**Session 3**

**9. Annual Meetings**

a) Minutes of January’s Annual Meetings Panel

The Minutes of the Meeting held in January (Document **EC30/19**) were accepted.

b) Minutes of the 2019 GA Meetings & List of Resolutions

The Minutes of the 2019 Annual Meetings (Document **EC31/19**) were noted. Any corrections should be sent to Andrew.

The 2019 Resolutions (Document **EC32/19**) were noted.

c) Review of the 2019 Annual Meetings

Members were asked to feedback using the categories ‘I Like’, ‘I Wish’ and ‘What if’. The following feedback was given:

‘I Like’	‘I Wish’	‘What if’
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced time. More manageable</li> <li>• Shorter meetings</li> <li>• More people in a younger age-profile this year.</li> <li>• Average age of attendance coming down (subsidies).</li> <li>• Speaking and debate.</li> <li>• 1 hour slots.</li> <li>• Energy the reducing days gave (though more tiring).</li> <li>• Freedom to deliver the accounts in a different way.</li> <li>• Sense of there being 370 committed people and the energy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silent breakfast table,</li> <li>• It wasn’t in holy week. Week after Easter.</li> <li>• Resolutions process was clearer and had more energy.</li> <li>• Knife crime debate could have put in to Unitarian context. More discussion before set policies. Had an ‘against’ debater for all motions.</li> <li>• We could revisit the notion of the plenary session, which seems archaic.</li> <li>• The Anniversary Service were not a lecture.</li> <li>• Greater engagement with the finances.</li> <li>• Values in what we’re eating.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We videoed multiple sessions.</li> <li>• We used video in the right way. Looked at how use volunteers.</li> <li>• Have smaller meetings all around the UK like this.</li> <li>• We didn’t have motions but had a debate instead.</li> <li>• Had same lunchtime setup at dinner.</li> <li>• Formalise a ‘ministry of money’ to do things differently.</li> <li>• Felt more open to new people, less of an insider’s club, more opportunities for new people to connect.</li> </ul>

d) Appointing an EC member to the Annual Meetings Panel  
Jim Corrigan was appointed as the EC representative on the Annual Meetings Panel.  
Christina Smith was also approved as a Panel member.

### 10. Finance update

David Joseph, Finance Manager, attended for this item.

#### a) Management accounts

The Management Accounts to 31 December 2018 (Document **EC33/19**) had been circulated. David drew the Committee's attention to a revision of a number and had provided a replacement page for the report. There has been a backlog of transaction processing, and therefore the accounts were as at December 2018. He had included the November figure to give context, though there were few changes between November and December.

Income: Quota balance outstanding had been increased to £97K due to the issuing of quota requests in December, and there was more work to be done on that. Dividends had dropped as the Bowland Trust dividend had been moved to the Bowland Fund total.

Expenditure: Grants payable – the six-monthly grant to The Inquirer had been made.

Payroll: This was split 50% in principle between administrative costs and programme activities.

It was believed that a professional fee needed to be transferred to Unitarian College.

#### Outlook

The B&FUA grant income has dropped by £2K.

Administration costs – had risen to £386K as audit bill from last year has gone in to this year (£1K) plus allowance for fees for legal advice in respect of Unitarian Investment Panel.

The balance of the TED fund brought forward at 1/10/2018 will be treated as a donation to the Unitarian College. It had been agreed with the Director of Unitarian College that we would reconcile the balance on the fund and transfer the sum due at the end of May.

A request for a contribution from the GA towards its share of professional fees for legal advice given to the Unitarian Investment Panel was received by the Treasurer in February. The Treasurer had been sent a note from 2017 agreeing we would pay a 20% share of the fees. The GA's share was anticipated to be £6K but the final request was for £3K. The Treasurer recommended that this sum was fair and that the GA should settle it when a proper invoice for payment was submitted to the GA. This was **AGREED**.

#### Balance Sheet

The balance sheet was considered healthy with positive net current assets and a strong net assets position backed by healthy investments.

The main items were Debtors (£160.5K) and Cash (£165K). Of the Debtors (£160.5K), the key components were £49K of accrued income and prepayments (including £36K from

B&FUA), £17.5K of Gift Aid debtors, and £94K other debtors. Of the other debtors, £93K was for Quota income – which had been recently invoiced. The current position on Quota debtors is £40K due. A Quota collection exercise is in process to recover the outstanding sums.

There was a balance of £164K cash in the COIF and HSBC accounts.

The Creditors figure was £32K (£9K owed to HMRC and pensions, £20K accruals and £3K mainly expenses to volunteers).

The Endowment Funds totals were shown on the 'Funds movement note' page. It was budgeted to transfer £120K for the year from the Bowland Development Fund for breakeven on normal expenditure. This year, we would be making a £35K donation to Unitarian College from Restricted Funds.

There was need to consider our use of Restricted Funds. A new Restricted Fund would be created with a balance of £4K in time for the next financial report resulting from a successful grant application to the Hibbert Trust from the Ministry & Congregational Support Officer for 'Appreciating Church', to promote interaction between congregations. This would initially be used to support appreciative enquiry in Lewisham and a North West congregation.

### Summary

There was a strong balance sheet, anticipating few risks and good returns on investment. Reserves were considered to be at an appropriate level. Financial processes needed to be updated.

#### b) Update on Gift Aid

David Joseph gave an update on the status of Gift Aid collection. At the start of the financial year, approximately £21K awaited collection. Three claims had been made, totally £3.7K, leaving an approximate balance of £17.5K. Of this, £3.8K needed to be collected by the end of this year as it related to income from 2014-15. The balance was from the 2015-16 year.

