

CHCC Annual Report

2025

This is a simple summary of College activity in the year since our 2024 AGM. We hope you find it useful. We are continuing with the less 'glossy' format as employed previously. Do please let us know if you find this report helpful.

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The Organising Professional Committee (OPC)

The College of Health Care Chaplains (CHCC) is a semi-autonomous professional college within UNITE the Union that sits as a national branch within UNITE Health. Although CHCC retains some independence, it is in other ways wholly integrated into UNITE such that its membership is fully integrated. The good news is that all the benefits of being a UNITE member are combined with all the benefits of being a CHCC member for no extra cost.

The decision-making body of CHCC is the *Organising Professional Committee (OPC)* which is made up of the officers of the branch and elected representatives of the CHCC regions. Additionally, a general invitation is given to observers who report on various aspects of health care chaplaincy practice in the UK that they are involved with. Other observers are leaders in other health care chaplaincy bodies in the UK giving the OPC a comprehensive overview of health care chaplaincy in the UK.

The following people made up the OPC in 2024:

Officers

President: Simon Harrison

Vice-Presidents: Kartar Singh Bring and Giselle Rusted

Registrar & Branch Secretary: Allison Dean

Treasurer: Phillip Staves

Equalities Officer: Stewart Selby

Faiths/Beliefs Officer: Kartar Singh Bring

Digital Communications Officer: Mark Burleigh

Lead Professional Officer: Jane Beach/Gavin Fergie

Industrial Officer: Melanie Todner

Regional Representatives

London: Tasha Critchlow

East Anglia: Adrian Woodbridge

South-East: Ruth Bierbaum

South-Central: Ruth Fitter

South-West: Mark Richards/Vacant from October 2024

West Midlands: Ricarda Witcombe

East Midlands: Kay Cattell

North-West: Giselle Rusted and Andrew Bradley

North-East (*Yorkshire & North Lincolnshire*): Fran Kissack

North-East (*Durham, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear*): Graham Peacock

Wales: Euryl Howells

Scotland: Paul Graham

Northern Ireland: Michael MacMillan and Anna Burcombe

Observers

Mental Health Chaplaincy Forum Chair: Andrew Williams

GP Chaplaincy: Angela Painter

End-of-Life Forum (Ambitions, NACEL): Giselle Rusted

Advisors' Group (Recruitment): Derek Fraser/Phillip Wright

Paediatric Chaplaincy Group: Claire Carson

AHPCC Chair: Jill Thornton

UKBHC Chair: Tony Brookes/Sarah Crane

Journal Liaison: Fran Kissack

CHCC Representative to UKBHC: Sarah Crane

For contact details please visit the website on: www.healthcarechaplains.org

President's Report

Simon Harrison

Dear members,

Looking back on the last year, the most significant feature (for me) was the knowledge that this was going to be my last as President! This was significant *not* because I am desperate to stop - because it is so vital that leadership evolves and changes within a healthy profession.

President-Elect

I was delighted that there was a successful election process with Neil Cockling now ready to succeed me. He not only brings a lot of leadership experience - he has invested the time throughout 2024 to understand the core priorities among healthcare chaplains - both among members and beyond. This bodes well for the focus of the College in the coming years and for membership growth, which is a vital part of the bigger picture.

UKBHC

As part of my stepping back this year, I also finished my time on the UKBHC and handed over the CHCC seat to Sarah Crane - whom I am pleased to see has now been voted in as the Chair. Again, I can look forward with positivity at the future of the UKBHC and the work they do knowing that Sarah brings great passion for improvement and, most vitally, ensuring the increased relevance of this body for all of us. A profession without a sound registration body is not really a profession at all. My final work with them has been

to work on clarifying registration criteria and ensuring that there is equity across the different nations that hold us together as one.

Northern Ireland/Wales/ Scotland/England

I was also able to continue a focus on engagement with Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in other ways during the year. I was disappointed that the Welsh government chose not to invest in the development of Chaplaincy, but the lines of communication are open and we have a very active representative in Euryl. There remains a very good relationship with the Scottish government, and I hope all the Scottish Boards, albeit we have more work to do to increase membership. In Northern Ireland we continue to work in close relationship with NIHCA (one of the oldest Chaplaincy bodies in the world!).

As I complete my second term, I am hopeful that the charge of being 'English Centric' cannot be levelled to strongly at the College. The relationship with NHS England also remains good - fostered by a healthy 'Chaplaincy Forum' (set up by NHS England to make sure all the stakeholders play nicely) - and I get the sense that people are starting to use the latest guidelines well to support themselves when Trusts seek to make some ridiculous change or another. It would be better if there was adequate funding from NHS

England to support work (again - the amount funded is ridiculous in comparison with other professions) - but that is an ongoing battle.

ENHCC

In April I had the opportunity to attend the European Chaplaincy consultation in Prague (ENHCC). This organisation continues to foster collaboration with bodies who operate in very different cultures (and far beyond the English-speaking world which we generally find represented in our main academic journals). I am hopeful that in future years that this consultation can help further develop our sense of self confidence and self-understanding as a profession across Europe. As I was elected to sit on the planning group - this is the one strand of CHCC work OPC have agreed to me continuing (all else stops as soon as I hand over the baton).

Ridiculous Changes

I mentioned chaplains facing ridiculous changes. I want to take a moment to thank all the regional representatives on OPC who do significant work in the background to support local trusts and boards. I may be getting old and grumpy but I really do not feel we should have to put up with some of the battles that are being fought in several places at present. Whether it is to do is a lack of respect or a lack of understanding, too many teams find themselves being reconfigured - or a proposal is made that they are managed by a non-chaplain, or they are banded inappropriately and more.

I know every profession always faces threats, and I don't think anyone is picking on us as such, but we make up such a small proportion of staffing in any one team that we are perhaps a little more vulnerable. In addition, we still do not have a singular clear vision of how the profession should look - we are in a process of evolution that can vary across the UK (and should vary, to some extent). I am hopeful that the work put in to create the "Workforce Development Guidance: Towards Greater Diversity in the Healthcare Chaplaincy Workforce (2024)" will support such a process, sketching out broadly what good look like and ways to move towards a better model.

This year I have tried to get a little less personally involved in situations and empower members of the OPC to take a local lead, but despite this I have still had to have several awkward conversations with directors of Patient Experience or Nursing about plans they have in place to mess up their teams, as well as individual chaplains facing really tough situations with their Employer or with their colleagues. As someone once said to me - you don't appreciate the 'Union' side of the College until you need it. There was a time when some Chaplains were unhappy that the College sat as a semi-autonomous professional body within a union - but in these times I believe it is really significant.

