

## **Summary of Decisions                      Council Meeting April 2016**

Every Area has a representative on Council. Do ask your Area representative for feedback on meetings and let him/her know if there is anything that you would like to be discussed at any of the Committees or Council. Summary reports have already been circulated from the Finance and Support Services Committee and the Mission and Society Committee, so they are not repeated in detail in this Report. The Summary from Christian Ministries Committee will soon be available.

Report to Assembly                      Assembly always receives a report from Council on what has happened in the previous 12 months. This report was circulated in advance of Assembly this year to all Churches and Personal Members. It was also available on the CF website. If you did not see a copy before Assembly . do ask your Church Secretary or let me know. My contact details are below. The Assembly Review booklet will also be circulated in the next Mailing.

1. General Secretary's Report                      Yvonne Campbell gave an analysis of the Consultation with Churches. 20% of churches had responded and there were some very interesting comments which will feed into the Strategy Group. These formed part of a presentation at Assembly. It was agreed that those churches who had responded would be contacted to help them with any specific issues they had raised.
2. Representation on External Bodies                      Council agreed the membership of the list of representatives on External Bodies that appears in the Year Book. It is expected that a member of each Body will provide a report back annually to their parent Board or Committee. This means there will be a formal link and that there is communication both ways.
3. Change of date of Assembly.                      Council agreed to trial holding our Assemblies in June for 2017 and 2018. This would particularly help the Finance Department with extra time to prepare the Accounts in time for Spring Council and for Assembly. The change will be reviewed after June 2017 to look at the feedback. The date for 2017 is 10<sup>th</sup> June in Wales.
4. Training for Council members                      Council is the Trustee body of the Congregational Federation. Area representatives are appointed by your Area but make decisions at Council as Trustees. There has been little training in what our responsibilities involve for some time. All agreed that it was very useful and that Council needs to reflect further on the issues raised.
5. Affiliation Fees                      There was a long discussion about Affiliation Fees and what churches receive for being part of the Congregational Federation. It was felt that it would be helpful if this information was circulated so churches could understand what they are getting in return for their fees. The Finance Committee were asked to look into this and report back.
6. Housing for Retired Ministers                      As part of looking forward, there was discussion about the suggestion that ministers living in a Manse should

consider purchasing a property of their own to buy to let in order to provide themselves with a retirement home. This would be suggested to all ministers. Rising House prices have made it increasingly difficult for the Congregational Federation to provide retirement housing in some parts of the country.

7. Welcome Church, Pickering Welcome Church in Pickering (North East Area) was warmly welcomed into membership of the CF and were received at Assembly.
8. CWM representative It was agreed that a CF representative to CWM should be co-opted as a non-voting member of Council. This was to enable better links between the two organisations.
9. Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland The wording of a statement of Friendship between CF and NSPCI was discussed. After discussion and assurances that NSPCI have broken their formal links with Unitarianism, the statement was agreed. Yvonne was asked to forward this to the NSPCI.
10. Constance Coltman Constance Coltman was ordained on 17 September 1917. She was the first woman to be ordained in a mainstream Church and this is very much part of our Congregational heritage. There are plans afoot for a major celebration for the weekend of 16/17 September 2017 and details will be circulated as soon as they are available.
11. ChurchesqMinisterial Counselling Service Access to this Service will continue to be offered to Congregational Federation Ministers, their immediate family members and to students. Details are available on the CF website.
12. Personal Membership of CF  
There have been requests from a number of people that Personal Membership be reinstated. We have people who move and find there is no CF Church near them. However, they still want to be involved and support CF and to continue to be fully involved and help in Areas and nationally. The proposal on Personal Membership was taken to Assembly but there were clearly a number there who were not happy, so it was referred back to Council for further discussion.

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