

## Minutes for Contemplative Fire Trustee Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2025

Online 9.30am- 3pm

Chair : Kim Tsai

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

1. All Trustees present. Kim Tsai (**KT**) Chair, Connie Chapman (**CC**), Peter Wright (**PW**), Ali Dorey (**AD**), Kathryn Lord (**KL**), Soobie Whitfield (**SW**)

Administrator Sarah Burns (**SB**) to take Minutes

### 2. Stillness

**KT** led us in a stilling moment sharing an object to represent something we were grateful for

### 3. Minutes of last meeting – Last Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**CC** highlighted sentence in matters arising to be deleted as not relevant

**AD** Date of Trustee meeting in May amended from 2<sup>nd</sup> May to 22<sup>nd</sup> May

**AD** mentioned 5 companions had attended Greenbelt to help facilitate CF sessions

Informal links with other communities ongoing – ARCIE, Hilda and Aidan, Northumbria Community

After this Minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the last meeting

### 4. Update on actions from Listening to Community 5-7<sup>th</sup> October

**AD** asked for list of Momentum and Action topics – these are

Spark Creativity, Deepen Learning, Clarify Communication, Centering the Trefoil, Care for those on edge of CF and Nurturing loving community

**SW** had met TS re hearing loss / elderly in CF community and discussion around options for practical training workshop, checklist for event organizers and strategies to implement immediately including

- Use of lanyard with appropriate logo (sunflower / trefoil) for all those with additional needs.

Amended minutes 16/2/26

- Explore options for CF to have own microphone to use at events

**KL** raised about those with visual difficulties, **CC** mentioned about EAL (English as Additional Language) as well as Neurodiversity

**KL** to encourage companions to run local events

**AD on** communications feedback – KT newsletter style to Companions, **PW** trustee feedback, **CC** about minutes online - always ask for consent to include on the minutes

Not clear, which momentum / action **PW** has been assigned

### **Actions**

**SW** to co- ordinate 'Inclusion 'small group and explore trainings sessions on principles of inclusivity

**SW** investigate microphone / boom box

**SW** to share strategies with **CC** so practical actions can be added Co- host checklist for events

**KL** to contact **BF** to link up with **SW** small group

## 5. **Matters arising and updates**

### i. **Safeguarding**

**PW** reported that no matters of safeguarding concern have arisen since the last meeting.

**AD and PW** have renewed their DBS certificates

**AD and PW** attended training for senior leadership on safeguarding; the topic of 'Radical candour' was outlined as a combination of empathy and being able to say difficult things to each other within communities. Trustees could be a model for this and the sharing at the Community weekend was an example how CF Companions and friends are encouraged to share.

**KL** – completing safeguarding training this week

**CC** has sorted out her DBS

**SW** has done domestic violence course and question asked about what if a person has issue with CF – where they can go to report this: **PW** said this would be the Birmingham Diocesan Safeguarding contact Sarah Rose

**KT** has done all safeguarding training

**PW and AD** reiterated that Vision and Values session done annually for new Companions has focus on safeguarding and need to encourage people to overcome reticence to talk about issues.

### **Actions**

**PW** to check safeguarding document on the CF website to make sure it has the details of who and where to contact if a safeguarding problem with CF itself- would be Sarah Rose, Birmingham diocesan safeguarding lead

**KL** to forward safeguarding certificates to PW when completed training

**KT** to sort out DBS issue around having an overseas address,

**PW** to approach DM to help with this query.

### ii. **CF Development and Growth**

**AD:** three new Companions since Community Weekend. Also a couple of recent USA enquirers. A discussion followed as to whether to these contacts to link to CF Canada or CF community in UK. A suggestion was that enquirers be given choice of joining events /exploring with both communities.

**CC** has developed the role of co-host at retreats in 2025.

Other Companions could provide the role in the future - with the cost of their retreat, they attend to be covered by CF. The principle that the co- host has safeguarding training was essential was discussed. In addition, to consider a 'Trustee' could be a contact as support for the co-host in a query arose that they could not deal with.

