

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2015  
Binfield Heath Congregational Church  
Saturday 9th May 2015**

**Welcome**

The welcome and opening greetings were given by Rev. Bill Calder, EFCC Chairman. It was shared that a number of brethren deeply committed to EFCC had passed away since we last met. Prayer followed.

**Opening Devotional Address**

Rev. David Magowan (Carey Baptist Church), gave the opening devotional address from 2 Thessalonians ch 1 v 1-12

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2014**

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 10th 2014 at Cannon Park Congregational Church were proposed by Dr Digby James (Quinta Independent Evangelical Church), seconded by Rev. Phil Grove (Tillingham Congregational Church) and agreed.

**Affirmation of Position Papers**

**Homosexuals and the Christian Fellowship** (paper circulated within the Report Book).

Rev. Peter Mills addressed the meeting, shared that as a church they agreed with the biblical content of the paper but believed the tone of it was pastorally unhelpful and therefore would be voting against. From the floor it was shared that the position papers were drawn up due to the urgent need to make a stand on contentious issues and were therefore not necessarily pastoral. The General Secretary shared that it maybe it is time to review – agreed to be taken to the Committee.

It and proposed by Rev. Keith Plant (Stony Stratford Evangelical Free Church), seconded by Rev. David Saunders (Rochford Congregational Church) and agreed to affirm the position paper.

**EFCC Statement on Ecumenism** (paper circulated within the Report Book).

It and proposed by Rev. Peter Beale (Bulkington Congregational Church), seconded by Rev. Ian Densham (Droylsden Congregational Church) and agreed to affirm the position paper.

**The Relationship of Men and Women in the Church**

**The Danvers Statement** (paper circulated within the Report Book).

It and proposed by Dr Marianne James (Quinta Independent Evangelical Church), seconded by Rev. Peter Mills (Pontefract Congregational Church) and agreed to affirm the position paper.

**General Secretary's Report**

This report was given by Rev. Mike Plant, EFCC General Secretary.

Woolwich Congregational Church – two points to give thanks for, that they have finally got planning permission and (even more significantly) Woolwich have a man, Josh Fortune, who has been willing to provide leadership for them.

Great encouragement to Mike and Bob Cotton.

New Minister - encouraging to lead and preach at Ian Densham's induction at Droylsden. Noted the lack of evangelical churches in Manchester in contrast to nearby Liverpool. We need to be much in prayer to see this work built up and thriving.

Mike shared on the situation with Andrew Carter in Uganda, with the threat of terrorists, prayer support requested.

Future Planning - Mike shared he intends to retire in 2019, looking at the work profile of Mike Plant. It has been agreed for someone to work part time for the Trust Board, this will enable Mike to have more time to work with the Churches.

Churches joining – good to have Zion Congregational Church, Hyde – wanted to be one with us with the gospel. Pray that other churches may want to join us.

Macedonia – Mike expressed his thanks for the prayer support, the visit had gone well but needs prayer as the churches are weak.

Churches leaving

Briston Congregational Church, Wells-Next-the-Sea Congregational Church. It became unclear if a church was meeting, did not sign the Affirmation of Oneness.

Walsham le Willows Congregational Church – possibly goes back to when the church split some time ago.

The aim is to ensure that the churches do affirm oneness with us, the office are in contact to remind churches and all 3 churches received letters from the Chairman of the Committee encouraging them to affirm.

The chairman thanked Mike Plant for all his hard work during the past year.

### **Trust Corporation Report**

The report was given by Rev. Gwynne Evans (Chairman).

Gwynne Evans reflected at the funeral of Brian Dupont that it was 23 years ago that the company was set up – thankful to those in times past who contributed time and energy to this.

Record thanks to the Trustees presently involved with the company, thanking the Lord for the gifts the men have, noting in particular Russell Taylor who stepped down at the end of 2014. Good to have Kevin Davies (Church Worker, Libanus Congregational Church) join.

Noted the purchase of a property in Axminster for a retired Minister, the selling of Canaan Church, Pentrechwyth. Also the closure of the Chapel at Braughing.

Gt Haywood – noted the difficulties in trying to sell this property and land. Needs prayer.

Grants – good to be able to support churches in various ways, also good to be able to help retired ministers and widows.

Goals for giving – thankful to God for provision from previous generations, emphasised the need for churches to give – EFCC do not apply a charge.

The chairman thanked Gwynne and the Trustees.

### **Office Report**

As detailed in the Report Book.

The chairman personally and also on behalf of the meeting thanked Anthony Harrison and David Smith for their work for EFCC.

### **Regional Secretaries' Reports**

#### **Report by Rev. Cyril Aston (Southern England and South Wales)**

Cyril shared what a joy it is to visit and preach at EFCC churches.

Wiveliscombe Congregational Church – encouraged prayer for the fellowship, going through a difficult time. Mike Plant visiting later in the month.

Castle Street Evangelical Church, Tredegar – attended the induction service of Steve Foley, good day – pray for Steve and his family.