Sue Ryder

One of the most frustrating episodes of this year was engaging with Sue Ryder, an organisation responsible for a number of hospices but which has shown little

understanding whatsoever regarding contemporary spiritual care provision, and which effectively removed all such provision whilst pretending this was somehow an 'improvement'. I was quite out-spoken on this matter, but this had very little impact and it seems that Hospice UK has little or no influence on its members either. Fortunately, there are some amazing hospices out there that do understand spiritual care - but sadly the outrageous behaviour of Sue Ryder was not unique in 2024. I am hopeful that a change in CEO may bring about some wisdom, and they have at least retained one highly skilled strategic lead, but this was a massive blow to the role of chaplaincy at the heart of hospice care.

AHPCC

In the light of the 'Sue Ryder' affair- we have formed much closer working relationships with the Association of Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplains during the year and have made it clear that our support for them and for Hospice Chaplaincy is absolute. We will see how this relationship continues to evolve in 2025/26.

Durham Study Conference 2024

On a cheerier note, I was delighted once more at the Durham conference to meet a good number of new folk (as well as some dear friends) who brought great enthusiasm and passion for the profession. It was also a real pleasure to see the amazing hard work of the organising group bear fruit. I know Mark Richards was delighted to sign off on such a positive note as he announced his retirement later this autumn. I loved the

City of Durham and it was good to be further north, but I do look forward to later this year when the venue will all in be in one location. Whilst I will no longer attend as President - I have already spoken to my Trust about funding for next year. For the last 20 odd years this annual event has been at the heart of my refreshment and learning - and despite Covid remains stable and fully booked each year.

Ready for change?

As I come to the end of my term, I know that a few other healthcare chaplains are also needing to step back from OPC, and indeed the wonderful Jane Beach has retired as our professional lead with Unite. I also want to offer my thanks to Ricarda Witcombe, regional rep for the West Midlands, for her calm wisdom. I want to make it clear that the College cannot deliver anything without the unpaid commitment of many chaplains across the UK on OPC and beyond. Both those stepping back and those continuing to serve have my deep gratitude. I have particularly valued the role our Registrar, Allison, has played keeping me on top of things. I am going to miss working alongside so many amazing people who make the College work. As I am a good way from retirement myself, and my MS has been exceedingly slow in its progression - I will still be around in the profession for a few years yet, (God willing) but I will value some space away from the sharp end of College life, trusting it is led a really wonderful group.

Simon Harrison

Jan 2025

Registrar/Branch Secretary's Report

Allison Dean

Greetings to everyone. It has been a privilege to serve again this year as Branch Secretary/Registrar for the College of Healthcare Chaplains.

I work closely with several people like our web-master, Mark Burleigh and Emma at UNITE in keeping our membership list and our web-site access list up-date to date.

Simon Harrison, our president, and I have had regular Teams calls looking at various topics and work that needed to be done throughout the year.

Working this year with Mark Richards, on the Conference Planning committee revealed how much he will be missed now he has stepped back. However, I look forward to working with our co-chairs, Andrew Williams and Paula Trainor and our Conference Registrar, Liz Allison, together with others in planning the October 2025 conference in Yarnfield. Keep your eyes peeled for more information as it comes available in February/March 2024.

Phillip Staves, our Treasurer, is another person who works quietly in the background to ensure our accounts are in good order and that the little details in conference contracts are considered and agreed. It is good to have his wisdom and insights.

Stewart Selby is another person whose brain has been much picked this past year as we had a Presidential election

in addition to the Officers' elections. What he doesn't know about UNITE rules and regs the rest of us will never know and he shares it quite generously as our Equality and Diversity Officer.

While I have named the persons with whom I work with most, I do want to extend my thanks to every officer, regional rep, observer and Unite personnel on OPC for their gracious and sometimes humorous responses when I pester them for reports, send yet another request for details, or ask them to add or remove someone to/from their list of persons to contact. Without each person quietly working in the background, my role as Registrar would be that much more difficult. From me to all of you, THANK-YOU for all that you do in serving the members of CHCC.

I know there are people who like numbers. Below are a few more figures of the assistance given to members in 2024 from the Registrar's perspective with thanks to Emma for filling in the "formal" numbers.

- 1 CHCC AGM with notifications
- 1 Presidential election with notifications
- 1 Election of CHCC Officers with notifications
- 1 query about training and educational opportunities to become a chaplain
- 1 query about CHCC fees and HMRC
- 1 query about CMI and Unite

2 Workplace Representation queries
2 sympathy cards to family/CHCC member who had experienced deaths of close family members (if you know of a bereavement affecting a CHCC member/family, please contact the Registrar)
2 cards to CHCC members who were hospitalised (again as above if you know of a chaplain hospitalised)
3 Grants/Bursaries queries
4 queries about The Journal and/or access to The Journal
11 queries about monthly up-dates not opening or not being received
2 Recruitment queries
4 quarterly OPC meetings with notifications
10 Research First Journal Club queries and mailings
11 Listening Exercise Gatherings with notifications sent to each region
14 queries about the benefits of joining CHCC and how to join
15 notifications of retirement and arranging cancellation of CHCC memberships

16 persons requesting changes to their contact details
23 web-site access queries (sent onto web-master Mark Burleigh – same number as 2023!)
24 queries re CHCC Conference and/or purchase order enquiries
134 Transfer of Memberships to CHCC from UNITE at Large processed
1. Includes requesting Emma at UNITE to make the transfer
2. Asking Mark Burleigh, our web-master, to grant access to the web-site
3. Notifying the regional rep of a new person to add to their list).
682 full and part-time members (according to Unite's official record).

In closing, thank-you again for the privilege of serving you – truly it has been both an honour and incredibly humbling to serve CHCC.

If you have a query, please do not hesitate to contact me at allison.dean@unitetheunion.org.

Treasurer's Report

J. Phillip Staves, CHCC Hon Treasurer



CHCC Unite Branch Account 2024

INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
	2024	2023		2024	2023
Balance Brought Forward	£ 7,006.05	£ 8,136.02	Registrar Services	£ 1,920.00	£ 1,800.00
Members' Contributions	£ 7,374.37	£ 6,703.72	Journal - Equinox Publishing	£ 1,820.00	£ 810.00
Bank Refund Commission	£ 10.00		Website - Maintenance	£ 900.00	£ 840.00
			Website - Hosting	£ 779.40	£ 779.40
			Website New Emails	£ 150.63	£ 35.86
			President's expenses	£ 255.00	£ 143.88
			Treasurer's expenses - Postage & Stationery		£ 51.90
			Places at CHCC Conference for Officers	£ 975.00	£ 590.00
			Place at ENHCC Conference ¹	£ 481.04	
			Travel to meetings	£ 803.88	
			European Network of Health Care Chaplains ¹	£ 109.08	£ 219.90
			Free Church Federal Council		£ 250.00
			CHCC 30th Anniversary publicity		£ 2,256.00
			Social Fund - Gift	£ 43.99	£ 28.00
			Bank Charges	£ 22.50	£ 28.75
TOTAL INCOME	£ 14,390.42	£ 14,839.74	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 8,260.52	£ 7,833.69
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 8,260.52	£ 7,833.69			
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	£ 6,129.90	£ 7,006.05			

Notes ¹ Includes foreign transfer fee

² Subscription for 2023 = 2 year's subscriptions.

