

## The Society for Ecumenical Studies

### MINUTES

#### **Of the Annual General Meeting, Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2010 at the St Thomas More Room, Catholic Church of St Mary, Draycott Terrace, LONDON SW3**

*Members Present:* Dr Martin Conway (Chairman), The Revd Mark Woodruff (Secretary), Hilary Martin (Treasurer), Dr Rosemary Bearcroft, The Revd John Bradley, the Revd James Cassidy, Lady Kate Davson, Father Maximus Lavriotes, Deolinda Eltringham, Michael Eltringham, Clare Murphy, David Murphy, the Revd Dr Donald Norwood, John Ruffle, Julie Skrine

*Apologies:* Beth Allen, Honor Alleyne, Dr Paul Collins, Frank Davis, , the Revd Graham Kent, the Revd Donald Knighton, the Revd Nicholas Latham, the Revd Ian McIntosh, Sister Margaret McMullen, the Revd Richard Orchard, the Revd Gareth Powell, the Revd John O'Toole, Ruth Reardon

*Guests present:* Dr Mary Cotes, The Revd Dr Keith Clements, the Revd David Tatem, the Revd David Gamble

1. The Chairman opened with a prayer.
2. Apologies were noted.
3. The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2009 were approved and signed.
4. The draft Annual Report for 2009 was approved and adopted. Fr Cassidy asked whether the statement of wider public benefit met the requirements of the statute administered by the Charity Commission. The Secretary replied that it met the standard criteria.
5. The Treasurer report expenditure in 2009 amounting to £1130-62 against income of £782.01, an excess of expenditure over income of £348-61. The present balance in the accounts was the same as at the beginning of the year of £648-80, minus the printing and distribution costs of the Newsletter and the refreshment charges for the AGM. These could not be determined until all invoices had been received, but the Treasurer estimated that funds in hand amounted would amount to approximately £450. The Financial Statement and Accounts for 2009 were received and approved.

Fr Woodruff reported that an annual invoice had been received from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland for membership as a Body in Association. None of this funding from BIAs is passed on, as thought, to national instruments in England, Scotland and Wales. Yet the Society has a close engagement with CTE as a BIA (of which Fr Mark serves as chair and thus a member of the Enabling Group). The position is being clarified between CTBI and CTE, following a restructuring over the previous two years and the resulting rearrangement of certain budgets. As a result, for instance, the relationship between the CTBI BIAs and ACTS has changed from official membership to unofficial link. When this is all clearer the committee may decide whether the subscription to CTBI represents value for money and thus whether to renew it for 2010-11. An appropriate level of BIA subscription for CTE has not been discussed or resolved yet in any case.

6. The level of membership subscriptions as in the last year was noted. No increase was approved.
7. Fr Woodruff proposed the dissolution of the Society on the following grounds:
  - a) Unsustainable membership level of 41 subscribers
  - b) Diminishing funds outstripping expenditure requirements
  - c) The non-engagement of denominational desk officers and academics – the original purpose of the Society as a forum
  - d) The unavailability of assistance to the Secretary in devising, arranging and putting on events and studies

Dr Norwood called for another drive to attract new paying members, stressing the value of a forum for ecumenical studies that was available from few other quarters. Many members supported this view. Fr Woodruff reminded members that there had been numerous attempts to engage key players and attract new members, given a number of events of high quality, but that it still proved very difficult to secure people's time, practical contribution to the operation of the Society, funds and the important engagement of key ecumenical figures in an environment of study and reflection. Nevertheless, it was resolved that the Society should proceed for the time being.

8.
  - a) The Revd Dr Elizabeth Welch was elected to the Chair of the Society for 2010-11
  - b) The Revd Mark Woodruff was elected Secretary for 2010-11
  - c) Mrs Hilary Martin was elected Treasurer for 2010-11.
  - d) No members of the committee were elected, but the chairman asked the officers and others interested in planning ahead to meet after the meeting to find a date for a further discussion (October 18, 4-30 pm at the offices of the URC, Tavistock Place).
  - e) Professor Paul Murray was confirmed as an honorary member of the committee in view of his work through the University of Durham on the receptive ecumenism approach.
9. The Secretary paid tribute to Dr Conway's service of seven years in the Society's chair.
10. The Chair warmly welcomed the Revd David Gamble, President of the Methodist Conference 2009-10, and invited him to address the Meeting on *Christian Unity – Will it ever happen?* A copy of the address will be circulated to members subsequently.