

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2017

Alderholt Chapel
Friday/Saturday 12th/13th May 2017

Friday Representatives' Meeting

Welcome

The welcome and opening greetings were given by Rev. Jackie Brown, EFCC Chairman.

Opening Devotional Address

Rev. Bill Calder (EFC Chairman) gave the opening devotional address from 1 John 1.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2012

The minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 14th May 2017 at Ebenezer Evangelical Congregational Church, Pontnewydd. were proposed by Rev. Neville Rees (Libanus Congregational Church, Morrision) seconded by Rev. Phil Grove, (Tillingham Congregational Church) and unanimously agreed.

Affirmation of Position Papers

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

The Relationship of Men and Women in the Church

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

It was proposed by Rev. Nick Gray (Staines Congregational Church), seconded by Rev. Keith Plant (Stony Stratford Evangelical Free Church) and unanimously agreed to affirm the position papers.

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

Jackie Brown referred to the 2016 AGM when the meeting agreed to affirm the position paper with the request that The EFCC Committee reconsider the paper in the light of the comments made at the meeting. The EFCC Committee have done this and the revised paper was circulated within the Report Book. The meeting unanimously agreed to affirm this paper.

Committee Report

It was shared that the 2016 AGM was the last one when Mike Plant General Secretary before he stepped down. Rev. Gwynne Evans agreed to step in and cover some of the work by Mike – particularly preaching.

The report was given by Rev. Gwynne Evans.

Gwynne started by quoting from Psalm 115 “Not to us, LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness”.

Recognition that over the 50 years the Lord has guided us as a Fellowship, his hand has been upon us – must give thanks. Reminded of Stan Guest’s words.

Stan was raised up to be the first Secretary, followed by Alan Tovey, then followed by Mike Plant – opportunity to give thanks to the Lord for these servants as he raised them up to serve EFCC. Being here at Alderholt reminded of men like Bert Pressey (member of the church).

As the Lord has led us so far, he will continue to lead us on, mindful of our Fellowship churches – there is a great need for the gospel.

It has been a busy year for the Fellowship – prayer requested as we search for a new General Secretary, Future Planning group meeting planned for the 20th May 2017. Gwynne referred to the good work the Regional Secretaries are doing, encouraging churches within the fellowship.

Puckeridge – as mentioned last year the EFCC Committee and Trust Board appointed Bill Harrow as Church Planter/ Evangelist – it has been hard going and prayer requested.

St Briavels – Minister, Matt Rees – encouraging work taking place.

Morley – noted that their Minister, Steve Wright, is stepping down in July. They have the use of a redundant classroom at a local school 7 days a week, a great provision.

Crystal Peaks Church, Sheffield - Gwynne shared the opportunity that had arisen for the Trust Board to purchase a closed Methodist Church building in Beighton to be used by the church, an area that the church were covering as they met in a Public building nearby.

There is a great opportunity for the gospel – the Trust Board are working with the church. A thanksgiving service was held on the 7th May 2017, prayer requested for Steve Horton and Martin Daniels (leaders of CPC).

Highbury Quadrant, London – Ian Jones the Minister is retiring, prayer requested for the one who is to be appointed, that the witness will be maintained.

Prayer Conference 2016 – briefly shared that it had been a good conference.

Prayer requested for the Fellowship.

It was noted the Home Call of Jim Morris (Minister, Bere Regis Congregational Church), Gwynne attended the Thanksgiving Service and shared of the good testimony given.

We hereby record our thanks to Gwynne Evans for the work he is doing.

Committee Election Result

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

Those elected to the Committee were:

Rev. Bill Harrow, Puckeridge Chapel,

Rev. Keith Plant, Stony Stratford Evangelical Free Church

Rev. Nick Gray, Staines Congregational Church

Mr Steve Horton, Crystal Peaks Church, Sheffield

The Chairman welcomed Nick Gray (attendee) onto the Committee.

Trust Corporation Report by Gwynne Evans

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

Woolwich – noted the good progress with the build, much to give thanks for.

Grants (including Ministerial support) – grateful to God for the funds held in Trust.

It was good to report that we have good Investment Managers (Castlefield) – attention drawn to the Managed Multi-Asset Fund (with Castlefield). For churches who have “spare” funds that can be invested. Trust Board cover management costs.

Value prayer for the Trust Board– involved in numerous situations. Highlighted the need to sell the properties at Braughing - connected to Puckeridge.

Solicitors – noted the change to Wrigleys (based in Leeds and Sheffield) from Potheary Witham Weld.

Custodian Trusteeship – noted we have enquiries received that are being processed.

Emphasis given to the positives to have the Trust Corporation as Custodian Trustee – avoids the need to contact a number of bodies when Trustees change. Also, reference made to the expertise offered by the Trust Corporation in a number of areas.

