



# the Company of Servers

Annual General Meeting  
Chelmsford Cathedral  
Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019

## MINUTES

- 1. Welcome** - Belinda introduced Fr Clive Wylie SCP as the new Chaplain General. Fr Clive introduced himself and gave a brief history of himself. He is currently the Rector of the Creakes Benefice in the Diocese of Norwich, which is the closest benefice to Walsingham. He encouraged those visiting Walsingham on pilgrimage to visit the Creakes. He is originally from Limavady in Northern Ireland. He was ordained in Armagh Cathedral and served his title in the area around Drumcree. He then moved to the Diocese of Dumfries and Galloway in Scotland as Diocesan Missioner, and was also Rector in the east end of Glasgow. He then moved to Norfolk to do some work for the Bishop of Norwich and was then appointed to the Creakes Benefice. He is a member of the SCP Provincial Council, and the Rector General (who would usually be the CoS Chaplain General), Fr Ian Gomersal invited Fr Clive to be Chaplain General to the Company of Servers. Outside of his Clerical roles, Fr Clive enjoys martial arts, more specifically Tae Kwondo., currently working towards his black belt, running and weightlifting. Fr Clive is organising the run for a Norwich Diocesan event at Sandringham on 18<sup>th</sup> May. He also mentioned that the SCP Provincial Council meets on Tuesday and he would report back on the Festival.
- 2. Apologies for absence** - Apologies for absence were received from:  
  
**Norwich Chapter** - Michaela Sorenson (also Central Committee), Graham Owers, Robert Horne, Norman Powell, Margaret Warner and Fr Alan Warner SCP.  
  
**Chelmsford Chapter** - Mark  
  
**Southwark and London** - Hazel Pudney, Mthr Frances Hiller, Cathie James, David Beresford, Patricia Brown, Karen Branson, David Branson, Chris Overton
- 3. Minutes of the previous AGM (5<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at Selby Abbey)** - John Kitchener (London and Southwark/Central Committee proposed and Aleksander Mazalon (Chelmsford) seconded that the minutes were signed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising from these minutes.
- 4. Chairman General's Report** - Belinda began by thanking Fr Clive for agreeing to be Chaplain General. She also thanked Fr Andrew Nunn SCP for his work in the past as Chaplain General. She then handed over to Fr Andrew to speak about the history of the Company of Servers.



# the Company of Servers

Fr Andrew began by saying that this is a year of anniversaries, 25 years of women being ordained to the priesthood, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Society of Catholic Priests, with load of pictures showing female priests 'at work' are on social media. At that time there were already organisations for those in the Catholic tradition, such as the Society of the Sacred Cross (SSC), of which some members were in favour of the ordination of women, however generally this was not welcomed by the organisation as a whole. An inclusive organisation was wanted so that people could meet, say mass etc.

SCP began in the Diocese of Southwark and very rapidly expanded. Lay people, who shared the same views as SCP members wanted an organisation to join, but couldn't join SCP, so it was decided to establish a lay organisation as well. The first group that this would be aimed at was Servers. Some were already members of the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary (GSS). Some GSS chapters were welcoming female servers, but overall the rules stayed the same. Looking at those gathered, we are a very mixed and diverse group, ministering. The Company of Servers came from the desire to have something which shared the values of SCP, celebrating diversity.

Ten years ago, the Company of Servers was created. It has had gradual growth, and at times it has not been easy, but it is something that is worth working at. Numbers are encouraging, and it has generated a number of leaders for the Church. David Warner, David Stephenson and Sion Hughes-Carew have all gone on to ordination. Fr David Warner and Mthr Penny King married around 10 days ago.

We have a fantastic history to celebrate, and we are part of a positive aspect. We are here because of how the Church treated women. There were and are lots of male societies, but we have a desire to be inclusive.

Belinda agreed with the idea of inclusiveness and diversity. This come across in her work as some of the students that she teaches have additional needs and would possibly be excluded. After all, we are all the body of Christ.

It is also important that we consider provision for young people and the elderly too. Older people may not have good memories or may need help, but they should still be included.

She also feels strongly about encouraging young people as Servers and it is up to us to be welcoming that.

