

The Chapels Society ~ Minutes of the 22nd Annual General Meeting

1) The 22nd Annual General Meeting of the Chapels Society took place at Bayswater United Reformed Church, Newton Road, London W2 5LS on 3rd July 2010. The President, Christopher Wakeling, took the chair at 12.30pm and called the meeting to order. Apologies for absence had been received from David Dawson, Ted Royle, John Hamilton, Jonathan Morgan, Alan and Joy Rowe, Clyde and Noreen Binfield, Jean Stell and Alan Rose.

2) The minutes of the 21st Annual General Meeting, held at Oakham Methodist Church on 4th July 2009 were unanimously adopted by the meeting and signed by the President as a correct record.

3) The President then drew members' attention to the *Annual Report and Accounts for 2009*. He observed that the role of President is not very onerous due to the diligence and efficiency of the Society's other officers. Indeed, he felt that few societies operated as effectively as the Chapels Society which was a credit to council members past and present. He also reminded those present that the membership subscription rate was something of a bargain, especially in relation to the many and varied activities of the Society. For this reason he felt that the more or less static membership figure was a concern. He therefore encouraged existing members to work hard to recruit new members as it is important to ensure that the Society has a sustainable future.

The Hon Secretary (Sara Crofts) noted that it had been quite a busy year in terms of casework and also that she had dealt with a number of requests for information and advice. She mentioned that the Society was still looking for someone to take over the administration of the website and that the Council was beginning to think about how to make best use of this resource in the future.

The Hon Treasurer (Andrew Worth) outlined the Society's financial position and noted that the finances were in good shape generally, although the reserves were currently a little depleted as a result of the production costs of *Miscellany 2*. He also noted that the costs of printing and posting the *Newsletters* had risen as a result of the change to producing three copies a year rather than two. He acknowledged that life memberships were a valuable foundation of working capital.

The Hon Editor (Chris Skidmore) remarked that he hoped that members welcomed the additional *Newsletter* but noted that this means that more articles and stories are required to fill the pages. He therefore encouraged those present to consider contributing items in the future. He also displayed a copy of the recently printed *Miscellany 2* and commended it to members.

The Hon Visits Secretary (Tim Grass) summarised the visits held during the last year and expressed warm thanks to all those who had given their time and expertise in organising what was generally felt to be an excellent programme of study days. He also looked ahead to the autumn visit to Rugby, noting that places were filling quickly and also to the 2011 visit to the Isle of Man. This weekend-long visit would be held in conjunction with the Manx Methodist Historical Society and promised to be a very memorable event with a series of evening activities as well as visits. He concluded by reminding those present that anyone who was welcome was to propose and prepare a visit and that he would be very pleased to receive suggestions. The President noted that thought would be given to the issue of making sure that the correct postage was requested for SAEs in response to a question raised from the floor about the cost of posting the notes for the Notting Hill visit.

As there were no questions regarding the *Annual Report and Accounts 2009* their adoption was proposed by Robin Phillips, seconded by Rosalind Kaye and agreed unanimously.

4) The President explained that John Anderson and Celia Gibbs had reached the end of their second terms of office this year and would be standing down. The Hon Treasurer, Andrew Worth, would also be standing down. The President expressed his deep gratitude to all three council members and hoped that it was a farewell rather than a goodbye. He also noted the terrific contribution made by Andrew Worth. He had proved to be a remarkable Treasurer, working quietly and diligently to look after the Society's finances. His attention to detail and his good will and dedication were much respected. Cards were presented to John Anderson and to Andrew Worth and the President noted that a card would be passed to Celia Gibbs at a later date.

As Christopher Wakeling had reached the end of his first term as President he vacated the chair to allow Chris

Skidmore to chair the next item of business. Chris Skidmore noted that Christopher Wakeling had been proposed for a second term as President by Celia Gibbs and seconded by Alan Petford. The meeting unanimously agreed to re-elect Christopher Wakeling as President and he therefore resumed the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

As a number of the officers were 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 three officers.

- Hon Secretary: Sara Crofts – proposed by Christopher Wakeling, seconded by Paul Gardner
- Hon Editor: Chris Skidmore – proposed by Sara Crofts, seconded by Alan Petford
- Hon Visits Secretary: Tim Grass – proposed by David Quick, seconded by Alan Petford

The President noted that there had been one nomination for the post of Hon Treasurer. This was David Watts who was proposed by Chris Skidmore and seconded by Tim Grass. The meeting unanimously agreed to elect David Watts to the role of Hon Treasurer. Robin Phillips asked if the Society still operated its bank accounts with one signature. Andrew Worth confirmed that this was indeed the case and explained the current procedures. The reason for a single signature policy is largely to do with the geographical dispersion of council members and although it is not perhaps ideal it is acceptable within the Charity Commission's guidance.

Paul Gardner was willing to stand for re-election and had been proposed by John Anderson and seconded by Celia Gibbs. Roger Thorne was also willing to stand for re-election and had been proposed by Paul Gardner and seconded by David Quick. Alan Rose had been nominated for election and was proposed by Roger Thorne and seconded by Tim Grass. The President asked all three nominations could be taken together. The meeting agreed and all three were elected unanimously. Chris Wakeling noted that as only one nomination had been received for two vacancies the Council would be one member short for the coming year. Of the current Council members Alan Petford (until 2012) and David Quick (until 2012, and then eligible to stand for re-election) were willing to continue serving.

5) Turning to the matter of the Society's Independent Financial Examiner the President noted the sad death of Cedric Hallam earlier in the year. Cedric Hallam had been a keen and able supporter of the Society and had attended many visits. He would be much missed. As a result of his death the Council had agreed to appoint John Bussey to examine the Accounts for 2009 (proposed by Roger Thorne, seconded by Christopher Wakeling). John Bussey has also been nominated to examine the Accounts for 2010 (proposed by David Quick, seconded by Sara Crofts). The President asked the meeting to ratify John Bussey's appointment to examine the 2009 Accounts and also his appointment for the coming year. The meeting agreed unanimously.

6) The President asked if there was any further business but no further matters were raised.

7) The President drew the meeting to a close by noting that he wished to draw members' attention to two important initiatives. The first is the publication of *Options for the Disposal of Redundant Churches and Other Places of Worship*, an extremely useful paper that would be of great help to congregations facing the issue of giving up a building and who were not presently being alerted to options other than disposal at the highest price. He hoped that it could be widely promoted across the various denominations as it would help to counter misunderstandings and might lead to more appropriate outcomes when buildings are made redundant. The second initiative is the recent launch of the *Places of Worship at Risk* campaign. All listed places of worship will be receiving a copy of *Caring for Places of Worship* in the coming weeks. This is a new publication which contains examples of good practice and also sources of advice and guidance.

The President concluded by thanking everyone for attending and also thanking the Society's hosts at Bayswater URC. He then closed the meeting at 1.15pm.

Attendees: Sara Crofts, Chris Skidmore, Martin Wellings, Petra Laidlan, John Thompson, Christopher Stell, Robin Phillips, Barbara Phillips, Margaret Ambler, Rod Ambler, Angus McCormick, David Watts, Roger Holden, Alan Petford, Richard Bateman, Christopher Buckwell, Tim Grass, Susan Samata, Marianne Wakeling, Anne Anderson, John Anderson, Roger Thorne, Paul Gardner, Rosalind Kaye, Jean West, Peter West, Angela Baxter, Colin Baxter, Mark Glanville Jones, Stella Bond, Andrew Worth, Bill Jacob, Josh Schwieso, Janet Kennedy, Saskia Hallam and Christopher Wakeling.