It was raised whether the EFCC could issue a statement regarding Child Protection Policy/ Safeguarding, also if EFCC can become an Umbrella body/ Licence holder for DBS. You

would need “hundreds” of enquirers to be a DBS licence holder – also this is not our strength. We are in touch with CCPAS and able to pass on any information. It was confirmed that a person with a DBS does not have to be a Trustee. It was shared that EFCC would strongly recommend churches consider the local Council policy / requirements on Child Protection / Safeguarding. Emphasised that every church needs to have a Policy in place – a must to protect your workers. Any incidents need to be recorded with a signature including any witness statements. Stressed that record keeping is so important as to who is present at all meetings – details to be kept for many years. EFCC recommend CCPAS as an Umbrella organisation. It was shared that OFSTED are looking at coming into churches, clubs which meet more than 6 hours a week – for example Holiday Bible Clubs. If churches are doing the right procedures than OFSTED will see this and it will be acceptable. Message is “Do things right”. Would include Vulnerable Adults/ Safeguarding. It was shared that all those in leadership even if not directly involved should have a DBS - seen as having oversight. Although not legal it is recommended DBS should be renewed every 3 years. It was shared from the floor that this also has a spiritual aspect.

Dr Digby James proposed a vote of thanks to the Board, especially Gwynne Evans as Chairman. Also noted the extra work done by Dr Graham Brown who has taken on extra responsibilities since Mike Plant left. Record also thanks to Anthony Harrison and David Smith for the work done in the office.

Regional Secretaries' Reports

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

The report was taken as read – Cyril Aston shared the encouragement of the Lord raising up new Ministers in recent years.

Matt Rees – St Briavels/ David Legg - Lee Mill/ Timothy Demore - Durrington/ Timothy Dennick – St Ives/ John Fry – Gendros/ Steve Foley – Tredegar/ Mike Plant – Honiton.

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

The report was taken as read – Bob Cotton mentioned Highbury Quadrant Congregational Church were interviewing a man on Sunday for the Ministry.

Report by Rev. Mark Ladds (Northern England)

Mark Ladds sent his apologies. The report was taken as read.

Report by Rev. Jackie Brown (Midlands and North Wales)

The report was taken as read – Jackie Brown shared that it had been good to be at the induction of Stephen Dunning – Mynydd Isa. Retired – previously worked as a Pharmacist in a hospital.

Oldbury – encouraged prayer for Bryan and Bernice Jones. Bryan is the Minister.

Training Officer Report by Rev. Bill Dyer (Training Officer).

The report was taken as read – Bill Dyer shared that the future of EFCC is closely linked with the training of Men for the Ministry.

Financial Report 2016 by Jeremy Allison

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

Jeremy presented the accounts for 2016 –

General Purpose accounts - it was noted that the costs of running the Fellowship reduced with the General Secretary leaving. Income is about the same from churches. A Management Fee is charged to the Trust Corporation, opportunity this year to reduce the deficit further (Page 10 item 4).

Jeremy Allison encouraged the churches the need to take action in giving to support the overheads for the office/ administration etc. Attention drawn to the Creditors/ Debtors list as detailed on page 7.

Trust Corporation accounts – an Independent Auditors report was needed this year due to the increased income from 3 accounts being closed and funds moved to the Trust Corporation as unrestricted (Dalston/ Stokenchurch/ Trinity). This releases the funds and aids the development of the work.

Jeremy Allison referred to Page 6 and explained:

Unrestricted – it is what it says/ Restricted – restricted as to the purpose of the donor/
Designated – earmarked by the Trustees.

It was noted the good use of funds – the purchase of the church building for use by Crystal Peaks – Woolwich another example – as is Alderholt.

Also noted good investment income as well as the rental income.

It was noted there have been some additional costs – archive work/graveyard issue and others.

Reference made to the investment portfolio growth and also property valuations. Reference was made to the Debtors on page 14. Also, the creditors some of which are the Investments held on behalf of other Trusts.

On page 15 it was noted the Alan Tovey funds – to support individuals.

Reference made to the cash flow statements on pages 8 and 9 – relates to the audit.

It was noted the agreement of the Charity Commission to close the 3 accounts (Dalston/ Stokenchurch/ Trinity) – the Charity Commission are keen for funds to be released so that they can be used – onus is on the Trust Corporation to do this. Example was Oakhangar.

In response to a question Jeremy explained the accruals were those costs relating to the year that have not been paid and for which not invoice has been received but we know that there is a cost which will be charged at some time.

It was proposed by Rev Neville Rees (Libanus Congregational Church, Morriston), seconded by Rev. Peter Beale (Bulkington Congregational Church) that the General Purpose and the Trust Corporation accounts should be accepted. The meeting unanimously agreed.

Appointment of Auditors

It was proposed by Rev. Dr Ian Densham (Droylsden Congregational Church), seconded by Dr Digby James (Quinta Evangelical Independent Church) and unanimously agreed that Smailes Goldie should be re-appointed as auditors for the forthcoming year.

We record our thanks to Jeremy Allison

Evangelism Report/ Puckeridge Chapel report by Rev. Bill Harrow

Bill Harrow shared the loneliness of the work at Puckeridge, making some inroads – evangelism in a village more difficult than in a town. Encouraged people to pray, call in if passing and telephone.

Pastoral Committee Report by Bill Calder

The report was taken as read.

infellowship Report by Robert Neilson

Robert Neilson sent his apologies. The report was taken as read.