Belinda said that she was a Server at a time when women wouldn't have necessarily been able to, and if the congregation had not been so welcoming then she may nit have been able to do it.

Belinda reported that as a Central Committee we have been looking at reproducing and updating the handbook. There is a PDF version on the website, but we need people to send photographs in to make the new one more inclusive. These need to be sent to Mark



# the Company of Servers

Charlton. Once we have them we can then look at publishing the updated version. Michaela Sorenson is a publisher by trade; however, she is due to be ordained this year.

There are also plans to create a definitive guide to serving aimed at young people, a guide to serving that can be kept in the vestry at church, and possibly put video clips online demonstrating some aspects of serving as reading is not for everybody.

This morning we may have done some things differently, but each church will do things differently.

There are more plans to focus on young people and the elderly.

In Belinda's parish, there is a Church School. Churches were and are instrumental at developing schools, however there are also a lot of elderly people who need to be looked after as well.

Belinda concluded by thanking the Chelmsford Chapter. There has also been a cake made to celebrate the anniversary. There had been lots of emails and meetings to make it all come together to what we have today.

5. **Treasurer General's Report** - John Kitchener reported on the accounts. Firstly, he spoke about the Chapters that had paid their subs. Some Chapters had not paid their subs for 2018. The annual subs are our main source of income and 2018 was possibly the lowest amount received.

The National Festival is by far the biggest expense that we have. This is what the majority of our income goes towards. The other major cost is travel expenses for the Central Committee. This is expected as there are members coming from all parts of the country. Some members of the Central Committee are now claiming them and paying them back as a donation so that we are able to claim Gift Aid back on them.

Last year we had a net loss of £371.63, however we do still have £924.90 in the bank.

Currently the cost of reprinting the handbook would not be able to be met by our subs alone. Last time, around 4 years ago, the cost of printing was around £3500.

John mentioned that there would be a retiring collection after Evensong and Benediction for the Company of Servers.

Barbara Baldwin (Blackburn and Liverpool) asked what we are able to claim Gift Aid back on. John explained that it was only able to be claimed back on donations.

Barry Moore (Norwich/Central Committee) proposed and David Wridderholt (Chelmsford) seconded that the accounts should be accepted, and all agreed.



# the Company of Servers

John stated that the Constitution says that he should set a budget for the coming year. John said that he anticipated that most of the figures would be similar to this year.

He also added that Claire Stephenson was happy to continue as our external examiner.

Belinda mentioned about emailing Chapters who had not paid subs to remind them.

6. **Election of one Ordinary Member** - As Michaela is due to be ordained soon, there is a vacancy for one Ordinary Member on the Central Committee. No nominations had been received prior to the meeting. William Varlow stated that we need people to come onto the committee as we cannot carry on indefinitely without volunteers. Yvonne Bowling said that it is an important role in the life of the Company. Belinda suggested that the Chaplains present should take it back to their Chapters and encourage people.
7. **AOB -**
  - a) Fr Peter Clark (Chelmsford) noted to the Central Committee that there are some lessons to be learned. The communications had been at times putting a strain on the relationship between the Chapter and the Cathedral. Aleksander has produced a timeline to assist in addressing these issues. Mthr Enid (Blackburn and Liverpool) mentioned the 2018 Festival in Selby. Belinda reported that that from this we did have the beginnings of documents to assist in the arranging of the Festival. It was noted that we used to have a Festival Officer, however this in fact made it difficult because the location of the Festival moves. Belinda noted that all of this is a learning curve, and we are all learning. Every Church has different rules and traditions that they follow.
  - b) It was asked if Eventbrite was the best way of booking. Mark Charlton reported that it was the easiest way of knowing how many were likely to be attending. Barry Moore expressed its importance in being able to have booked the meal for those coming on the Friday evening.
  - c) Fr Clive Wylie note that he was thrilled that his first job as Chaplain General was to admit three new members to the Company, two of them young people.
  - d) Belinda reported that the location for next year's festival and AGM was still being confirmed and would be announced in due course.
  - e) Belinda also reported that Exeter Chapter had asked about producing a banner using the Company logo. Central Committee may also be interested in having one made.
8. **Prayer and Close** - Fr Clive closed the meeting with prayer at 3:04pm.