

## THE FRIENDS OF THE CITY CHURCHES

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held at St Mary Abchurch, Abchurch Lane, London EC4N 7BA on Thursday 25 June 2015 at 3.15pm**

### **1 Attendance:**

The meeting was attended by 71 Members of the Friends of the City Churches including Oliver Leigh-Wood (Chairman of Trustees), Neil Graham (Honorary Treasurer), Trustees Mary Milne-Day, Brian Evans, Nancy Branson, Signe Hoffos, David Jessop, Liz Simpson (Hon. Secretary) **Apologies for absence** were received from Trustees John Reynolds, Paul Simmons, Tony Tucker and 45 members

### **2 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 4 June 2014:**

The Minutes were accepted as a correct record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.

### **3 Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements 2014-2015:**

i Oliver Leigh-Wood, Chairman, spoke to the Report, which had been circulated before the meeting, highlighting several points:

- He thanked all the FCC Trustees for their voluntary work over the past year, noting that all Trustees and FCC members had one thing in common, that they all love the churches in the City of London.
- He noted FCC's move to the status of Charitable Incorporated Institution and referred to retiring Trustee Mary Milne-Day's invaluable assistance.
- Trustees Paul Simmons and John Reynolds were thanked for another year's successful publication of FCC's 'Newsletter' and 'City Events' and the continuing development of the website was also noted.
- The FCC had enjoyed another full year of Events: particularly worth noting was the event in Postmans' Park which is expected to lead to the formation of a group – not unlike the FCC – which will ensure that the G F Watts' memorial structure will be better looked after in future.
- Trustee Tony Tucker's guide to City churches continued to sell well and FCC is anticipating the publication of a new book on the sword-rests of the City of London in late 2015. Other new merchandise is in development.
- At St Mary Abchurch itself, particular attention had been paid to Health and Safety issues, with an annual review of fire protection. The CCTV system had been improved. The establishment of a fund to support the restoration and cleaning of the bell had led to generous donations and it was anticipated that work by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry would begin in 2016.
- Referring to Church Watching as the 'public face' of the FCC, the Chairman thanked Trustee Brian Evans for his work as coordinator of the Church Watching scheme and encouraged Watchers to consider ways in which the FCC could help City churches with its grant programme.

- He concluded by thanking the FCC Patron, The Bishop of London and Martin Sargeant and others in the Diocese offices, for their continued support.
- ii Neil Graham, Hon Treasurer, spoke to the Financial Report which had been circulated before the meeting, drawing attention to the following points:
- The fuller Report reflects our new CIO status and changes in the Charity laws.
  - FCC deposits had been managed safely and prudently to maximize the interest available on deposits; all deposits were protected by the Financial Services Protection Scheme.
  - Donations to the FCC had been consistent with previous years; he added his own thanks to donors to the Bell Fund.
  - He emphasised the importance of Gift Aid to FCC and said that there had a positive response rate of 80% to letters sent to members who had previously not 'gift-aided' their contributions to FCC.
  - The administrative costs of running FCC had been contained, with promotional costs being quite low currently. The biggest fixed cost to FCC is the rent payable to the Diocese for St Mary Abchurch.

There were no questions on the Report and Financial Statements for 2104-2015, which were accepted nem con.

#### **4 Trustees' Proposal on Membership fees and payments**

i To increase the rate for single and joint annual membership to £20 and £25 respectively, with an additional £2 administrative charge for those paying by cheque or cash.

After considerable discussion on this point, the meeting voted separately on each clause: The increase in the membership rate to £20 and £25 was ACCEPTED; the meeting REJECTED the proposal of an additional administrative fee.

ii To offer single and joint Life Membership for £450 and £550 respectively . The proposal was ACCEPTED

iii To end the discount on Watchers' subscriptions. After vigorous discussion both for and against the proposal, the proposal was ACCEPTED

The above to be implemented forthwith in respect of new Members and at their annual renewal date for existing Members.

#### **5 Amendment to the Constitution**

The Chairman and Secretary introduced the amendment to the Constitution dated 17 December 2013, designed to allow the dissemination of information to Members by electronic means in addition to traditional methods:

The addition of a sub-clause 4 to Clause 22 to read:

*4 The charity trustees may, subject to compliance with any legal requirement, by means of publication on its website, provide the members with the notice referred to in Clause 11 (3) (notice of general meetings).*

And by the addition of the words 'member or' in each of the sub-clauses 2 and 3 to clause 22 so that the said sub-clauses read as follows:

*2. To the CIO*

*Any member or charity trustee of the CIO may communicated electronically with the CIO to an address specified by the CIO for this*

*purpose, so long as the communication is authenticated in a manner which is satisfactory to the CIO.*

*3 By the CIO*

*Any member or charity trustee, by providing the CIO with is or her email address or similar, is taken to have agreed to receive communications from the CIO in electronic form at that address.*

The amendment was ACCEPTED

## **6 Election of Trustees**

Brian Evans, Neil Graham, Oliver Leigh-Wood and Paul Simmons had expressed their willingness to stand for election as Trustees. They were elected without opposition for the periods indicated: Brian Evans and Oliver Leigh-Wood (3 years), Neil Graham (1 year), Paul Simmons (2 years). Oliver Leigh-Wood was re-appointed as Chairman.

## **7 Re-appointment of Independent Examiners**

The re-appointment of Mitchell, Rodrigues and Co Ltd as Independent Examiners was proposed and accepted without opposition.

## **8 Discussion**

A member suggested that FCC Members could attend services and recitals in Watched Churches; another member reminded the meeting, however, that FCC was a secular organisation which should not be encouraging attendance at services.

The Chairman urged Members to promote the FCC, reminding them that there were funds available to support church repair and refurbishment projects. He also encouraged Members to consider becoming more active in developing FCC activities and finished by thanking them for their attendance and support.

The formal Annual General Meeting was concluded.

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Following the conclusion of the business meeting, Isabel Assaly, Regeneration Manager, Churches' Conservation Trust gave an illustrated talk.

Refreshments were served.