Gendros Congregational Church – now Pastorless with Steve Foley moving to Tredegar.

Torcross – small fellowship and future critical – EFCC evangelistic team visited in 2014 with very little response.

Cyril Short – Cyril paid his own personal tribute, Cyril took the funeral service – gospel opportunity with many present connected to the armed forces.

We record our thanks to Cyril Aston.

### **Report by Rev. Bob Cotton (South-East England, East Anglia and London)**

Hadham Cross Congregational Church, Much Hadham – Bob Cotton recently preached, met a villager who shared that he will miss William Jervis – what an impact he made in the 2 years he was at the church.

Bob will be meeting the church to discuss the future.

Puckeridge Congregational Church – Bob Cotton met with Ray Waterman (Pastor), small church who have agreed to close at the end of 2015. Ray Waterman will retire at the same time. Expect only a temporary closure as EFCC looking to relaunch the church.

Gt Chesterford Congregational Church – noted Mark Plumb accepted a call to be full time – able to be self financing.

Woolwich – Bob endorsed Mike Plant's comments made earlier.

Briston – Bob mentioned that recently some friends visited the church but no one there.

We record our thanks to Bob Cotton.

### **Report by Rev. Mike Plant (Northern England and North Wales)**

Report previously given.

### **Training Board Report**

The report was given by Rev. Bill Dyer (Training Officer).

Burden that God would raise up men for the harvest field! our prayer.

Need to covenant together as a body of churches to pray.

Spiritual health of the church is for men to be called and trained but so few men are coming forward from the churches to be trained. Thanks to those who are in training.

Key that the churches see the need to pray, encourage those with gifts within their fellowships – spiritually equip them with gifts/ potential to work of the church – Bible Colleges can only do a part. Raised whether churches see their responsibilities.

Also noted that men who are coming into training in later life have less years to serve the church.

Noted the incalculable value of a Minister to have a godly, prayerful, supportive wife.

It was mentioned the work of the John Owen Centre, able to provide 1 – 1 mentoring/ training which is beneficial.

We are not at the point of no return – noted some churches have men in training – raised that we need to consider working with external partnerships.

We record our thanks to Bill Dyer.

### **Financial Report 2014**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Jeremy Allison (Smailes Goldie – Auditors for EFCC) to the meeting.

Jeremy presented the accounts for 2014 making reference to his report.

Noting the the General Purposes Fund accounts show only those items which are relevant for running the EFCC organisation. highlighting the situation with the General Purposes account and the support from the Trust Corporation as a Management fee.

Breakdown of gifts noted as per report previously circulated.

Trust Corporation accounts – Jeremy went through the income and expenditure account of Trust Corp as shown on page 5 of the accounts.

### General Purpose Account

It was proposed by Rev. Matt Rees (St Briavels Congregational Church), seconded by Rev. Bill Harrow (Marden Congregational Church) that the accounts should be accepted. The meeting agreed.

### Trust Corporation Accounts

It was proposed by Rev. Peter Taylor (Nazeing Congregational Church), seconded by Rev. Phil Grove (Tillingham Congregational Church) that the accounts should be accepted. The meeting agreed.

### Appointment of Auditors

It was proposed by Dr Marianne James (Quinta Independent Evangelical Church), seconded by Rev. Peter Beale (Bulkington Congregational Church,) and agreed that Smailes Goldie should be re-appointed as auditors for the forthcoming year.

### Evangelism Committee

Report by Rev. Bill Harrow (Chairman of the Committee).

Bill drew attention to his report – we are required:

All to have a passion for Evangelism

All to have a passion for Churches

All to have a passion for Church Plants

Bill shared that there had been little response from the churches when EFCC made an offer to support the church in evangelism.

John Carpenter shared his experience of evangelism, emphasising the need for all church members to be involved in evangelism using the opportunities God gives.

### Pastoral Care Report

Rev. Bill Calder (Chairman of the Committee) – Bill drew attention to the report emphasising the importance of Pastoral Care to the work of EFCC.

### Teacher Training Report

Rev. Jackie Brown shared on the work so far, initially good response but disappointing since. Encouraging and positive note received from Pontefract following their training. Also shared that it is a reflection on the lack of evangelism in churches around the country.

Jackie emphasised that it is important to reach out to the children and young people – with potential to be the leaders of the future.

Jackie passionately shared the need for leader training.

### infellowship Report

The infellowship report (previously circulated) was taken as read, Mr Robert Neilson (editor) was unable to be with us.

### Prayer Concern Report

The Prayer Concern report (previously circulated) was taken as read, Rev. Andrew Leach (editor) was unable to be with us.

### Welcome of New Ministers

Rev. Bill Calder drew attention to the number of New Ministers/ Assistant Ministers/ Church Workers (detailed below).

Rev. Ian Densham (Minister Droylsden Congregational Church, came to the front and was given the right hand of fellowship by Bill Calder on behalf of the Fellowship.

Bill then led in prayer.