CHCC Training Account 2024

INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
	2024	2023		2024	2023
Balance Brought Forward	£ 42,916.39	£ 39,790.77	Bursaries		£ 1,966.00
Conference Fees - Previous Yr	£ 2,495.00	£ 1,755.00	Training (includes travel to events)	£ 1,459.80	£ 1,392.42
Conference Fees - Present Yr ³	£ 26,482.00	£ 20,400.00	Conference	£ 24,547.70	£ 16,458.85 ⁴
Interest from Deposit Account	£ 970.99	£ 787.89			
TOTAL	£ 72,864.38	£ 62,733.66	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 26,007.50	£ 19,817.27
TOTAL INCOME	£ 72,864.38	£ 62,733.66			
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 26,007.50	£ 19,817.27			
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD	£ 46,856.88	£ 42,916.39			
Money in Current Account	£ 8,038.04	£ 5,068.54			
Money in Deposit Account	£ 38,818.84	£ 37,847.85			

Notes ¹ As of 31-12-24 we are still awaiting 1 payment = £325

⁴ + £2850 paid early in 2022. Total conf cost = £19308.85

The College of Health Care Chaplains has two Bank Accounts; the Unite account and the Training account.

The Unite account is funded from members subscriptions to the Union and pays for the running of the College. Members contributions from Unite increased by 10% in 2024.

The Training account allows us to award grants and bursaries to members, plan a large national conference and facilitate local training events. The largest source of income for the account is our annual conference and because we filled all the places, the Durham conference should make a profit of £2,260 when all the places have been paid for. A smaller, but none the less useful, source of income (nearly £1000) comes from having most of our funds on deposit. We did not support any bursaries in 2024, but did fund some training events.

I'm very grateful to Fran Kissack in Sheffield and James Taylor in Poole for their help in auditing the accounts each quarter. I'd also like to record my thanks to Liz Allison (Conference Registrar) for her tireless help and efficiency.

J. Phillip Staves

CHCC Hon Treasurer

Lead Professional Officer's Report

Jane Beach, Lead Professional Officer for Regulation, Unite in Health

Registrar's Note: Due to Jane's retirement in 2024, there is no Lead Professional Officer's Report. However, CHCC is most appreciative of the time and wise counsel Jane provided over her many years working

with CHCC. In the meantime, we are very pleased that Gavin Fergie is providing us with wisdom and counsel until Unite decide who will be replacing Jane.

Industrial Officer's Report:

Melanie Todner - (No written report received)

Equality and Diversity Officer's Report

Stewart Selby

2023/24 Background:

Throughout 2023/24, my focus remained on assisting the officers of the College and the Organisational Professional Committee (OPC), providing updates and input as required. Due to ongoing health challenges, it was agreed that I would adopt a reduced level of engagement for 2024 while continuing to contribute where possible.

Key Activities and Contributions:

Support to Officers and Groups:

I provided updates and input to the College and OPC, followed up on

pieces of work supporting the College, and advised groups or individuals working on specific tasks.

Tri-Annual Officer Elections:

A significant part of my role involved planning and discussing the details of the tri-annual officer elections with the Secretary. Due to COVID-19 implications, officers across Unite were required to serve four years instead of the usual three.

Advisory and Guidance Role:

I responded to requests for advice as needed, offering guidance to other officers in their ongoing efforts to assist members with equalities and

diversity matters.

Other Activities:

My contributions also included assisting the President, Officers, and OPC with procedural and operational advice and recommending options to address OPC vacancies within CHCC/Unite’s rules.

Transition Plans and Succession:

Having planned to step down at this AGM, I did not submit a nomination for re-election, believing it was the right time to conclude my tenure and create space for the next generation.

However, no nominations were received for my post or that of the Treasurer.

As a joint returning officer, I discussed and advised a solution to address this

issue, ensuring it remained workable and within CHCC/Unite rules. Details of this solution will be clarified in today’s AGM.

Closing Note:

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the encouragement, prayers, and goodwill extended to me throughout my tenure. Your kindness has been invaluable, particularly during challenging times.

It has been an honour to serve in this role, and I look forward to contributing to the College in new ways in the future.

Stewart Selby

Period of Office: 2021–2025

equality@healthcarechaplains.org

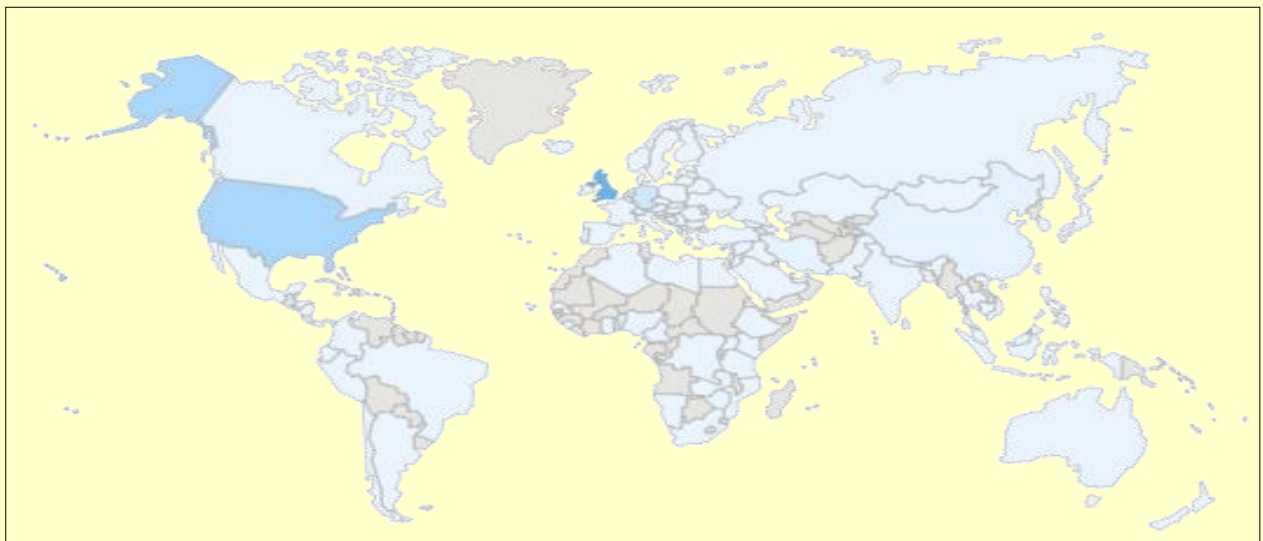
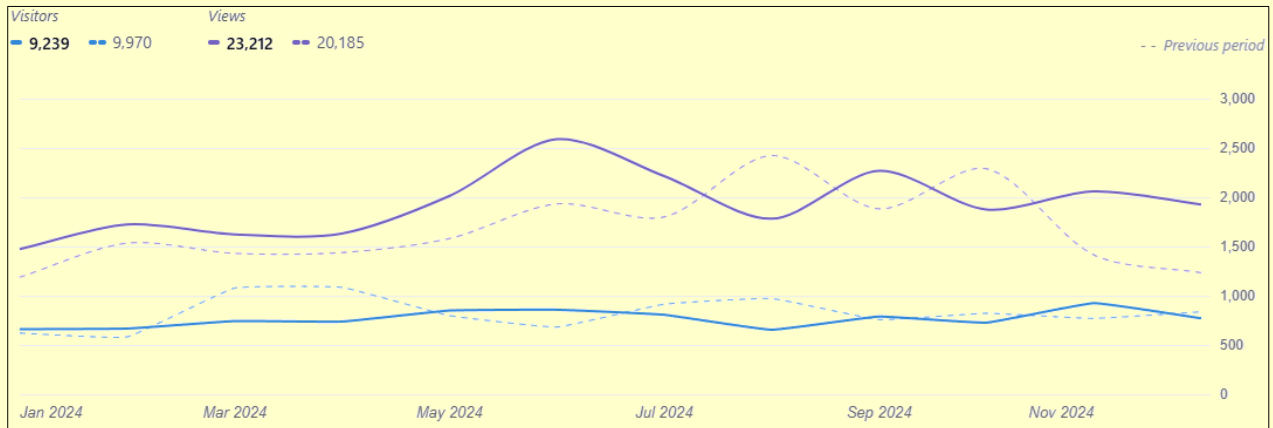
Faith/Belief Officer’s Report