**AD** CF archive of video, photos and documents. A survey to companions asking where best to access these resources from has had 10 replies so far. You -Tube proving to be the most popular platform to access videos, which AD suggested is suitable for short videos i.e. chants and body prayers but longer recordings would be interrupted with adverts unless the person accessing them had paid for advert free access.

**AD** identified that easier to sign into one platform rather than multiple media platforms to access the archive

**SW** raised need for list of where everything is -**AD and SB** working on a 'catalogue' and need to be easy to access through the website.

## **Action**

**AD** feedback on survey, USA enquirers to be encouraged to join either CF group

**KT** suggested possible pilot use of vimeo with companions who are non-tech to see how accessible it is

**KT** Co – host role needs further consideration if it is needed for all retreats and evaluation of the role would be helpful sometime in the year to see if this role works or not

**SB** Find out how retreat leaders TW and JT found it having someone in the co-host role

### iii. **Communication Strategy Inventory - feedback of Trustee responses**

**KT** -has circulated to Trustees the summary of trustee responses. Discussion around some of the points

**AD** – spoke to communication being the most important facet, the idea of rhythm and seasonal communications positive and perhaps need a small group to support communication JD and LG mentioned as younger adults who might support this enquiry about IT/ website development and maintenance

Need for a contemplative way of engaging with tech and social media – perhaps link with Companions who do not use the social media, or do access but not comment, to help develop this contemplative approach

The resources can only be listed on the website - with a link to another platform where they can be accessed

**PW** –encouraged by WhatsApp offerings as like a daily time of togetherness. A discussion followed about options for different subgroups on the WhatsApp and how that might work if one general one and one for notices about events

**KT** – shared experience of larger groups on what's app and how the subgroups over time reverted into the general group and so a different WhatsApp group used for notices

**KL** people respond to the messages differently and so do we need a separate one for notices

A separate WhatsApp could be set up for those attending the same retreat leading up to and after the event

**CC** raised the point that some Companions not accessing emails. What are the reasons for this?

**AD** clear titles in email subject lines required

**SW** asked about sending out printed details about events – not sent currently

Suggested perhaps for those Companions in care homes the CF post can be sent

**CC** whether there could be regional companions who are willing to keep in contact with those in care homes

**KL** mentioned about pastoral care for all Companions

### **ACTIONS**

**KT** to investigate about set up of different groups on WhatsApp

**SB** to send printed copies of CF post from now on to those in Care homes

**SB** to add in AD or KT contact details when on out office message used in case of emergency

**SW** to initially discuss with small group about Pastoral care

**AD** to keep website updated

**AD** list issues ongoing with IT and seek advice about website / how to catalogue resources.

**KT** to ask LG about what being offered (blog writing?) and BB... and to begin process of gathering a

Communications team/group?

**AD** to add to Trustee info on website that AD and PW are safeguarding contacts

**KL** to arrange an online coffee time event in the New Year (between dates of Time of Togetherness)

#### iv. **Finance /Budget**

Thanks given to Sally L for preparing the financial update and that budget going as planned and discussed at the AGM. A discussion about provision for Trustee travel as **KT** based in Netherlands would result in higher costs than in the past.

**KL** CF retreats / events need to be fully costed before the event is advertised, taking into account prices for venues, payment for retreat leaders. **It was agreed** that principle would be - £150 honorarium per day for retreat leader, and travel costs, expenses and place on retreat would be paid. In the case of the retreat being cancelled, the honorarium would still be paid to the retreat leader.

**AD** noted budget allocation for retreats for this financial year would go over budget in February 2026

Additional discussion focussed on how best to approach subsidy for the retreat and in person events – to use an average cost for all retreats or offer £50/£100 off, or % reduction for each retreat

### Some general principles around this would be

- To have a 2-year schedule for retreat / in person event planning with approximate costings advertised so people can budget for these retreats which they wish to attend
- Encourage people who find cost of retreats too much to apply for bursary which is always available and not limited to a certain number for each retreat
- New Companions to have costs covered of attending one Community weekend - reflecting generosity of the Community
- The guidelines for charging for retreats in the future need to have good stewardship and generosity. Use of firmer deadlines so can cancel retreat if poor uptake (need to mention this in the booking details) and option of taking out personal insurance if no refund

#### v. **Methodist checklist feedback for what a CF event creation checklist might include**

CC: had received this detailed document and had looked at when planning her co-host role checklist for CF retreats and Community weekend this year.