Proposed Gift Aid recovery plan:

- 1) Finalise the 2014-15 claim by June.
- 2) Claim the remaining 2015-16 year by Dec 2019.
- 3) Later gift aid to be claimed after the new Finance Officer is appointed, then develop a process to claim Gift Aid by the corresponding financial year end.

David was thanked for the recovery plan and the report and left the meeting.

### **11. Nightingale Centre minutes (Document EC34 & 34b/19)**

The Minutes of the Nightingale Centre Management Committee Meetings held 09 February 2019 (Document **EC34/19**) were noted. The draft minutes of the meeting held 06 May 2019 (Document **EC34b/19**) were also received. Sue Catts had resigned and it was **AGREED** to appoint Cathy Masztalerz as a Committee Member. It was **AGREED** to add £6.2K to the investments as an endowment resulting from the sale of land for the school (land price £3.5K and £2.7K interest).

### 12. Confidential Items

Andrew Mason and Elizabeth Slade left the room for discussion of this agenda item.

#### Staff remuneration

A paper (Document **EC35/19**) had been circulated and Staff remuneration was discussed.

### 13. Paper on assisted dying (Document EC36/19)

A paper on The Assisted Dying Coalition (Document **EC36/19**) had been circulated, along with the text of the 2013 GA Resolution on the topic.

Robert Ince reported on the paper. Robert declared an interest, as a Director of 'My Death My Decision'. We had been offered the chance to join this new coalition on assisted dying. At present, 'Dignity in Dying' was the main assisted dying organisation, and they will only support a change in the law for people who are terminally ill with only six months to live. He felt that joining other groups in the Coalition, even if we did not agree with all individuals statements, would put us in the campaign.

The following comments were made:

- Our resolution refers to 'intolerable existence', the coalition referred to 'incurable suffering' – slight variations of wordings could have life or death impacts. The Quakers were currently using our wording, though every organisation would express itself slightly differently.
- Members were not in full agreement as to whether the resolution, as worded, gave the EC the authority to join a coalition.
- Wider consultation might be required (though it was noted that there had been discussion on the resolution for two years, and resolutions from the Annual Meetings are considered to represent the view of our Movement).
- In response to a question as to what the Coalition wanted from us, Robert indicated support and momentum, as Brexit was currently occupying parliamentary attention.
- A discussion paper for circulation and comment would be useful.
- The positions of other groups in the Coalition, and possible new groups joining, were important.

It was **AGREED** that Robert would go back to the Coalition and speak to them about wording, collate the stated position of Coalition members, and bring this back to the next meeting.

**ACTION: Robert**

## Session 4

### 14. Paper on conflict of interest (Document EC37/19)

Rob Whiteman submitted a paper to attempt to define conflict of interest, to be attached to the Conflict of Interest Policy as guidance. This was **AGREED**.

### 15. Decision on EC member to serve for two years

Derek McAuley had emailed the five people elected to see if anyone wished to indicate they were willing to serve for two years. No-one had offered to do so. The GA Constitution stated that the procedure is that four people stand down and four new members join.

There had been five during this term due to a resignation. Members are ordinarily elected for four years.

### 16. President's Report

Celia Cartwright gave a verbal report. She indicated that it would be useful to know the approximate timings around occasions like the Cenotaph, and asked whether there was a dress allowance for such occasions. Having delivered her report, Celia left the meeting.

Outgoing President Joan Cook had submitted a Report (Document **EC38/19**). Joan was thanked for her report, and for her year working as President.

### 17. Chief Officer's Report

Liz had submitted Report **EC39/19**. This was noted. It was suggested that the next report be put in the 'I Like, I Wish, What If', format.

### 18. EC Link Reports

The Link Reports (Document **EC40/19**) were taken as read.

- NELUM – would meet on Monday, and were looking at their purpose.
- Midland Union – Were planning to be creative about their own working practices.
- S Wales – Had raised the issue of safeguarding costing in having Youth Officer due training. It was suggested that remote training would be more appropriate.
- Sheffield – Had run a session on Rites of Passage with 12 attendees. Great Hucklow had previously suspended regular services, but the District had now agreed to provide worship support to enable a congregational service to take place from July on the first Sunday of the month at 3pm As a result of a conversation with the Unitarian College Tutor, the students would arrange a Christmas Carol Service on 13 December.

### 19. Unitarian Discovery Holiday (Document EC41/19)

A report on the winding up of the Unitarian Discovery Holiday group, requesting the outstanding monies be passed to the Send a Child to Hucklow fund, had been received. Their Constitution dissolution clause mandated that the funds pass to the GA to use in line with the Objects of their charity, which did not accord with the objects of SACH. After discussion it would go with the Unrestricted Fund. The Chief Officer would respond to the UDH group.

**ACTION: Chief Officer**

### 20. Key Messages

Key Messages could be passed to districts verbally then circulated via Uni-News. These were:

1. Convening as a new fully-elected EC.
2. Appointment of Marion as Convenor, Welcoming new President, Appointment of EC Link people & other Committee Members.
3. Exploring EC Covenants and ways of working.
4. Chief Officer gave initial impressions.
5. A preliminary review of the Annual Meetings had been held but people were reminded to complete the AM feedback survey.
6. Mark Hutchinson had been accepted on to the GA Roll of Ministers with probationary status.

**21. Any other business**

It was **AGREED** that Rev Mark Hutchinson be added to the GA Roll of Ministers as a Minister with Probationary Status.

The Bridport Paper would be added to the agenda for next time.