Kartar Singh Bring (No written report available)

Digital Communications Officer's Report

Mark Burleigh

Our website has continued to receive regular traffic with over 9,000 visitors in the year:



The map above shows that visitors are from all around the world, the darker blues being the homes of the majority of visitors.

Again, we have been able to keep our site secure (and have done since we were hacked in 2019). All comments that are posted are moderated prior to them appearing, as there are many spam comments posted on the site. This stops the ones that get through the automated filtering. It does mean that where someone posts a genuine comment it may

be a day or so before it appears for everyone to see. Please bear in mind that the delay is caused by the human reviewing of all comments.

The site has been regularly updated over the past year. However, if you see something that is out of date, please let the Registrar know.

I also continue to maintain the access to the members area of the website. New members have been granted access (as well as updating e-mail addresses for

those who have changed their email address). This relies on me being informed of additional or changed details, which the Registrar regularly does.

CHCC members can access the members' area using their registered e-mail address – this is the email address that the CHCC has as a part of membership details. If you need to change your registered e-mail address, please e-mail the Registrar. The first time you log in please use the "forgot password" option. A new password will be emailed to you. When you have used that password to log in to the members' area you can change your password to something more memorable. You can also access the code for **free access to the *Health and Social Care Chaplaincy Journal*** in the members' area.

From a GDPR point of view, no information is stored within the site except members' e-mail addresses and passwords for the members' area (unless members have specifically added additional details themselves).

I am glad that the website is being well used and continues to serve the Chaplaincy profession and the interests of the members of the College. If you spot a problem with the website, please do send me an e-mail!

website@healthcarechaplains.org

Mark Burleigh
Digital Communications Officer

English Regions, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland Reports

London

Tasha Critchlow

Healthcare chaplaincies across London felt the waves of political uncertainty and unrest this year.

The limited multi-faith spaces were contested and fought over in several trusts by the distressed staff and general public affected by the disturbance and wars in the world. Anglican chaplains had meetings with +Sarah and +Christopher to discuss

challenges they were facing. Attempts to get everyone together were not successful as chaplains across London were under a lot of stress.

On the bright side a new master's course in Healthcare Chaplaincy and Wellbeing has been launched at Southbank University. A unique course that delves into the illusive subject of wellbeing.

South-East England

Ruth Bierbaum

We now have 49 CHCC contacts in the south-eastern region. This is an increase of about 30, thanks to the work of the Registrar to encourage existing and new members to allow me to e-mail them.

Many have expressed interest in participating in on-line training and/ or gathering for collegiate support.

However, whilst we facilitated two on-line scoping/listening exercise sessions with Neil Cockling, earlier in the year, only four members attended.

This is I suspect, a reflection that our sector in this region is understaffed and under pressure.

At an in-person meeting of Kent-based healthcare chaplains, in June, the main points of concern raised were:

- desire for CHCC support around maintaining out-of-hours on-call rotas, and
- electronic patient record chaplaincy permissions.

During the year, I have had two requests for collegiate support from members; one was essentially pastoral and the other strategic.

We are looking forward to an on-line session in February with Steven Nolan on his paper: "Rethinking Spiritual Assessment".

However, as the pressure on my own time has increased, (due to prolonged vacancies and delays in progressing a business case for more chaplains in my trust), I have not been able to be as active in this role, as I had hoped. My

tenure for this role ends in January 2026, but if there is another member who feels more able to dedicate time to it – please let me know. Maybe there is a place for carrying this responsibility in collaboration...?

South-Central England

Ruth Fitter

The South-Central Area has continued to be quiet but with the occasional request for advice from everything including support for possible redundancy to how to access the CHCC website. However, it is always a privilege to engage with whoever comes to me as your representative in this part of the country so please do always feel free to pick up the phone or to request a Teams call.

We held our first two area meetings in July 2024 and October 2024. They were small attendances but the people that came were able to offer a quality of conversation on a range of subjects from how to build your team of

chaplains at a time when some Trusts and hospices are making redundancies to how to work with chaplaincy volunteers. We hope to be holding three meetings this year - Tuesday 4th March between 2pm and 3.30pm; Monday 7th July between 10am and 11.30am and Thursday 9th October between 12noon and 1.30pm. Allison will send the link out nearer the time and please join us if you can – preferably with a coffee in hand.

