

The Society for Ecumenical Studies

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held at Church House, 15 February 2002

Present: Martin Conway (chair), Martin and Ruth Reardon, Alan Rainer, Fidelis Daly, Tom Bruch, Maximos Lavriotes, Mark Woodruff and David Carter.

Apologies: Mary Tanner, Martin Cressey, Genny Tunbridge, Barney Milligan.

The Convenor opened in prayer.

Financial statement

The current balance was £1,248.01. During the year, £36 had been received in income and £153.30 spent on committee expenses, mailing expenses and a sub to the Societas Oecumenica (£60). We had paid £28.53 in bank charges to the new branch to which Sr. Fidelis had moved our account. It was agreed we should challenge this, since the normal practice of banks was not to charge church charities etc. We should seek to put up to £1,000 on deposit.

Future Plans

Martin mentioned our joining Societas Oecumenica and their forthcoming conference in Salisbury (mentioned in last newsletter). He reiterated the appeal to members to suggest sources of grants that might help the Societas lower the anticipated costs for its forthcoming conference in Salisbury.

On our own plans for a big conference in 2003, he mentioned the co-operation of the Hertfordshire Newman Association and the ecumenical Study Centre at St Alban's. He mentioned that we would hold a lunch time meeting for our members on the day, providing tea and coffee for them and seeking suitable questions for the afternoon session. In addition to this, we hoped to have a weekend gathering for our own members. The secretary reported that he had been in touch both with the Focolare Centre at Welwyn and with the London Colney Centre to see if we could book accommodation etc. in either of those places. Both had promised to respond to him.

We would have, in the light of their replies to decide where might be feasible and to plan events for the rest of the weekend.

Mark Woodruff spoke about the hopes of the Couturier Ecumenical Fellowship to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Abbe Paul's death and to revive his influence. We needed to look at ways in which we had already begun to live as one in the sharing of hymnody, the arts etc. He had set up a 'yahoo' news group on the net on this and would be happy to try his hand at a web site for us. He would welcome any suggestions. This offer was very gratefully received.

Newsletter, mailings etc

No significant advances here. We needed someone who could take a fair amount of material and edit it appropriately.

Charitable status

Martin had been looking into this and had consulted a lawyer with experience on this. We would need to prepare a new constitution and have it adopted at an AGM. Paul mentioned there can be problems if the Charity Commissioners take the view that we are only concerned with our own members, rather than wider work. Mark said he would be happy to offer any assistance he could.

We received the news that one of our members, Nick Sagovsky is going to a Chair at Liverpool Hope University.

Elections

The officers and Committee were re-elected with the addition of Mark Woodruff as an additional member of the Committee.

Once again, we thanked Paul Avis most warmly for his hospitality. Paul spoke briefly to us of the new 'journal for the Study of the Christian Church' of which he is a co-editor, and which is being sponsored by the Centre for the Study of the Christian Church (of which he is Director) at Exeter, and the University College at Chichester. He also mentioned the forthcoming ecclesiological symposium on the main Christian traditions, edited by himself and due to be published by SPCK on March 22.