**22. Dates of future meetings**

Meetings at Essex Hall unless otherwise stated:

15 July 2019 (9-5); 12-14 September 2019 (Evening of 12th to lunchtime on 14th, Nightingale Centre); 28 November 2019 (9-5); 21 January 2020 (9-5).

**23. Non responsive check-out**

This took place.

Hilda Dumpleton gave Closing Devotions with a short reading and the meeting closed.

**Minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held 15/07/19**

- Present:** Marion Baker, Phillip Colfox, Jim Corrigall, Hilda Dumbleton, Peter Hanley (by Video), Robert Ince, Lynne Readett, Matthew Smith and Rob Whiteman.
- In attendance:** David Joseph (Finance Officer, Item 10) Elizabeth Slade (Chief Officer), Andrew Mason (Minutes)
- Apologies:** Celia Cartwright (President)

**Session 1**

Robert Ince conducted Opening Devotions by reading from the Dalai Lama's Little Book of Wisdom and the meeting started.

**1. Checking in**

This took place and the meeting started.

**2. Reviewing qualities for our behavioural covenant**

- Notes of Facilitated Session

The notes of the session facilitated by Sarah Tinker (Document **EC50/19**) were accepted.

- Trustee Code of Conduct

The trustee code of conduct (Document **EC51/19**) had been circulated. Members were asked to review and sign it.

- Existing behavioural covenant

The existing behavioural covenant (Document **EC53/19**) had been circulated. It was **AGREED** that Robert and Peter would draft a behavioural covenant to share, that would not at this stage include the decision-making process. **ACTION: Peter, Robert**

**3. Apologies**

Peter Hanley was not present, but was video-conferencing in to the meeting. All other EC members were present. The President, Celia Cartwright, had sent apologies.

**4. Minutes of the 17 May 2019 meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held 17 May 2019 (Document **EC43/19**) were **AGREED** as a correct record, with some minor amendments, and signed by the Convenor.

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

- Item 5 – Report from Simon Bland re. Harris Manchester College and Ministerial Competencies.
- Ethical Investment – To be covered under the Finance Group Minutes.
- 'Ministry of Money' idea – to be noted for the September meeting.
- Helping congregations with their web presence – this came under strategy.

**6. EC Action List (Document EC44/19)**23-25 September 2018

Pg 7, item 8 – Small initiatives fund of £5K to enable the Ministry & Congregational Support Officer to assist where he sees fit in empowering people and congregations. This linked to other items. The Chief Officer would speak to Simon Bland about the criteria.

**ACTION: Chief Officer**

16 November 2018

Pg 1, item 4 – Tabulated issues and requirements list – A wider discussion on strategic direction would be undertaken, with checking and monitoring of this list, and unfinished projects to be picked up on an ongoing basis.

Pg 6, item 15 – Youth Programme journeys for young people to adulthood. The Chief Officer would chase this and ask the Youth Officer for a report. This was broadened to a brief report from all staff areas within the Chief Officer's Report. **ACTION: Chief Officer**

Pg 7, item 18 – Sustentation Fund – The procedure for congregations without a District Association was raised. The Ministry & Congregational Support Officer would be asked about this.

**ACTION: Chief Officer**

25 January 2019

Pg 5, item 9 – GA Accounts – Issues being raised with new Auditors – This was ongoing.

Pg 5, item 9 – Gift Aid Progress – This was on the agenda for this meeting.

Pg 7. Item 14 – Safeguarding Report, External Support Options for Safeguarding Lead – The Chief Officer would follow this up with Gavin Howell. This was ongoing but would come off the list.

**ACTION: Chief Officer**

Pg 7. Item 14 – Safeguarding Report, Annual Meetings slot – This was ongoing, Gavin had approached the Annual Meetings Panel about hosting a slot.

Pg 7. Item 14 – Safeguarding Report, the Register needed designing – This was ongoing. Peter Hanley needed to meet with the Safeguarding Coordinator. Peter was cautious about the GA taking on responsibilities it could not meet.

**ACTION: Peter**

Pg 8. Item 17 – Stipend Review Committee Report, recruit two new members – This would go on the agenda.

**ACTION: Chief Officer**

Pg 9. Item 22 – Revision of Guidelines for Ministers and Congregations – This was ongoing and considered to be quite urgent. Lynne Readett, Simon Bland and Sarah Tinker were to get together.

It was noted that delivery mechanisms were shrinking and this placed a greater burden on Officers and particular individuals. This would be discussed further in the next session.

17 May 2019

Pg 3, Item 7 – Declaration of Interests forms. Andrew had reminded those who had yet to submit their forms of the need to do so. Those EC members with outstanding forms would complete and send them. **ACTION: All**

Pg 3, Item 7 – Local Leadership Strategy Group (LLSG) – the Convenor would approach the LLSG to ask how they can be helped. This was part of the overall strategy. **ACTION: Marion**

Pg 10, Item 13 – Assisted Dying – This had been included on the agenda.

Pg 11, Item 19 Unitarian Discovery Holiday – The Chief Officer has followed this up.

Harris Manchester College, Oxford (HMCO). The GA has an interest as guardian of the Ministerial Roll, to ensure that HMCO ministerial training could be benchmarked against the GA's ministerial framework. There were major concerns about this at present and feedback was needed for the next meeting. Rob Whiteman would write a risk for the Risk Register on this. **ACTION: Rob**

The Chief Officer would be meeting with Jane Shaw, Principal of HMCO, and would discuss this, as well as looking at the role of the two Colleges and possible collaboration and differentiation between them. **ACTION: Chief Officer**

### **7. Our motivations and visions**

EC Members shared their motivations, what brought them to the denomination and their roles; and each other's passions and hopes.