Ruth Fitter

South-West England

Mark Richards (Due to Retirement, no report available)

West Midlands

Ricarda Witcombe

The big news for this year from the West Midlands is that we have finally started to meet together again, and now have a monthly online catch up for any CHCC members. We also met together face to face in May, at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, for a valuable time of connection and discussion particularly around the Greater Diversity paper. (If you are reading this, are from the West Midlands, and have not known about any of this, please let us know as we would love you to be included.) I am delighted to share a few pieces of news from around our region –

University Hospitals in Birmingham:

- After three years of vacancy, UHB has now appointed to the role of ‘Head of Chaplaincy and Multi-Faith Services’.
- We received an inter-faith award from Birmingham’s inter-faith council for the work that we have done promoting inter-faith co-operation and understanding within the Trust.
- We have developed a ‘Good Practice Guide’ for all wards to assist staff in caring for the cultural and religious needs of patients.
-

George Eliot Hospital, Nuneaton:

- Several multi-faith and belief celebrations, including Ramadan, Eid, Easter, Vaisakhi,

Baha'i Holy Days, Bandi Chhor, Divas/Diwali, and Christmas

- Another successful training course in Autumn 2024 where we have enrolled eight new volunteers to our growing multi-faith team which is now at 31.
- Better connections with our ward staff, and supportive work around staff memorials and memorial services
- A new Wave of Light initiative for Baby Loss Awareness Week, as well as participation in our area-wide Baby Loss Awareness Week Service at Coventry Cathedral
- Involvement in Remembrance Day parades in Nuneaton and Bedworth, and our first Festival of Remembrance in conjunction with our Armed Forces Community Network
- Approval of halal meals for the Trust with implementation coming in 2025.

Myton Hospices:

The hospice has appointed a new lead in Spiritual Care and are advertising for a spiritual care practitioner to join the new team – see the Myton website for details.

Locally, the team at South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust have been

supporting Myton with emergency on call provision and are sharing training for volunteers in 2025.

we were happy to support the Coventry & Warwickshire event for Baby Loss Awareness Week in Coventry Cathedral which was attended by 300 people.

South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust:

At Warwick Hospital, we were delighted to follow in the footsteps of Birmingham Children's Hospital and hatch some chicks in the chapel in the Spring. Hope, joy and compassion for these tiny balls of fluff were cultivated in abundance.

The SWFT team have growing expertise as keyworkers in SUDIC processes, led by the paediatric and community bereavement chaplains. And

This is just a tiny snapshot of some aspects of West Midlands Chaplaincy Life over the year. We look forward to another year of growing relationship with one another and sharing in this work together,

Personally, I am now stepping down as OPC rep for the region and am very happy to be handing over to Kevin Place and Peter Spence who will be sharing the role going forward. It has been an honour both to be part of the OPC and to represent my colleagues, and I am excited for all that the future holds for us.

East Midlands

Kay Cattell (Due to ill-health, no report available)

East Anglia

Adrian Woodbridge - (No written report received)

North-West England

Andrew Bradley and Giselle Rusted

Recruitment & Workforce: Frozen recruitment continues. Many trusts in the Greater Manchester area are being affected by hefty financial restraints

which is having an impact on hours not being advertised and hours cut within Chaplaincy. With in one Trust there has been a challenge to a B8

Chaplaincy Lead post being proposed where a non-Chaplaincy member of the Trust will manage the Team and there is an expectation that two B7's will cover and take on responsibilities beyond their banding. This Chaplaincy Team is presently being supported by other Lead Chaplains in the Northwest and Sheffield but whilst a strong business case has been put forward there is a certain amount of cynicism in the air. Colleague well-being chaplains remain 'under threat' within the Trust and this continues to be a headache.

Mental Health: The two trusts in Greater Manchester seek to work in partnership as Trusts including Chaplaincy. Whilst one Trust is under multiple and demanding financial pressures, the other is keeping its head above water whilst still be able to contribute to the Greater Manchester NHS financial savings.

Some Trusts have been able to fill vacancies enabling them to feel fully resourced with new initiatives taking place strengthening the position and value of Chaplaincy. Two Trusts in the North-West where what Chaplaincy contributes is not seen as a priority to Senior Leadership and reduction of budgets and staff, is having a significant impact on Leadership and Chaplaincy morale.

Assisted Dying: A number of conversations are taking place locally

within Trusts around assisted dying with a larger meeting to take place in May to take this conversation forward with regards to the impact on Chaplaincy, its implications on Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care; what it will or won't deliver.

Spiritual Care Spaces: Some Chaplaincies have been able to acquire new space and it is clear that those Trusts supporting these Chaplaincy Teams truly value the contribution chaplaincy makes to staff well-being and supporting patients and carers. Chaplaincy is seen as valued and making a positive impact on the functionality of the workforce and the health and well-being of patients/ service users.

UKHBC Competencies: It is planned through a Study Day in May to look at the UKHBC Competencies benchmarking what individual Chaplaincy Teams deliver and identify where improvements to a professional service can be made.

Governance: A number of Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Teams are working on Vision and Strategy and another putting in place a Chaplaincy Policy.

As usual Christmas has been an extremely busy time for Trusts across the North-West with the inevitable winter pressure taking their toll.

North-East England (Yorkshire & North Lincolnshire)

Fran Kissack

It continues to be a privilege to represent Yorkshire and the Humber on the OPC.

We met as a region as part of the CHCC listening exercise led by Neil Cockling, and those of us who gathered online valued the chance to share our thoughts and aspirations together.

I continue to enjoy getting to know chaplains in this area and have offered support to a number of individuals.

Please get in touch if you need support or would like to chat. I hope we might build upon our listening gathering to connect better across the region.

Fran Kissack

North-East (Durham, Tyne & Wear, Northumberland)

Graham Peacock (No written report available)

Scotland

Paul Graham (No written report available)

Wales

Euryl Howells

As a forum of Leads in Wales we have met four times this year. What was evident is that the Province and the NHS in general identify that the pressures faced by NHS staff and patients makes it difficult to deliver 'bet care' in a period of financial stringency and austerity. The demand doesn't decrease, even if the funds do! This has resulted in additional work with front-line staff, difficult

admissions and also complex holistic needs. Along the M4 corridor the buildings have had deficiencies, and this has impacted with teams needing support around redeployment even if temporary and movement of patients to other settings.

The core of pastoral and spiritual care, the listening ear and not being nursing

or medic or administrative, demonstrated the impact Chaplaincy through 'coming alongside with no agenda' proved to Health Boards the value our profession can provide. The skill to listen attentively, and the essential requirement of time, to understand life changing events in an individual's life and the search for meaning/worth on that journey remains primary

The Spirituality, Health and Wellbeing in NHS & Social Care Wales (SHaW) group had a comprehensive document delivered by Chris Swift and to no surprise the recommendations offered to the Chief Nursing Officer for Wales could not be funded under the preferred option. The preferred (Transformative Change) option supported by Chaplaincy, will be revisited in 2026 when budgets are being reviewed. A statement of intent was issued by WG stating "the focus during 2024-2026 will be on ensuring the safety and consistency of the Spiritual Care Service in Wales currently provided by the entire health and social care workforce supported by specialist healthcare chaplaincy teams". In the meantime, an action

Plan to evidence the spiritual care provision across NHS Health & Social Care Wales is being investigated with regular consultation and direction of Spiritual Care staff.

