



# the Company of Servers

## MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

3<sup>rd</sup> May 2014

### 1. Chaplain General's Welcome

Fr. Andrew Nunn welcomed the companions to Southwark Cathedral for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Company of Servers on a significant day in the life of the Church of England, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ordination of women to the priesthood and also the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society of Catholic Priests (SCP) in Southwark cathedral. The history of SCP, inaugurated by Bp. Roy Williamson in September 1994, was outlined as catering for those priests unable to remain in SSC. Fr. Andrew instructed the members to continue to pray for the General Synod's continued difficult work on a conclusion to the ordination of women to the episcopate. Bp. Stephen then outlined the legislation which has been simplified to offer less to those who cannot accept women as bishops and how the mood had changed and all accepting canonically that women are eligible to become Bishops in the Church of England. Although guarantees for parishes not able to accept women Bishops had the same arrangements honoured as currently in place.

The Synod is still very close and it is hoped the vote will go through in favour. There would be one Diocesan post and two Suffragan posts for those women called to be Bishops. The media will be critical and refer to 1994 when all women were watched, criticised and the same will apply in 2014.

The Bishops work is to prepare the women to be Bishops and support them.

Fr. Andrew continued reminding us that the affirming catholic societies have a future after the vote and how we should work together and share mission. The Catholics place is essential post the vote. Next year, 2015, sees the election of a new General Synod so there is responsibilities on Deanery Synod members to report to their Parochial Church Councils to pray and carefully report to Diocesan Synod the feelings of Deanery Synod so that General Synod members are fully informed.

He thanked the servers for their ministry in parishes. David Stephenson was thanked for his leadership of the Company of Servers.

David Stephenson added these comments to Fr. Andrews opening reminding members that the vote for Women as Bishops fell in the House of Laity and there is now a second chance.

## 2. Apologies for absence

London Chapter: Melissa Holloway, Ben Pearce, Chloe Miles-Sweet, Hilda Addy, Ian Flatman.

Southwark Chapter: Mitzi Isaacs, Ingrid Pile-Grey, Mark Charlton.

Norwich Chapter: Michael Watson, Michael Whittle, Graham Owers, Alan Powers, Robert Horne, Alison Harding.

Chelmsford Chapter: Tina Rollings (priest) Cynthia Weedon, Keith Weedon, Diane, Locessel.

### 2.1 ATTENDANCE

Southwark Chapter	7
London	19
Norwich	5
Chelmsford	12
Exeter	2
Chichester (SCP)	1

## 3. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Leicester Cathedral

These were attached to the Agenda. The minutes were proposed by Sally Tooth (London) and seconded by John Kitchener (Southwark) and unanimously accepted.

## 4. Matters arising

There were no matters arising

## 5. Chairman's report

Attached to these minutes.

The Company of Servers is not confined to the UK but has a Chapter in Newcastle, Australia which has just been launched. The new diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales encompasses the existing Ripon and Leeds chapter and is planning a series of events in the new diocese.

The handbook had received a financial donation in order to enable its production.

The Company of Servers has a positive profile at General Synod, the Society of Catholic Priests Conference, through its website and the porch and postcards. There is still work to be done on membership and use of electronic returns. The Central Committee should review policies and procedures. There are three vacancies on the Central Committee, with David standing down as Chairman, Alex Hobbs standing down as Membership Officer and Jack Harding as Youth Officer. David has been involved with the Company of Servers since its beginning in 2009, has been visibly present at chapters and there is now a good geographical spread across the country and further afield. The Company of Servers is an inclusive organisation.

## **6. Treasurer General's report**

Attached to these minutes. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Sion Hughes-Carew (London) and seconded by David Beresford (London). The accounts were accepted unanimously.

The handbooks and the loan for them have implications for the future. A donation of £250 was received for the 2013 Festival at Leicester. A question was raised regarding return discrepancies in terms of numbers of companions and subscriptions from the chapters.

The banner payments with the postcards, porch cards have proved beneficial for publicity. The banners are displayed at General Synod with the other Affirming Catholic societies including SCP.

### **Budget 2014-2015**

Eight chapters have already sent subscriptions including Bangor and Newcastle Australia.

More medals have been sold this year and money spent on replacing the stock means finance is tight.

Donations are needed and the use of Gift Aid has been beneficial. Details of how to Gift Aid are on the COS website. Some of the loan for the handbooks has been paid back and there has been a slight net income from them.

It was proposed by John Kitchener that Clare Stephenson continue to independently examine the accounts and seconded by Cathie James (London). Accepted unanimously.

## **7. Membership Officer's report**

Currently there are just over 500 Companions across the country and further afield. Southwark is the largest chapter. The collection of the numbers relies on the chapters keeping the Central Committee up to date - at the moment 109 people have joined in the year. The location of the AGM and Festival needs consideration to encourage greater attendance. There need to be Central Committee consideration of the membership of chapters, the medals and enquiries to make more efficient use of the forms used, examination of policies and practices to ensure information is accurate and accessible to members. Individual details of all members to ensure accuracy in the number of Companions, Associate Companions and Affiliate Companions is to be collected to present a fuller picture of COS membership.

Salisbury Chapter is a cause for concern and work is being done to re-establish the chapter.

Attached to these minutes.

## **8. Central Committee Elections**

There are currently three posts available for Central Committee: Chairman, Committee Members.

It was proposed to appoint two committee members without portfolio particularly as the Membership Officer is a complicated role and will be examined by the Central Committee.

Two nominations were received after the deadlines

**9. Festival 2015**

This will be fixed by the new committee.

**10. Any other business**

**11. Prayer and closing comments**

Fr. Andrew Nunn closed the meeting with the Grace.