## **Session 2**

### **8. Finding our direction: sharing what we already know**

The EC reflected on external factors influencing the denomination (political, environmental, social and technological), as well as partners, allies and competitors, the current strengths and weaknesses of the denomination and GA, and the impact that we are having.

### **9. What do we need to find out?**

From this review, the EC identified some initial areas where further information is needed in order to inform our direction.

**Session 3****10. Finance update** (David Joseph, Finance Manager, attended for this item)**1. Management Accounts (Document EC45/19)**

The Finance Officer reported on the current Management Accounts, with the caveat that the figures were from the Ledger based on transaction processing and bank reconciliations currently incomplete. The effect was that debtors may be understated, and the cash figure may be affected.

The Outlook was for a budget deficit of c£19K. There were no dramatic changes in income or expenditure anticipated. The Bowland drawdown was adjusted from £120K to £113K.

Main variances – there was a small item for legacies; the quota appeal figure was unchanged, as a thorough exercise was needed to ascertain the correct figure owing; the GA Community Appeal had received £5.3K, a slight increase; it was not considered reasonable to increase Gift Aid at this stage, as there was a need to analyse this further. David was hoping to catch up with transactions over the next three months to bring the figures up to date.

**Balance Sheet**

Pending the bank reconciliation, Debtors were £92,200 (£25,800 of which was quota payments) and Liabilities were £67K (£25K in this year to the Birmingham Hilton Metropole for the Annual Meetings, and £24K to HMRC – which brought it up to date).

**2. Update on Gift Aid**

Since the last report in May, David had commenced working on the final pre-2016 Gift Aid collections. It was originally hoped we might submit a claim in June, but this had not proved possible. David had reviewed documentations, prepared electronic accounts, and started an updated Gift Aid procedure, but was expecting this to be a time-consuming task. It was hoped that this could be delegated to a temporary staff member, with a deadline well in advance of the end of the financial year. The current balance remained £17.6K (£3.8K pre 2015-16 and the balance of £13.8K from 2016 onwards). The plan was now to process claim for the 2015-16 year before 31 December 2019. In future, the new Finance Officer will be responsible for submitting Gift Aid claims each year before the year end.

**3. Recruitment of Finance Officer**

A clearer idea was needed of the range of work being done. The current priority was to meet our responsibilities for paying supplier invoices and volunteer expenses for the GA, B&FUA, Essex Hall & Unitarian College. David was building up knowledge and getting a better idea of what needed to be included in the job description. The plan was to look at recruiting temporary support for a period of around three months to support main housekeeping work and core duties. David would then focus on quality control in the Accounts, meeting our statutory deadlines, and working with the new Auditors. Engaging a temp would help us to work out what the Finance Department needs, before we move to recruit a permanent Staff member. The speed of recruitment has been affected by the decision to move away from our current processes, as this takes setup time.

David wished to update the style of the Management Accounts. In response to a question, David indicated he was happy to email Robert further about this, with the Finance Group reviewing the new format.

It was noted that the Sustentation Fund, Ministers Stipend Augmentation and Unitarian College were all new projects. The tools, as well as the personnel, needed to be considered.

#### 4. Budget planning

At the Finance Group meeting, the form of the budget for 2019-20 had been discussed. As a new strategic plan was being developed in the EC, it was felt to be best to wait for that and use it to inform for future budgets. However, for next year, an interim holding budget was needed, which would be based largely on a 'no change' scenario. This would be presented to the September EC Meeting, following discussions with the Chief Officer, and could then be amended accordingly.

Guidance from the Charity Finance Group suggests that the Finance Group should be responsible for creating a draft business plan.

#### Bowland Trust Reserves

The Chief Officer and Finance Manager had spoken about this. Scenario 1 represented the current drawdown on an operational budget of £144K, assumed no major changes, and anticipated the Bowland Trust reserves running out in 2028/29. Scenario 2 in the paper had been presented as a hypothetical to prompt thinking about the drawdown of the Bowland Trust Reserves. Scenario 2 had the effect were we to spend larger chunks earlier on in the cycle, on new investment in changing our activities, in hopes of having a positive effect on the expansion and promotion of our values, in a financially sustainable way. The lack of sustainable income is currently our major financial risk. The GA needed to ensure other sources of income, not just Bowland. Success was not just quantified in financial terms however.

#### 5. Minutes of July Finance Group meeting (**Document EC54/19**)

The Minutes of the July meeting of the Finance Group had been circulated. The Finance Manager highlighted that the Finance Group would be meeting on a calendar basis, for specific functions: oversight of the budgeting process; the Year End process; oversight of ongoing Management Accounts. The Finance Group aimed to take the detailed oversight of the GA's financial situation as it's task, to give the EC confidence on what has been presented to it. The Group would have regular communication and guidance with Staff members.

It was noted that a Business Plan had not been included in this list.

#### Investment Policy

The Investment Policy needs review on whether the ethical investment policy is suitable, along with an assessment of the financial impact of implementing an updated ethical investment policy (which required professional advice). The current Investment Policy would be circulated to Jim and Robert, who had not received a copy.

**ACTION: Chief Officer**

There was a great deal of interest in the Movement in ethical investment. Divestment (of fossil fuel investments or other items within pooled investment funds) is a further issue. The aspiration was to get an impact assessment by September.

In response to a suggestion that training local Treasurers be added to the list of objectives, it was felt that this was more likely to be a function of Unitarian College, though the GA would need to set standards.