A further development is the WG review into the competency framework into Palliative – End of Life Care and a brief introductory meeting took place in December 2024. Chaplaincy is represented by the Welsh delegate who will consult with the Leads Forum. Their guidance will be offered to the review. It is seen that there is an increase for spiritual care support at the End of Life.

There have been several occasions when support have been offered to chaplaincy staff on multi-faith issues and some organisational guidance around HR matters.

We will continue to meet as Leads and work with groups on long-term spiritual need and offer training and support and remind staff of the relevance of good spiritual care.

Euryl Howells
CHCC Wales, January 2025
euryl.howells2@wales.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland

Michael McMillan and Anna Burcombe

I am delighted to offer this update to the Annual General Meeting of the College of Healthcare Chaplains on behalf of Northern Ireland (NI). I am

pleased that my responsibility as rep for Northern Ireland is now a shared one. Anna Burcombe is now joint representative for Northern Ireland.

Anna is relatively new to chaplaincy and to the CHCC but brings with her a wealth of knowledge and skills, and a passion for the delivery of appropriate and safe spiritual and religious care. Anna is currently in the process of completing a Masters with CTF. This is reflective of her enthusiasm for evidence-based practice. She works between the Belfast City Hospital and Northern Ireland Hospice. She is such an asset to chaplaincy in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland-wide Chaplaincy Research Project

The NIHCA (Northern Ireland Healthcare Chaplains' Association) has commissioned Queen's University, Belfast to conduct an extensive research project looking primarily at chaplaincy service provision and service user experience. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the chaplaincy community in NI and it is hoped that the research will strengthen and bolster our current position. We recognise that it may also set necessary and challenging change in motion but we are willing to step up to the plate.

Post-Graduate Education for Chaplains

One of the functions of the NIHCA is to provide grants to enable members to pursue further education. In the last three years, an average of eight grants each year have been approved. Members have been keen to undertake either a first or second unit of CPE or a post graduate certificate.

We hope that this will result in more chaplains seeking registration.

New Lead Chaplain for Western Trust

The chaplaincy community in Northern Ireland was delighted by the appointment of Rev Lindsay Blair to the position of Lead Chaplain of Western Trust. Northern Ireland has five health and social care trusts, and five hospices. Lindsay's appointment means that four of the five HSC Trusts now have a lead chaplain. The group of lead chaplains hope to work together to push the regional agenda.

President of the NIHCA

Rev Derek Johnston has completed his extended term of office as the President of the NIHCA. Derek will be known to some of you. He has long been a champion of chaplaincy in both his own Trust and the region.

Training Programme

Some of the NIHCA'S training programme is now able to be live-streamed. It is our hope that this will encourage colleagues across the discipline, both regionally and nationally to link in and take benefit. If you're interested, check out our website to find out more. [Northern Ireland Healthcare Chaplains Association – Training](#)

With thanks and blessing,

Michael and Anna
CHCC NI Reps

Observers Reports

Mental Health Chaplains' Forum: Chair's Report

Andrew Williams (No written report available)

Chaplaincy in General Practice Observer's Report

Angela Painter (No Written Report available)

Paediatric Chaplaincy Network Observer's Report

Claire Carson

The PCN gathered for their annual study day in June 2024 in Leeds, where we had a presentation on the findings and implications of the National Paediatric Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care research project SPARK. The SPARK Project is exploring pastoral, spiritual and religious needs of children and young people living with life-threatening or life-shortening conditions.

Paul Nash is stepping down from Team leadership at Birmingham Women's and Children's hospital and taking

semi-retirement from the end of March this year. He hopes to return focusing a day a week on the Centre for Paediatric Spiritual Care: training, research, and resources. Claire Carson has generously offered to pick up convening the Paediatric Chaplaincy Network with the working group.

The PCN steering group meets twice yearly to discuss current news and issues within paediatric settings, as well as planning for up-coming study days. This year's study day will take place in London on 10th June.

Professional Appointments Advisors Observer's Report

Philip Wright

I thought it would be good to introduce myself. I am the Lead for

Chaplaincy, Bereavement and Medical Examiner Officers for Barking, Havering

& Redbridge University Hospitals Trust (BHRUT).

I first joined the UKBHC as a board member back in the late 2000's and was part of the board that successfully achieved the Professional Standards Authority Accreditation. Once this had been completed, I stayed on the board for about a year then I decided to have a break from sitting on the board. Back in September 2024 I rejoined the UKBHC looking after the Professional Advisors arm of the board. I haven't had a chance to have much input yet, however, I did have a Teams meeting with some of the UKBHC registered advisors on 30th September to gain a better understanding of what some of the issues are.

The main themes that came out of the meeting were:

- Training – existing advisors felt the training had been inconsistent, some having adequate training, others having little, some having none.
- Recruitment of advisors - How do we expand and recruit more advisors etc.
- Feedback forms

- Communication - Communication was generally seen as poor and can be improved.
- College course i.e. Post-Graduate certificate, etc having sections on interviews and applications.
- Forum for advisors.

The general consensus amongst all those that attended the meeting was that the standard of people applying for chaplaincy roles was poor, with only a few excelling. This was a concern for the future of chaplaincy and something to be continued in discussion.

Action

An action plan has been drawn up to include the above points and is included in this report.

If you wish the support of a Professional Advisor for recruitment purposes, please contact the Lead Officer for the Professional Advisors by e-mail:

professionaladvisor@ukbhc.org.uk

Philip Wright
UKBHC Professional Appointments
Advisor Lead

Draft Professional Advisor Action Plan

	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATE	EXPECTED OUTCOME
Training	To have an adequate and accessible training program and plan for Professional Advisors.	To agree what the training for advisors should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) What is the role of the advisor b) Consist of c) Who delivers d) Accredited/recognised 	PW	April 2025	For all advisors to know what their role is as an advisor. An agreed training plan that all advisors have undertaken. A plan for future advisors.
Recruitment	Advertising the role and recruiting mor advisors from the current membership.	The have a correct register of current advisors and a mapping exercise of where the current advisors are based and then to look at the gaps. Have a simple recruitment plan.	PW	July 25	To have a correct list of advisors and know where the areas of the country we need to recruit more advisors. To have recruitment process with clear process and outcomes.
Feedback Forms	To ensure feedback forms are correctly returned and audited.	To have a clear understanding of the purpose of the feedback form, agree the feedback form and how it is to be used and returned.	PW	May 25	To understand why we are using the feedback forms and use the data they have provided to map and develop the work.
External Chaplaincy Training	To review all current chaplaincy training provision to explore knowledge around recruitment, applications and interviews.	To research all current training providers to see what they offer in terms of interview and job applications training. To then put together what training is needed to enhance the application and interview process.	PW	Autumn 25	To have a list of what training providers offer in their course/training around applying for jobs ad interviews to see what area of knowledge needs developing.
Standard Job Descriptions and Recruitment Packs	To have a set of standard Job descriptions to be used as blueprints for band 4-8a.	Collate all current Job Descriptions for all bandings and posts. To collate range of interview questions, already used and new.	PW	Summer 25	To be able to offer trusts a complete recruitment package including blueprint JD and Interview advice and questions.