### **New Ministers/ Assistant Ministers/ Church Workers**

Steve Foley – Castle Street Evangelical Church (Tredegar)

Duane Russell – Donaghey Congregational Church

Ian Densham – Droylsden Independent Church

Alan Mason – Fordham Congregational Church

Mark Plumb – Great Chesterfield Congregational Church

Gerald Tanner – Wycliffe Independent Church

Note: Chris Sinkinson, Alderholt Chapel, has changed his role to elder.

### **Presentation to David and Joyce Saunders**

Rev. Bill Calder presented a gift of plants to David and Joyce – a small token of appreciation to mark their long years of service to the Lord, David's involvement with EFCC and wider afield with WECF.

### **Missionary Advisory Council Report**

This report was presented by Rev. Peter Taylor, M.A.C. Committee Chairman.

Paulo Nunes – noted the passing of Paulo, Peter shared the love and support given by EFCC/ WECF. There may be a financial need for his widow, Christina.

Andrew Carter, Uganda – Peter shared that they had built a safe room in their accommodation – living at considerable risk and will evacuate if need be.

Alan Best – noted the sudden passing of his brother Graham.

Prayer followed for those mentioned.

### **World Evangelical Congregational Fellowship Report**

Reports previously circulated from Rev. David Saunders and Rev. Alan Best

The report was presented by Rev. David Saunders.

Tensions/Tears/Triumphs – David shared personal knowledge of Paulo Nunes and Graham Best .

David focused on the work in Paragominas as mentioned in his report in contrast to the work in India. David drew attention to the WECF conference held in South Africa, a blessing for all who attended.

David shared on his Ministry in various parts of the world, time to reflect upon his 55 years in Ministry giving a testimony to the need to keep going on and on with the Lord.

Prayer followed for David.

### **Church Reports**

The reports were introduced by Rev. Bob Cotton.

Staines Congregational Church – Rev. Nic Gray (Minister), seeing signs of stability and health within the fellowship. Nick thanked EFCC for the support for Jasper Caines with his Ministerial training.

Marden Congregational Church – Rev. Bill Harrow (Minister), roller-coaster in Marden, some blessings with 2 baptisms at the end of May. Prayer requested for a man Bill is in contact with. Children's work increasing.

Droylsden Independent Church – Rev. Ian Densham (Minister), Ian shared that the church had been without a Minister for 15 years, attendance about 30 morning and evening which is encouraging. It is a part time ministry as he has other responsibilities.

Ian stressed the importance of preaching and also the role that the EFCC Training Board have.

Binfield Heath Congregational Church – Rev. Thomas Brand (Minister), Thomas shared that work was slow but steady and seeing some response from the village.

Quinta Independent Evangelical Church – Dr Digby James (Minister), Digby shared that a family had moved to Gobowen with some interest in the area – may lead to a church plant.  
Tillingham Congregational Church – Rev. Phil Grove, Phil shared on the new development in Southminster, a cafe being opened as a means of outreach.

A time of prayer followed.

### **Women2Women**

Mrs Margaret Plant reported.

The Ladies Conference held on 17/18 April 2015 was much blessed with 50 ladies attending, the speaker was Ruth Eardley who spoke on “Distinctly Different”. Margaret shared responses from those who had attended, good to bring the ladies of the Fellowship together. Feedback received to enable planning for the future, next Conference 15/16 April 2016 – speaker Catherine Campbell

Messages from this year’s conference are available on CDs.

Noted the Women’s Forum is closed, now have a Facebook page.

### **Greetings from Visitors/ Greetings from EFCC Churches and Associated Organisations**

Affinity – Matthew Evans brought greetings on behalf of Affinity, conveyed their thanks to EFCC for their involvement – very much appreciated. With support from Peter Beale and Mike Plant, the office and also financial.

Greetings and apologies received from individuals and churches within the fellowship.

Greetings had been received from The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (Rev. R Underwood), WECF (Alan Best) – it was noted the value of WECF to the churches and the work that Alan Best is doing, Congregational Union of Ireland (Rev. R McLarnin)

### **Committee Election Result**

The Chairman informed the meeting of the results of the Committee Election.

Those elected to the Committee were:

Rev. Gwynne Evans (Hayes Town Chapel)

Rev. Andrew Leach (Rochford Congregational Church)

Dr Digby James (Quinta Independent Evangelical Church)

### **Welcome of new Committee Chairman**

Bill Calder thanked all for their support for the past two years, thoroughly enjoying his role and being a privilege to serve the Lord this way. Jackie Brown thanked Bill Calder on behalf of the Fellowship.

Rev. Jackie Brown (Peoples Church, Bridgnorth) was formally welcomed as the new Committee Chairman by Rev. Bill Calder (Thornton Heath Congregational Church), retiring Chairman.

### **Closing Devotional Address**

Rev. Jackie Brown (Peoples Church, Bridgnorth) gave the closing devotional address from Joshua 5.

Please note that full copies of the reports given can be found in the 2014 Annual General Meeting Report Book which was sent to all ministers and churches within the Fellowship.