The Finance Manager was thanked for his efforts and for his report.

**11. Stipend Review Committee membership:** request for nominations  
EC Members who are on the GA Roll of Ministers (Jim Corrigan, Lynne Readett, Matthew Smith and Rob Whiteman) declared an interest.

#### Background on the process

There had been concern expressed that congregations could not afford the higher stipend levels, with a request for North / South representatives from outside the current committee join the committee. The current membership was: the GA Treasurer, Martin Whitell (Ministerial Fellowship), Sarah Tinker (Ministry Strategy Group), and the GA Chief Officer. It was felt that the concern reflected a steep series of increases, rather than a lack of valuing our Ministers. The context of a shortage of Ministers was also noted. It was **AGREED** that we advertise for new committee members in Uni-News.

**ACTION: Chief Officer**

## Session 4

### **12. Chief Officer's Report**

The Chief Officer gave a report (Document **EC46/19**). Issues identified were:

- Challenges – Many of our challenges come back to a lack of clarity about what we are trying to do. This then caused volunteer energy to drop, losing capacity, which results in a reduction in vision and forward momentum. She felt it was important to create conditions for people to re-find their own vision and energy.
- Web and print materials, and website, etc – The Chief Officer wished to invest in expertise to make a publicity material look clear and appealing. It was difficult to find information on our website, which looked old-fashioned. Style matters as well as content when presenting information. Leaflets needed to be freshened up, and Liz had identified a person who might be able to assist. Graphic design and branding were important. There were opportunities to create books that were more obviously appealing to a wide audience (as opposed to being designed for committed Unitarians). Materials could be made available online as well as through books. Communication through Uni-News and The Inquirer should also be considered.
- Remote training – This needed to be applied more generally, possibly through Unitarian College.

The Chief Officer had recently met with 'Perspectiva', a spiritual think tank. It might be possible to have a public event with them.

Her last four months had mostly been reactive, absorbing information, and she was looking forward to moving to being able to focus outwards proactively.

Items identified for future consideration were:

- Our relationship with the Humanists.
- Retreats: There was a value to time together away, without reinventing the wheel.

### **13. President's Report**

The President's Report (Document **EC47/19**) was noted with thanks.

### **14. EC Link Reports**

The EC Link Reports (Document **EC48/19**) were noted.

East Midlands Unitarians – Jim Corrigan had been asked to raise the issues of the GA website, and of events overrunning at the Annual Meetings.

North East Lancashire Unitarian Mission (NELUM) – There was an August gathering scheduled to happen at Walmsley, and Lynne would report back in September.

Manchester District (MDA) – Robert Ince reported an issue in the previous week at our Oldham church, where a group had met supporting Palestine, and the MDA had a telephone call from a Zionist group implying racism.

### **15. Assisted Dying Coalition**

Robert had prepared a report (Document **EC49/19**) on the stated position of the assorted organisations involved in the Assisted Dying Coalition, as requested, and offered to take on a spokesman role if required. After discussion, it was not felt there was sufficient agreement to proceed at this time, but Robert should be the spokesperson on the issue if required.

### **16. Minutes of Nightingale Centre**

The Minutes of the Nightingale Centre Management Committee meeting held 06 July 2019 (Document **EC52/19**) were received. Clarification had since been received from the Centre's Insurers in respect of Minute 8.w, confirming that volunteer activities were properly covered.

The Centre was doing more to be sustainable, and intended to create a sustainability policy and explanatory information on this to publicise.

### **17. Key Messages**

- The EC had looked at motivations and visions, with a view to strategic planning.
- The Nightingale Centre Sustainability Policy
- Uni-News invitation to join the Stipend Review Committee
- Further work on the Ethical Investment Policy
- Review of Financial Processes
- Chief Officer's update on her first four months in post
- Discussion about the GA website update
- Reviewing our Objectives and Priorities as part of our plan, with this being the major agenda item for the September meeting - general views would be welcomed, to be sent to the Chief Officer.

### **18. Any other business**

A copy of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF)'s new vision document was circulated by Robert, as IARF President. The GA was a member of IARF.

**19. Dates of future meetings**

- 12-14 September 2019 (arriving between 3pm and 6pm on Thurs 12<sup>th</sup>, leaving 2pm on Sat the 14<sup>th</sup>), Nightingale Centre.
- 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (9.00am – 5.00pm), Essex Hall
- 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020, (9.00am – 5.00pm), Essex Hall
- Dates yet to be decided in: May (End); July; September (at Hucklow), November (Mid)

**20. Non responsive check-out**

This took place.

Matthew Smith gave Closing Devotions with a short poem 'Between High and Low Water' by Jan Sutch Pickard and the meeting closed.

**Approved Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held 28/11/19**

- Present:** Marion Baker, Phillip Colfox, Jim Corrigall, Hilda Dumbleton, Peter Hanley, Robert Ince, Lynne Readett and Rob Whiteman.
- In attendance:** Simon Bland (Ministry & Congregational Support Officer, Items 9-11), David Joseph (Finance Officer, Items 13-14), Andrew Mason (Minutes), Elizabeth Slade (Chief Officer)
- Apologies:** Celia Cartwright (GA President), Matthew Smith

**Session 1****09.00 – 10.30**

Marion Baker conducted opening devotions by reading the 23 November piece from Fragments of Holiness and 'Silence' from Gathering in Prayer by Roger Courtney, and the meeting started.

**1. Checking in**

This took place and the meeting started.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Celia Cartwright and Matthew Smith.

**3. Minutes of 15 July meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held 15 July 2019 (document **EC56/19**) were **AGREED** as a correct record, and signed by the Convenor.