	To have a recruitment pack that Trusts can use to recruit chaplains from job descriptions to recruitment advice and interview questions etc				
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Other Areas of Work

Advisor meetings/forum

Advisors website/resource pack

Advisors conference

The Journal

Fran Kissack

I am the OPC link with the journal, Health and Social Care Chaplaincy. I act as the book reviews editor for the journal. If you would like to review a book, please give me a shout and I can support you with that. The peer-reviewed journal is currently urgently seeking a new Editor in Chief. We continue to welcome the submission of research articles, and over the last few

years the journal metrics have continued to improve.

Your membership of CHCC confers access to the journal for free. The member's area of the CHCC website contains the code for access. Please do have a look – it's well worth a read.

Fran Kissack - fran.kissack@nhs.net

Research First Journal Club

Mark Newitt

Over the last year the CHCC has continued to promote the online Research First journal club. It does this in relation to the College's first priority which is to 'support the future of chaplaincy as a healthcare profession across the UK' viewing research literacy as an important skill to develop. The journal club is open to any health and social care chaplain who wishes to participate. No special knowledge or research experience is required. At the beginning of the Journal Club a presenter provides a summary of a recent article that has clear relevance to chaplaincy care and

we then break into smaller groups to discuss it further. A *proforma* with a framework of questions to think about when reading an article has been created to help chaplains gain confidence in their own ability to understand, critique and apply research findings to their practice. Dates of forthcoming meetings and the articles being discussed can be found on the [CHCC website](#). If you would like to receive a diary invite/link to join or know more about the journal club please contact Mark Newitt (mark.newitt@freechurches.org.uk).

Appendix 1

Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the College of Health Care Chaplains (CHCC)

12 March 2024 – Held via Microsoft Teams

11:00 - 14:05 hr

Simon Harrison, CHCC President, welcomed all present at 11:05 a.m.

The first portion of the meeting was dedicated to considering the “Greater Diversity” paper which has been through at least 45 iterations which was originally led by Kartar Singh Bring and then a Task and Finish Group led by Graham Peacock. The intention was to talk about the document, good and bad, with a brief introduction by Graham Peacock.

Graham Peacock thanked Kartar for the initial work that he did on this paper.

Report uses new terminology and stop using the term “generic Chaplaincy” as it is a very loaded term. Now wanting to use “inclusive chaplaincy” which means that different perspectives are valued. This could strengthen all types of faith and belief chaplaincy by removing any shred of privilege. Need to have an Equality Impact Assessment. Offering it in all humility as it has been a long time coming. Graham noted that Chaplaincy is not a profession that can be shunted into the side-lines. His hope is that this document can strengthen the profession and enable the patient voice to be heard and that chaplaincy will be part of that.

Simon thanked Graham Peacock for all the work he has put in to get the document over the line.

Graham left at this point in the meeting to re-join the Methodist synod he was required to attend.

15 responses, both positive and negative, were received via the QR code or link on the front of the document. It was noted that chaplaincy is there for everyone and we cannot just focus on those who self-select for chaplaincy service. We need to look at best-practice to enable chaplains to see those who wish to see a chaplain while keeping spiritual practice front and centre.

People were neutral in some cases and certain elements of the document worried some persons.

Several questions were raised with respect to numbers of persons responding vs. the number who received the document via e-mail. Others wished clarification about religious

symbols, clerical collars while others appreciated the clarification and standardisation the document contained.

After questions and comments were raised, discussion was held in virtual break-out rooms around the following points:

1. Small number of responses.
2. Endorsement
3. Iconography
4. Faith/belief contacts
5. Volunteer chaplains
6. Consistency
7. Focus on those who 'could' use our services.
8. Importance of communication about what we do
9. Concern about religious ethics
10. Negating religious roots
11. Greater response?
12. Registered as a profession
13. Slippery slope
14. Identity of chaplaincy

Following the individual group discussions, Simon Harrison thanked people for the different voices that came forward prior to the group discussions.

The following was noted:

1. The possibility of having more time for discussion across the wider CHCC membership – possibly in small groups, like today, rather than just interacting with a paper document before officially endorsing the paper.
2. A useful discussion was held in one group about the need to recognise how different the contexts are across the four nations.
3. With respect to the status of this document, Simon Harrison responded that the paper will be as of the date we finish hearing responses and edit the document as people will want to move on. Will arrange for four drop-in virtual sessions in the next few of weeks for people to add their input.
4. Jeremy Law asked that CHCC not seek to having its cake and eating it. There need to be very clear guidelines for endorsement and iconography (clerical collars, etc.) It has been great to discuss the paper and he is very grateful for the authors for the work they have put into this document.

This document is being seen as a way forward in which there will be discussion around the broad issues the document covers. However, today's group discussions focussed on the nuances and attempting to pin things down. The OPC residential meeting in January 2024 spent much time with the paper in front of us, going through sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph. We need to have the in-depth conversations on various points.

The AGM took a break at this point and the meeting resumed at 12:45 hr.

The business portion of the AGM commenced at 12:45 hr.

Present:

Simon Harrison	Ifeanyi Chukuka
Allison Dean	Tausif Khan
Phillip Staves	Susan Miles (left at 11:38)
Kartar Singh Bring	Nicholas Hookey
Jane Beach	Susan Miles
Ruth Bierbaum	Varkey Eappen
Ruth Fitter	Petros Nyatanza
Giselle Rusted	Sabia Rehmans
Andrew Bradley	Kevin Place (left at 13:04)
Graham Peacock	Yunus Dudhwala
Fran Kissack	Godley Matthew
Ricarda Witcombe	
Mark Richards	
Tasha Critchlow	
Angela Painter	
Paul Graham	
Michael McMillan	
Melanie Todner	
Neil Cockling	
Jean Hurlston	
Reuben Mugweru	
Sally Anne Smith	
Liz Allison (Left at 12 noon)	
Sarah Sewell	
David Savage	
Andrew Williams	
Kay Cattell	
Jeremy Law	
James Taylor	

Apologies:

Tony Brookes
Mark Burleigh
Jennifer Sistig
Mark Newitt

Claire Carson
Timothy Dixon
Stewart Selby
David Flower
Euryl Howells

Agenda

The agenda was presented and adopted as presented.