#### **Actions:**

CC to use what is necessary and helpful from the Methodist checklist to develop CF list.

CC to forward copy of the Methodist checklist to SB for reference

#### **(iv) Hardship fund**

KT introduced the reason behind idea of a Hardship Fund.

A discussion followed on about the nature of the fund, what it was for, was there money in the budget and the amount to allocate to this fund, and who it was for. CC highlighted the need of governance about this fund – a rationale and how decisions are to be written and documented.

#### **We agreed that**

: - the name of the fund to be changed to 'Hardship/ Relief Fund.'

:- for Companions and Friends of CF only

:- for this financial year £500 to be allocated

#### **Action**

KT to draft a few sentences about this new fund outlining who can apply, whether application is direct from people or on behalf of others and threshold limit. These details to

be checked out with other trustees and shared in letter from Trustees to Companions following the meeting

**(vii) Update new Bishop Visitor for CF**

**PW** has emailed potential new Bishop Visitor in September and had no reply. He had sent email again this week and awaiting reply.

**Action:**

**AD** agreed to make informal contact with potential Bishop Visitor via phone.

**PW** would get back to +Anne if no email reply by mid-January 2026

**(viii) Admin update**

**SB** had emailed written document of actions following last Trustees meeting, and overview of progress on upcoming events in person and online.

Numbers of companions 91, friends (232) and 7 new contacts since the last Trustee meeting

Dates and planning for events discussed in part 6 of agenda

**6. CF retreats/weekends 2026/7 – review**

**KT** gave overview of planned events in 2026, gaps identified for Wisdom on the Way (WotW) in March, summer retreat Permaculture topic not possible for WotW in March.

**All** discussed costings of Fellowship Weekend at Othona and publicity to go out in the next week

**KL** offered possibility of an online weekend retreat in summer based on book by Joyce Rupp

**CC** possibility of another Silent retreat in the coming year led by JT or another Companion

**KL** about Noel Moules as speaker for a “Shalom Quest” session instead of a WotW in March

**Actions**

**KL** to liaise with Noel Moules about date for online event in March 2026

**KL** to consider facilitating online summer retreat over 2 days of a weekend in July 2026

**SB** to contact JT re pilgrimage and silent retreat in 2026

**SB** to develop 2-year programme for events and share with trustees where gaps are in programme

Amended minutes 16/2/26

7. **Decision making by trustees outside of meetings.**

**SW** Suggestion discussed and **we agreed that**

- when contacted by email Trustees need to reply within 72-96 hours,
- If the matter requires urgent reply this is to be put in the subject line of the email.
- An initial reply from Trustees to say seen email and that will follow up is acceptable
- Four out of six (a quorum) of Trustees, (which includes the Trustee raising the issue) to proofread and/ or agree the decision or content of letters sent out.
- However, if all Trustees need to respond this needs to be highlighted in the email.

In addition, to be aware of safeguarding issues about how communications are made and can be interpreted depending on the forum used.

8. **Dates for next Trustees meetings after June 2026**

TBC October or November for 'Listening to Community 'reflection on Community weekend Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2026, online, 9.30 am -2.30 pm

9. **A.O.B**

**CC** about young adult engagement with contemplative practise – **SB / KT** to put on next agenda for general discussion

**CC** about prayer cards

**PW** about safeguarding and addition to Vision and Values in 2016 about 'All Companions to share in the responsibility of care in CF' - **KT** to add this to Trustees letter to Companions

10. **Date of next meeting:** March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 9.30am -2.30 pm on zoom

11. **Closing in silence** led by **KT** reflecting on the areas of gratefulness shared at the start of the meeting.