**4. Strategic Matters**

- Outcome of 12-14 September Strategy Review meeting

The Outcomes of the Strategy Review meeting held 12-14 September 2019 (document **EC57/19**) were **ACCEPTED**.

People want to be informed of what the EC are up to, and will want to know how it will affect them. On consideration, it was felt that much of this document was thought formulation rather than final actions, and the document was not ready for release. It was suggested that the Chief Officer put an article in The Inquirer based on her blog post. To update people. She was thinking about how to engage with people, particularly on specific projects. **ACTION: Chief Officer**

- Update on strategic initiatives

The Chief Officer had circulated an update (Document **EC58/19**).

**Expressing who we are:**

This was about telling the most helpful story about who we are and what we're doing. The Art of Hosting team would be sending out invitations next week, for the planned session at Woodbrooke Quaker Centre from 24-27 February 2020. A few non-Unitarian partners would be invited to share and give other perspectives, and the training will be delivered by expert trainers/facilitators. The event would be for around 40 participants and would be by application to give appropriate diversity of participation. It would be suggested that

attenders be asked to contribute financially according to their ability. It was agreed that harvesting and sharing the output of the gathering will be important.

#### Sharing what we have

Websites and leaflets – The Chief Officer had started the process by speaking to a brand strategist. The aim was to progress a revamp as quickly as possible.

Supporting congregational websites – A poor website can be a symptom of other challenges in a congregation, and so just creating a new website is not always helpful. The Chief Officer had held initial conversations within the Staff. Ultimately it was not sensible to have a Staff member running every congregation's website.

On the main GA website, it was suggested that we could offer a page for every congregation with the core information (annually reviewed and fed directly from the GA database) with a link out to their Facebook page etc, so there would always be at least a core page. The ideal would be that each congregation would have their own personalised website / Facebook page, where they would have details of upcoming events etc. The GA could direct other congregations to some of the better current congregational websites, and create a plan for others to follow (who had been involved, how much they had spent etc).

#### Forming new groups

There was discussion of how this approach fitted with the 2020 project. The 2020 project is finishing, and they been asked for a report on lessons learnt, which will inform this. The Chief Officer would be meeting with others inside and outside of the Unitarian movement with experience of small group formation in the New Year to try and learn from them and possibly create alliances.

#### Reinvigorating existing congregations

The job description for the staff member has been drafted with a view to advertising in the New Year.

#### Leadership

The Hibbert Lay Leadership event had taken place, and there was a item later on the agenda to report on this. The Hibbert Trust wanted to invest in future leadership, and the GA, Hibbert Trust and Unitarian College would need to explore together how to get the right kinds of leadership.

#### Youth strategy

The Youth Officer would be invited to the January EC Meeting to discuss this further.

- Chief Officer's Objectives

The Chief Officer's Objectives (document **EC59/19**) were reviewed.

### **5. EC Behavioural conduct (Document EC60/19)**

Robert had circulated a draft behavioural covenant (document **EC60/19**). This document was **ADOPTED** and would be brought to each meeting.

**6. Red Cross**

In total we had raised £100K towards natural disasters, but only £4K in the last three years. It was **AGREED** that Jim and Robert would go back to Feargus about what action is needed.

**ACTION: Jim & Robert**

**Session 2****7. Statement on the Chief Rabbi's comments on Anti-Semitism**

Rob Whiteman had proposed a statement. Significant discussion took place and it was agreed to reflect on this over the course of the day, and return to it under Any Other Business.

**8. Governance Update (Document EC62/19)**

The Ministry and Congregational Support Officer (MCSO) had circulated document **EC62/19**, an update on governance.

Governance was considered a major weakness in congregations. The planned removal of exempted status by the Charity Commission requiring registration by 31 March 2021 was seen as an opportunity to help address this. It was noted that the language of many old trust deeds was not helping to further current objectives or attract external funding for these activities. The possibility of the CIO model, combining congregational and building trusts, could also help to streamline activities and minimise the number of trustees needed – a major current issue. There were now believed to be around 25 congregations who had changed to CIOs.

The MCSO was continuing to push the importance of good governance, though this would involve a significant amount of relatively bespoke work, which would benefit greatly from standardisation. The presentation day on CIOs in July had been well-received, but was comprised of early adopters rather than necessarily those who would most benefit, and he therefore planned to re-run the event, and target those people. Around 50 congregations employ Ministers and were felt to be higher risk. The CIO model has the main advantage of removing personal trustee liability, and these groups would be prioritised. He also hoped to harness the enthusiasm and knowledge of those congregations who had undertaken the change to CIO status. It was suggested that the presentation day be retitled as a 'succession conference'.

ChapelMark – The ChapelMark scheme asked basic self-assessment questions about governance and documentation, and was an attempt at a stock-take audit on where the problems are. Self-assessment. An initial pilot had been run in Wales.

It was noted that peer-assessment would be better than self-assessment, and that many of these documents were not relevant if the congregation did not have a building.

The MCSO had met with the Welsh Officer to plan two training sessions on the most common issues in Wales.

It might be possible to negotiate insurance premium discounts if we could achieve a larger number of congregations with high ChapelMark scores, as this would reduce the perceived risks. Chapels with high scores tend to have more engaged trustees and are doing other activities. There might be a role for Districts in promoting this.

Other comments were:

- The wider picture was what our congregations are doing in the real world, not just how good their governance is – poor governance was likely to be a symptom of a bigger problem.
- Considering a review of the ChapelMark, and whether it would be useful to add extra questions.
- Congregations need to consider a broader story about having a clear mission.