Minutes of the 2023 AGM

Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting were presented by the Registrar, Allison Dean.

Moved by Allison Dean, seconded by James Taylor:

“That the Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting be adopted as amended.”

Motion carried

Allison Dean will send a copy of the minutes to Simon Harrison for signature and they will subsequently be stored for future reference.

Simon Harrison provided a brief history of CHCC, its relationship to UNITE and how OPC functions within CHCC and UNITE. He also spoke about how CHCC supports chaplains across the UK and how it engages with NHS England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland.

Reports:

President’s Report: As written – Simon Harrison stated that it was a very reflective report. Part of Simon’s report addressed Sue Ryder declaring their chaplains redundant but not as cost-saving exercise. The redundancies are due to reconfiguring the service so that a social work or counselling qualification qualifies a person to apply for a lead chaplain’s role at Sue Ryder but not a UKBHC registered chaplain. Also noted that two hospices in Birmingham were declaring chaplains redundant and that it was felt that local religious leaders were sufficient to provide spiritual care for all. Not sure what sort of spiritual care will be provided to those of no faith or belief. A lengthy discussion followed regarding the provision of spiritual care to End of Life patients in hospices.

Registrar's Report: As written. She provided further numbers with respect to full-time, part-time, community, back to education, and retired. In addition to her report the following numbers were provided with respect to the 689 members:

Full-time	412
Part-time	166
Community	34
Back to Work	7
Full-time Education	3
Retired	67

Treasurer's Report: As written and presented. Simon Harrison extended thanks to Phillip Staves for work carried out. It was noted there had not been a large number of requests for grants or bursaries according to Mark Richards. The grants are focussed on the aims of the college not PhD, CPE, or Master's work.

Digital Communications Officer's Report: As written. Simon Harrison extended thanks to Mark Burleigh for his work as web-master in keeping the CHCC web-site so up-to-date.

Equalities Report: Report as written.

Faith/Beliefs Coordinator's Report: As written.

Simon Harrison noted thanks to the officers who come together on short notice to deal with co-options and other urgent College business which occurs between meetings.

Professional Officer's Report: As written. Jane is looking forward to having a professional meeting with Melanie Todner, the Industrial Officer.

Industrial Officer's Report: Simon Harrison welcomed Melanie to OPC and looks forward to having her on OPC. She is looking forward to working with OPC and to discovering what OPC would like her to bring to the meeting.

Regional Reports: As written.

It was noted that part of Neil Cockling's listening exercises will be to find out what people expect of their Regional Rep. Neil has asked that regional reps contact him to set up a meeting for each region. OPC reps (or anyone else who wants to discuss the future of the College as per Simon's comments) can get in touch with Neil about the future conversations using Neil.Cockling@cntw.nhs.uk.

Business Arising

1. Update from motion agreed at 2022 AGM re Report

A decision needs to be made on how to move forward from conversation this morning. It was heard that there is a desire for an extended period of engagement which may require further changes in the document. The document will not be published as is but will be changed after the four virtual discussions are held and OPC has reviewed same. The document will be re-circulated to the membership with a brief summary of today's discussion. There will be two virtual drop-in sessions in April and two in May 2024. The engagement process will be completed by 1 June 2024 after which the document will be sent to UNITE for formatting and then published.

Moved by Simon Harrison, seconded by Kartar Singh Bring:

That the document be commended to CHCC AGM as a response to the request and motion made by a member in 2020. The document will be published by 30 June 2024 but the AGM requires further engagement and has received comments from the greater CHCC membership.

Motion carried

2. CHCC Fellowships:

Work started last year to explore having CHCC Fellows. AGM is now being asked if it is content to continue work on the criteria and come up with a small number of names to create Fellows at 2025 AGM. It was agreed by those present that the group which started the work, complete same, and bring forward a small number of names to the 2025 CHCC AGM.

Any Other Business

1. Utilisation of E-Mail through Official Links

Mark Newitt, who was unable to attend the meeting, asked in an e-mail for a discussion to be held on this motion which he proposed:

All CHCC business relating to the College Officers that is carried out over email should be done using an official Unite or CHCC (healthcarechaplain.org) email address rather than any personal or work-related email. Such email addresses should have their own inbox rather than simply be a forwarding address. This both helps separate when someone is writing in an official capacity and when in a personal capacity, but also provides accountability through there being an audit trail meaning that, should the situation arise for any reason, the College is able to access the emails that an officer has sent.

Simon Harrison provided the background to Mark's motion and discussion ensued.

The motion was amended as follows:

Moved by Simon Harrison seconded by Andrew Williams

That we accept the principle of the motion and the benefits. However, this is a very clear aspiration that we want to explore with UNITE union and with our current healthcare chaplains and if we can, achieve it and work towards it.

Amended motion carried.

2. Request for Expressions of Interests to be Research Lead:

Steve Nolan has resigned due to his workload however will continue to produce the quarterly Research Digest. Simon Harrison thanked Steve for his work as Research Lead and for the work he does in producing the Quarterly Research Digest. Simon invited anyone interested in the position to send an e-mail to himself or Allison Dean outlining reasons for wanting to be research lead. Previous research leads, Mark Newitt and Steve Nolan are happy to speak with anyone who might be interested.

3. Membership in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland

Simon Harrison has been invited to attend Northern Ireland's AGM to speak about the college and its relationship with Northern Ireland in May 2024. Michael McMillan, our Northern Ireland regional rep, is looking forward to Simon coming.

A CHCC engagement event is also to be set up in Scotland. It will provide an opportunity to find out how Scottish members are feeling about the new Scottish guidelines.

Simon is hoping to have an engagement meeting in Wales after the consultation there is completed on the Welsh Chaplaincy guidelines.

4. Sue Ryder

Discussion was held with points about safe-guarding concerns, doing no harm, impact on finances for Sue Ryder, "one chance to get it right", as well as information governance guidance and calling in persons from community to provide spiritual care. After much discussion about the situation wherein Sue Ryder is making all its chaplains redundant, the following motion was made:

Moved by Fran Kissack, seconded by Giselle Rusted

That spiritual care is essential to holistic care at the end of life. Chaplaincy is the profession which delivers that care across the UK and the College of Healthcare Chaplains regrets the removal of chaplains from Sue Ryder Hospices. The College expresses deep concern about the delivery of inclusive spiritual care in any end of life care setting where chaplains are not involved and asks those who provide that

care to consider how good end of life spiritual care will be made available to all. It asks the OPC to continue to advocate for chaplaincy across end of life care settings.

Motion carried.

There being no further business, Simon Harrison thanked all who had attended and shared in the discussions.

The meeting adjourned at 14:05 hr.