

The Chapels Society ~ Minutes of the 21st Annual General Meeting

1) The 21st Annual General Meeting of the Chapels Society took place at Oakham Methodist Church, Northgate, Oakham on 4th July 2009. The President, Christopher Wakeling, took the chair at 11.00am and called the meeting to order.

Apologies for absence had been received from: Edward Royle, Helen Harris, Roger Thorne, John Dearing, John Ellis, Rosalind Kaye, Christopher and Jean Stell, Raymond and Margaret Honey, Colin and Angela Baxter, Celia Gibbs, Robin and Barbara Phillips, Leonard Smith, Rosemary Taylor, Clyde and Noreen Binfield, John Anderson, Prof & Mrs Alan Sell and Alan Petford.

2) The minutes of the 20th Annual General Meeting, held at Huddersfield Methodist Mission, Lloyd Street, Huddersfield on 21st June 2008 were unanimously adopted by the meeting and signed by the President as a correct record.

3) The President then introduced and commended the *Annual Report and Accounts for 2008*. He noted that it has been a very busy and rewarding year.

The Hon Secretary (Sara Crofts) gave a brief summary of the casework carried out by the Council during the year and thanked the Council members for their support during her first year in post. She also encouraged members to notify the Council of any cases of interest.

The Hon Treasurer (Andrew Worth) outlined the Society's financial position and noted that the finances were in good heart despite the current downturn. He commented on the benefit we receive from Gift Aid but observed that the continuing economic gloom is likely to have a negative impact on our finances during the coming year.

The Hon Editor (Chris Skidmore) remarked upon the introduction of an additional *Newsletter* and encouraged members to continue to pass on stories, articles and other items of interest for future issues. He also noted the publication of the beautifully produced *Nonconformist Communion Plate* by Christopher Stell and gave an update on progress with *Miscellany 2*. The editing stage was almost complete and a flyer would be sent with the September *Newsletter*.

The Hon Visits Secretary (Tim Grass) thanked all those who had been involved with preparing and organising this year's visits and outlined the plans to visit Buckinghamshire, Notting Hill and Rugby next year. He also suggested the possibility of a future weekend visit to the Isle of Man and asked members to indicate their interest in the idea during the remainder of the day. Nigel McMurray commented that plans for the October visit to Newcastle were well in hand and encouraged members to make the most of a visit to the north east.

As there were no questions regarding the *Annual Report and Accounts 2008* their adoption was proposed by Joy Rowe, seconded by Mary Ede and agreed unanimously.

4) The President explained that John Ellis had reached the end of his term of office this year and would be standing down. Andrew Worth also wished to stand down as Hon Treasurer but as no successor had been identified he has agreed to continue as Interim Treasurer for the coming year. As all the current officers were therefore willing to stand for re-election the President asked if the candidates listed below could be approved en bloc. The meeting unanimously agreed to elect all four officers.

- Hon Secretary: Sara Crofts (proposed by Celia Gibbs, seconded by Paul Gardner)
- Hon Editor: Chris Skidmore (proposed by John Anderson, seconded by Tim Grass)
- Hon Visits Secretary: Tim Grass (proposed by Roger Thorne, seconded by Christopher

Wakeling)

- Hon Treasurer: Andrew Worth (proposed by John Thompson, seconded by Anthony Earl)

Of the current Council members John Anderson (until 2010), Paul Gardner (until 2010 then eligible to stand for re-election), Celia Gibbs (until 2010) and Roger Thorne (until 2010 then eligible to stand for re-election) were willing to continue serving. Alan Petford was willing to stand for re-election (until 2012) and had been proposed by Sara Crofts and seconded by Andrew Worth. David Quick had been nominated for election and was proposed by Ian Serjeant and seconded by Christopher Wakeling. The President asked if there were any further nominations. As no further nominations were made the meeting unanimously agreed to elect Alan Petford and David Quick to the Council.

5) Independent Financial Examiner: The nomination of Cedric Hallam was proposed by Celia Gibbs and seconded by Paul Gardner. The meeting agreed his appointment unanimously.

6) The President asked if there was any further business. In response, John Hamilton asked for some further information about the outcome of the cases the Society had commented on during the last year and in particular asked for an update on the Gustavus Adolphus Church in Liverpool (1883, Caröe, Grade II). Christopher Wakeling understood that the Church of Sweden Abroad was currently reviewing the situation with regard to the church and was hopeful of a positive end to the story. Sara Crofts noted that in many of the cases we had made comments in support of those made by other organisations such as English Heritage and the Victorian Society. Where we had recommended that listed building consent should be refused the local authority had generally followed this advice however, Christopher Wakeling commented that it was difficult to define 'success' in terms of casework as the refusal of listed building consent or planning permission often meant that chapels remained empty, unused and at risk. He then went on to say that even where chapels remained at risk the Society tries to influence events, as in the case of Whitefield's Tabernacle, Kingswood, Bristol (1741, Grade I). Here, with assistance from a local contact, the Society had helped to persuade the local authority to serve an urgent works notice on the owners in an attempt to arrest the deterioration of the buildings.

Andrew Worth noted that the 22nd Annual General Meeting would take place during the Notting Hill visit on 3rd July 2010 unless anyone was aware of any major activities or conferences already scheduled to take place that weekend. The meeting was not aware of any conflict with regard to this date.

7) The President drew the meeting to a close by noting that the current Council was working well together and that the introduction of a number of new officers in recent years had brought some new ideas and fresh thinking. He encouraged the membership to get involved with the Society's work by suggesting items for the *Newsletter* and offering their services in terms of undertaking casework. He also expressed his particular thanks to John Ellis for all his hard work and thoughtful input to discussions and to Andrew Worth for agreeing to continue as Interim Treasurer whilst a successor was sought. He also encouraged the membership to try hard to recruit new members as it was important to ensure a continuing flow of new members for the Society to continue to flourish.

The President closed the meeting at 11.40am.

Attendees: Sara Crofts, J C Morgan, Stella Bond, Cedric Hallam, Saskia Hallam, John Digger, Christopher Wakeling, Marianne Wakeling, Chris Skidmore, Rod Ambler, Margaret Ambler, Julie Witherall, Roger Holden, Brian Ferrier, Andrew Worth, George Brassington, Alan Rowe, Joy Rowe, Richard Bateman, John Hamilton, David Oldham, Elaine Kaye, Reginald Rooke, Nigel McMurray, John Ede, Mary Ede, Paul Gardner, Tim Grass, Peter West, Jean West, John Thompson, C D Buckwell.