The following recommendations were made:

- To roll out the ChapelMark endorsement / certificate at the Annual Meetings. This was **AGREED**. The Sheffield District had offered to develop this programme, phrasing it more as a success story than a compliance story.
- Development of model CIO documents for congregations – It was **AGREED** that Sarah Rowley of Charles Russell Speechleys, who had undertaken CIO work for other Unitarian institutions, would be asked to create one. The Treasurer indicated that he wished to be involved in this project. It was noted that the GA had voted to become a CIO and this still needed to be progressed.
- The MCSO requested a budget for publicising CIOs. This was **AGREED**. The GA Staff would work out a budget.
- To consider how to demonstrate public benefit. This was about who we are and what we're doing in the world, and would be explored through public events. This was **AGREED**.
- To acknowledge those who have registered and are registering as CIOs, and the informal support they have given to each other. It may need to be formalised to give improved support going forwards.

### 9. Sustentation Fund Legacy Campaign (Document EC63/19)

The Ministry and Congregational Support Officer (MCSO) had circulated document **EC63/19**, a report on Legacy campaigning.

At present, the Sustentation Fund capital produces around £20K a year to distribute in small grants, which are unlikely to significantly influence decisions on installing / retaining ministers. Money was being invested in training, but trained ministers would need funded pulpits to serve. The MCSO was suggesting attempting to raise funds to increase the endowment to c£4M.

More generally, it was remarked that faith sector charities do less well on legacies than those charities with more concrete outcomes.

This was a historically unusual time where the house price increases and the age of our membership means there could be an opportunity to encourage people to invest in the future of the Movement, particularly if we could find tangible projects which fit the motivations of our membership and the overall strategy of the GA.

Discussion followed, where EC members were in agreement that a legacy campaign was worthwhile, but further consideration was required as to whether the Sustentation Fund was the best vehicle for this. It was **AGREED** to pursue the legacy campaign, and then reconsider this for the January meeting.

**ACTION: MCSO**

**10. Supporting Vulnerable Congregations (Document EC64/19)**

The Ministry and Congregational Support Officer (MCSO) had circulated document **EC64/19**, a report on supporting vulnerable congregations.

There are congregations at the limit. The process of considering closure, or disposal of buildings, is a one-off situation, where people would not have the opportunity to gain these skills. Where it is ultimately decided that a congregation needed to close or dispose of its building, the GA would need to support trustees feeling a burden of guilt and failure, and also in the mechanism for sale (as well as the preceding decision process to sell). A recommendation to look at a peer support group of volunteer trustee mentors, with experience, in a similar way to the congregational development panel, was **AGREED**.

**ACTION: MCSO**

The MCSO was thanked for all his work and left the meeting.

**11. EC Action List (Document EC61/19)**

The EC Action List was reviewed, and a number of action items would be removed.

23-25 September 2019

All items would be removed

16 November 2019

All items would be removed.

25 Jan 2019

Page 5, item 11: Nightingale Consultant's Report – This had been circulated to the Treasurer and the item would be removed.

Page 6, item 12 – This would be removed.

Page 6, item 13: Investment Policy changes: This had been done.

Page 6, item 13(b): Investment Policy – This remained ongoing with the Finance Committee.

Page 7 item 14: Safeguarding Workshop – This had been booked and the item would be removed.

Page 7, item 14: Safeguarding Register – This was ongoing.

Page 8, item 17 - Stipend Review Committee Recruitment – There had been one nomination, Ken Howard. This item would be removed.

17 May 2019

Page 3, item 7: Assistance to LLSG – This was considered part of the review of leadership and the item would be removed.

15 July 2019

Page 3, item 6: HMCO Training – The Risk Register had been updated.

### Session 3

#### 12. Finance update (David Joseph, Finance Manager, attended for this item)

A written financial report was not available, as the Auditors were currently in, creating the actual accounts. The Finance Manager therefore reported verbally to the meeting.

Issues from previous years, and the complexity of the Aqilla finance system, meant that we were around 4-5 weeks behind the usual position at this stage. Accordingly, we had been slightly more flexible with the audit deadlines, and were just finalising transactions now. The new Auditors had taken over this year, and were asking many more procedural questions, due to their unfamiliarity with the account.

Since June, the accounting information had been organised differently, and this had a noticeable effect in locating information quickly for the Auditors over the preceding period. The Finance Committee would be meeting on 13 December, and there was a risk that this date might not be met, though the Finance Department were working hard to try and meet this. A backlog had taken up a lot of time to deal with, and had left a smaller backlog accumulating from the new period. The Finance Manager felt this should be caught up in time to give meaningful numbers at the January EC Meeting.

The Auditors had recommended a change from the current format of the separate Annual Report and Annual Accounts documents. The current Annual Accounts document would have some additional information added, and would become the official Annual Report and Accounts. The larger glossy document would become an Annual Review.

Gift Aid – The claimable period which had been about to run out had been done in August, along with the next period. An outstanding quarter's claim with HMRC (which had been sent, but not yet paid), would be pursued. An accrual had not been made for this year's Gift Aid on the Anniversary Service Collection and Associate Membership, and this would be discussed with the Auditors.

Aqilla – In answer to a question on the suitability of the Aqilla package, the Finance Manager felt that it was not a good fit for our purposes. He intended to set a timetable to look at moving to alternative software, linked with our new strategy objectives to consider the chart of accounts, departmentalisation for projects and objectives, etc. He would need to write a first draft paper for review, and look at the budget for the software. It was remarked that when the Aqilla software had been installed six years ago, a five-year review period had been envisaged.