Prayer Concern Report by Andrew Leach

The report was taken as read. It was mentioned to make better use of prayer items to go on the web, also the use of events to go on the web.

Missionary Advisory Council Report by Bill Harrow

This report was taken as read.

World Evangelical Congregational Fellowship Report

Two reports – David Saunders and Mike Plant

The reports were taken as read. It was noted the work done by Mike Plant, it was shared that Mike and Margaret Plant are in Macedonia at present.

Studies Conference Report by Peter Beale

The report was taken as read.

Women2Women -report by Lucy Beale

The 2017 Conference was a really good conference.

Dates for next year 13 – 14 April, Lucy Beale encouraged the ladies to attend.

We record our thanks to Margaret Plant – the Committee are open to new members.

It was noted how very beneficial Facebook is.

Encouraged support in prayer.

It was noted the value of ladies within churches.

A time of prayer followed as the session closed.

Closing Devotions

Rev. Chris Sinkinson (Moorlands Bible College) gave the Friday evening closing devotion from Matthew 10.

Saturday Annual General Meeting

Welcome

The welcome and opening greetings were given by Rev. Jackie Brown, EFCC Chairman.

Opening Devotional Address

Rev. Chris Bishop, Minister of Alderholt Chapel, gave the opening devotional address from Matthew 6

SEMINARS

The attendees broke up into 2 groups

1. "Women's ministry in the local Church"

Session led by Elizabeth Smith (FIEC) with opportunity for Q/A.

2. "Transsexualism and its implications for the churches"

Session led by Chris Sinkinson (Moorlands) with opportunity for Q/A.

Greetings from Visitors/ Greetings from EFCC Churches and Associated Organisations

Graham Nichols (Director) brought greetings on behalf of Affinity.

Graham explained the background to Affinity and what they are doing now. Reference made to their publications Foundations and Social Issue bulletins. They have an aim to engage with Christian and Secular media.

Jim Lyons (Pastor of Knockbracken Congregational Church and Chairman of the Congregational Union of Ireland) brought greetings on behalf of the CUI.

Value prayer for the Fellowship – their annual meeting will take place 20th May 2017, they do not have an incoming Chairman, also they do not have a Secretary – the time will be devoted to Gods word and prayer. The CUI meets 7 times a year.

Rev. Jackie Brown shared that Greetings and apologies have been received from individuals and churches within the fellowship.

Greetings received from The Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (Richard Underwood), Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, USA (Ron Hamilton), Union of Congregational Churches, Bulgaria (Georgi Zhelev), Fellowship of Congregational Churches, Australia (Kerrian Cartledge). Evangelical Church, Argentina (Pastor Armando Guillermo Nass), Congregational Christian Churches in Canada (David Schrader).

Welcome of New Ministers

Rev. Jackie Brown drew attention to the number of New Ministers and encouraged prayer for them (detailed below).

New Ministers

Andrew Lawton - Henfield

Mike Plant - Honiton

Stephen Dunning - Mynydd Isa

John Fry - Gendros (Swansea)

Training and Assistantships -The value and importance.

Rev. Ian Densham led the session

Ian drew attention to Timothy ch v12-16

Focusing on Commend and Teach – Truths of the gospel, warning against error, encouragement to holiness, challenged young men in the Ministry to encourage not discourage, reminded of our relationship to Christ.

Ian shared his personal experience that led him to persevere and keep learning.

Qualifications – use the gifts that God has gifted you with.

The importance of focusing on the preaching of the Word and the edifying of the saints, to develop your gifts, growing as a preacher and pastor.

Ian emphasised the great value in training and encouraging men as they learn – this led on to what can EFCC Churches do – encouraged churches to get involved, an appeal made for the larger churches to maybe support/ fund smaller churches – the Training Board will be issuing a new “TEAM” leaflet covering this area.

EFCC can be support in many ways – through the Training Board (Bill Dyer- Training Officer), In-Service training days, which were well attended and beneficial. Encourage attendance at the EFCC Ministers’ Prayer Conference.

Ian shared there are:

Great Needs

Great Opportunities

Great Potential

Mention was made of the men we are supporting:

Song Tsai – church Wycliffe Independent Church, Sheffield

Chungman Shon – church Hayes Town Chapel – unable to be with us due to visiting relatives in S. Korea

Tom Brand – church Binfield Heath Congregational Church

Ian read out reports from these 3 men.

Ian then introduced Deiniol Williams – Deiniol is with Gwersyllt Congregational Church, part time but moving to full time over the summer and also Rob Childs who is with Droylsden Congregational Church. The interview for both, led by Ian, took the form of a question/ answer session before being opened. It was an encouraging and helpful session.

Both men appreciated the support given to them by EFCC.

Ian encouraged prayer for these men.

Closing Devotional Address

Rev. Jackie Brown (The People's Hall Evangelical Church, Bridgnorth)) gave the closing devotional address from Acts 26.

Please note that full copies of the reports given can be found in the 2017 Annual General Meeting Report Book which was sent to all Ministers and Churches within the Fellowship.