

THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL SOCIETY
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING,
6.30 p.m. 21 April 2022
Art Workers' Guild, Queen Square, London WC1

Chaired by Mark Kirby, Chairman of Council.

Apologies: Phil Exton, S. Henderson, John Kinross.

AGM papers: The AGM agenda and a letter about membership rate changes and the switch to direct debit payments for subscriptions had been posted to members in advance, and the draft AGM minutes, draft accounts, and annual report for 2021 had been made available on the Society's website.

1. **Welcome.** The Chairman Mark Kirby welcomed attendees. There were 20 in the room and 37 online (via Zoom), 57 in total. He explained the arrangements for voting and invited those attending online to submit any questions or comments in the Q&A box on their screens.
2. **Minutes of the 2021 AGM.** No comments were received and therefore the minutes were considered to be accepted.
3. **Annual Report.** Becky Payne, Secretary, reported that the Covid pandemic had continued to constrain our normal activities, but the work of the Society had continued. We had to postpone the summer visits programme, and it was necessary for both the AGM and the annual conference (on 2nd October, on the theme of *The Lay Experience of the Medieval Cathedral*) to take place via Zoom. A second Conference, on 21st September, was a celebration of Leeds Minster and was our first attempt at a hybrid live/online event.

The 24th annual Stephen Dykes Bower Memorial Lecture took place on 8th December, and was also a Zoom event. Based on the theme *Three Faiths: Three New Places of Worship*, it comprised architects' presentations on an Anglican church in Tottenham Hale, a synagogue in Finchley and a mosque in Cambridge.

Two editions of *Ecclesiology Today* were published in 2021, along with two editions of *Church Crawler* and four e-newsletters. 46 new members joined the Society.

No comments were received so the circulated report was deemed to be accepted.

4. **Accounts for 2021.** The draft accounts had been published on the Society's website. In his commentary Anthony Gilmour, Treasurer, reported that the Society had roughly

broken even in 2021. The October conference had made a good profit, being an online event without the costs of event hire; without that, we would have made a loss. Our assets had shrunk somewhat, due to the prevailing low interest rates. However, this was an unusual year, and there was no cause for concern; generally, the Society was in a sound financial position. No questions or queries were raised and therefore the accounts were considered as accepted.

5. **Membership subscriptions.** The Chairman reported that a paper setting out and explaining the proposed changes to subscriptions (due to take effect in January 2023) had been posted to members in advance of the meeting, and had been placed on the website. It had been hoped to vote on these changes today, but online voting on membership rates was not explicitly allowed for in the Society's Rules and, following legal advice, it had been decided to postpone voting on this matter until an Extraordinary General Meeting at the conference in October 2022. There were no questions or comments, but an informal opinion poll (show of hands or typing Yes in the chat box) indicated unanimous assent to the changes.
6. **Appreciation of contributions by our President and Vice-Presidents.** The meeting noted our grateful thanks for their support of the Society. The Chairman commended the President's essay review of Allan Doig's *A History of the Church through its Buildings*, published in *Ecclesiology Today*.
7. **Election of honorary officers and members of the Council.** The following nominations had been received: Chairman: Dr Mark Kirby; Deputy Chairman: Andrew Derrick; Editor of *Ecclesiology Today*: Nick Chapple; Editor of *Church Crawler*: Phil Draper; Treasurer: Anthony Gilmour; Secretary: Becky Payne; Reviews Editor: Dr Christopher Webster; Membership Secretary: Graham White. Other members of Council: Dr Paul Barnwell, Trevor Cooper and Paul Velluet. Responses in the room and online confirmed that the meeting was happy for those nominated to be elected *en bloc*.

The Chairman paid tribute to Geoff Brandwood, Council member and stalwart supporter of the Ecclesiological Society, who had died in November 2021. Geoff was a man of extraordinary energy and productivity, always ready to help and volunteer. Amongst other achievements, he had compiled a biographical list of early members of the Society (now on the website), and more recently a new edition of his book on the architect Temple Moore had been published, accompanied by Geoff's own superb photographs. The Chairman was pleased to report that Geoff's biography of G. E. Street, on which he was working at the time of his death, would be taken forward and published.

The Chairman also expressed his gratitude to Christopher Moore, who was stepping down after six years on the Council, during which time he had successfully run the Society's annual conference. He thanked Christopher for his work as a quiet, efficient and genial organiser and host.

The Chairman then introduced Paul Gray, who had volunteered to take on the role of looking after the Society's communications, particularly the website and social media. Paul described his professional background and his longstanding interest in architectural history, and stated that he hoped to draw upon the wealth of the Society's historical legacy in promoting its work today.

The Chairman reported that the critical roles of Visits Secretary and Events Administrator remained unfilled, and would be re-advertised soon.

8. **Honorary Auditor.** Mark Ockelton was thanked and commended for his careful scrutiny of the Society's accounts. It was proposed that he should be re-elected as Hon Auditor (independent examiner). Unanimous positive responses in the room and online confirmed that he was re-elected.
9. **Any other business.** The Chairman drew attention to this year's annual conference on 1st October, organised jointly with the Church Monuments Society. The theme would be *Last Rites and Funeral Monuments*. No other matters were raised.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm. 20 further attendees then joined us online for an excellent illustrated lecture on late Georgian churches by Christopher Webster, whose book on this neglected and unfairly maligned period of church building is due to appear shortly.