**ACTION: David Joseph**

The Finance Manager was asked about the process for catching up on the backlog. He replied that the work already done on organisation, to avoid time lost on incomplete records and missing information, would reduce delays going forward. The targets for payment of invoices and expenses would be two weeks and the GA's invoice payments were now generally caught up. The trustees were assured that appropriate systems had been put in place for the GA. For the B&FUA and Essex Hall, these needed to be applied in the same way. When the GA audit was complete, these would be prioritised. B&FUA was considered fairly straightforward. Essex Hall would require more effort due to the decision to register for VAT, and the additional complexity that would involve. The year end was approaching, and there was therefore a lot of work to do.

### 13. Investment Policy

The draft Investment Policy (document **EC66/19**) had been recirculated for consideration.

Sustainable investments were a different raft of products, which would definitely impact on the Investment Policy. A motion to carbon disinvest was seen as a possible potential motion, and the effect this would need to be explored before the Annual Meetings if so. It was noted that the Investment Policy had been signed off at the last Annual Meetings, with annual review.

Robert and the Treasurer had brought an alternative concern – how to make affordable investment advice available to our approximately 200 small organisations (congregations, districts, affiliated societies etc. Independence should not preclude these organisations from receiving appropriate support. Robert had put two sheets together on a direction of travel, based on the principle that the GA should have a role in supporting investments within the Movement. This could include: creating a forum or group on a wider investment discussion, with performance indicators, than received through the Investment Panel's meetings with Newtons; coordinating with the B&FUA; reissuing the investment advice letter; and supporting Church Treasurers. It was noted that the General Assembly itself could not give investment advice to congregations, as it is not registered with the Financial Services Authority. Questions were also asked on how we could support congregational financial management (including other matters like lettings) more generally.

It was **AGREED** that the Chief Officer would consider how this could be taken forward, with input from the Finance Manager, Treasurer, Robert and others as needed. **ACTION: CO**

### 14. Risk Register

The Risk Register (document **EC67/19**) had been updated by the Chief Officer, but she would consider rewriting the document in a different style in future. It was noted that some items could be considered issues rather than risks, and the document might be too long. It was **AGREED** that this would be given priority on the agenda for the next meeting.

## Session 4

### 15. Chief Officer's Report

The Chief Officer had submitted a report (document **EC68/19**). Issues identified were:

- Reduction of Bowland Trust bursaries for the Annual Meetings bursaries / youth discounts – The Chief Officer identified a need to look at the financial picture for the Annual Meetings generally in future (Staff time was not currently budgeted, for example). For 2020 it was **AGREED** that the GA would cover any shortfall from the 2019 surplus.
- Safeguarding: Half a day of Gavin's time a week only really covered DBS checks. Issues arising, or the current major enquiry, wipes that time out. This would be considered.

### 16. President's Report

The President's Report (document **EC66/19**) was noted with thanks.

**17. EC Link Reports**

The EC Link Reports (document **EC70/19**) were noted.

The Scottish Unitarian Association's AGM would now be held on 30 May 2020 in Edinburgh.

The Sheffield & Manchester Districts had not met since the Last EC meeting.

The East Cheshire Union had met recently, and each congregation had been invited to bid for up to £4K for a discrete project. The district was also arranging a First Aid Course, and funding two people per congregation to attend.

**18. Minutes of the Annual Meetings Panel Meeting held 17 September**

The Minutes of the Annual Meetings Panel meeting held 06 July 2019 (document **EC71/19**) were received. A placeholder EC breakout session had been booked for the 2020 Annual Meetings, and this was an opportunity for dialogue on our strategic direction.

**19. Minutes of Nightingale Centre Management Committee held 12 October 2019**

The Minutes of the Nightingale Centre Management Committee meeting held 12 October 2019 (Document **EC72/19**) were received. The EC were asked to approve the investment of £75K of the Centre's cash in hand (£25K legacies and £50K running balance in advance payments) and this was **AGREED**. It was noted that the expenditure expected to be needed on Barleycrofts was less than has been expected in the Minutes.

**20. Nominations for GA Vice President**

Rev Sue Woolley was nominated and the nomination was accepted.

**21. Report from Hibbert Trust Meeting**

A report from the Hibbert Trust Lay Meeting (document **EC74/19**) had been received.

**22. Agreeing Key Messages**

The key messages were agreed as:

- Looking to explore how the GA supports its congregations:
  - The Chapel Mark scheme (and Sheffield District)
  - The Congregational Support Team
  - Considering how congregations might be supported on how they tackle their investments.
- The EC's Behavioural Covenant
- The Art of Hosting training
- Continuing GA Bursaries and Young People's Subsidy
- The nomination of Sue Woolley for Vice President

**23. Any other business**

International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) were asking individual members, including the GA, to approve a new Constitution as part of their move to a CIO structure. The objectives were unchanged. A request had been made for a written resolution to be agreed. This was acceptable in principle.

The anti-Semitism statement was revisited. After discussion, the last sentence of the first paragraph of the proposed statement was removed, and the Chief Officer & Rob Whiteman were tasked to tweak and disseminate the statement. **ACTION: Liz & Rob**

**24. Dates of future meetings**

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January (9:00am – 5:00pm at Essex Hall. Further dates would be decided by Doodle Poll after the meeting in: late May; July; September (at Hucklow); and mid-November

**25. Non responsive check-out**

This took place.

Rob Whiteman gave a reading from “A Century of Wisdom” by Alice Herz-Sommer as Closing Devotions and the meeting closed.