

Anglican Church of Luxembourg

Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held on Tuesday 9 April 2013 at 8.00 p.m.

**in the Sœurs Franciscaines, Salle Feschmaart, Avenue Gaston Diderich,
Luxembourg**

1. Opening Prayer

The Chaplain opened the meeting at 8.17 p.m. by welcoming everyone and praising the new, comfortable venue. There were 34 members present. The Chaplain read from Ephesians, Chapter 3, verse 14, and said a short prayer.

2. Notice of Meeting

The Chaplain read the notice convening the meeting. It was acknowledged that due notice of this year's meeting had been given via the website, the Konvikt magazine, the pew sheets and announcements during services in the weeks leading up to the Annual General Meeting.

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Liz Alexander, Elaine Birch, Peter Bond, Francis Carpenter, Hilary Cole, Martin Curwen, Richard Deeley, Caroline Kafka-Markey, Justin Loasby, Anthea MacDonald, Edward Seymour, Geoff Thompson and Carole Vlachavas.

4. Declaration of the closure of the list of candidates

Two nominations had been received for the Church Council (Evelyn Sweerts and Paul Townend) and two for the election of two Churchwardens (Catherine Allen and Chris Vaudrey). The list of proposed candidates for the election of two Church Council members and two Churchwardens was declared closed.

5. Approval of the Minutes of the AGM of 20 March 2012

The Chaplain referred the Meeting to the Minutes drafted with regard to the previous Annual General Meeting held on 20 March 2012. It was acknowledged that these Minutes had been posted on the website of the Anglican Church of Luxembourg and had been available for comment well in advance of the Meeting. The draft minutes were unanimously approved as a true record of the last AGM.

6. Ministry Report

The Chaplain presented his report:

"State of the Congregation"

This has been a challenging year. We seem to be in good health, we are generally positive: we are still being joined by new families, still experiencing good highlights.

Highlights of 2012 – in chronological order

The engagement of a new Music Director.

Confirmation: 11 confirmands, the highest number for many years.

The Queen's Jubilee Service – which was a great occasion in the Cathedral.

The Church Fair – 25th anniversary of holding the Fair in the Vaudreys' garden.

The arrival of our new Assistant Chaplain, Andy Markey, along with Caroline, Joshua and Malachi.

The nurturing of two new vocations to the ordained ministry, in addition to Susan Bolen's progress in this direction.

Challenges

The basic challenge is one of continuing to be "fit for service".

Maintaining rotas is increasingly difficult, so a smaller number of people are doing more duty than they used to do.

Area contact groups – now we have 360 people dispersed throughout the country, and this is much harder to organise than we had expected, more difficult than on previous occasions.

The new Safeguarding policy introduced last year by the Church of England is still awaiting proper implementation in our chaplaincy.

Punctuality - well, this is always a challenge, but the chaplains have made a renewed commitment, especially to the 9.30 a.m. congregation.

We continue to deal with major pastoral issues, sometimes involving complex ethical and occasionally legal questions, and a need to interact with other professional carers and institutions. Some issues take weeks or even months to resolve.

Structural issues

We are facing three big structural issues which will continue for the next few years.

Possible sale of the Vicarage – this is an ongoing - and very time-consuming - process, and my thanks are due especially to Chris Vaudrey and Catherine Allen, Sebastiaan Boelen and Neil Ross. Since we are currently in a good location, the aim is to stay where we are and rebuild on the same site, but it will take about two years to get planning permission and around two years to build. The alternative is to spend lots on repairing the Vicarage.

The national re-thinking of the status of religion in Luxembourg is an issue which will impact us directly – Philippa Seymour, John Overstall, Martin Curwen, and especially Catherine Allen and Chris Vaudrey have been particularly engaged in reflecting on the issues which will affect us, mostly to do with stipend.

The Konvikt Chapel, which is in a bad state of repair, is the subject of an application for demolition submitted by the Roman Catholic Church to the Luxembourg City Council. This is a complex business, but the Catholic Church, which is in the process of rationalising the use of its church buildings, is determined to do something about this site, and that will directly affect us.

Personal Ministry

It has been an even more demanding year for me personally than I had expected. Three things came together just after the period of my operation. Structural issues demanded more of my time than I had anticipated, in addition to the successful recruitment process.

I was asked to give the annual lecture, in French, at Clervaux Abbey, during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which was a great honour.

The Association of the Luxembourg Fund Industry invited me to speak at a conference on Responsible Investing, this was an incredibly interesting event, and I found myself making a podcast for the first time in my career.

Last October I took over as President of the Council of Christian Churches of Luxembourg for one year. This year it has been particularly time consuming because we are revising the statutes, and dealing with some particularly thorny issues.

The different events of the last year have enabled me to develop deeper contact with Jewish and Muslim religious leaders in Luxembourg, and this has been a particularly warm experience.

I have continued to teach in the European School, though with fewer periods: Andy and Caroline Markey are also involved in this.

Looking forward

We are still engaged in the “Being the Church” programme, but in many ways it has been, and it still will be, something of a slog going forward over the next few years.

Area meetings still need to happen, even if we have to rethink how they will happen; somehow we need to develop the fellowship of our congregation, perhaps by developing more local house groups.

An increased giving campaign will be an important part of the programme over the next twelve months. We have been saying this for some time, but now we need to do it; this does, however, involve a considerable amount of careful preparation, and we have discovered that this has become a greater challenge than we had envisaged.

I hope we will continue to contribute to the building up of the wider community in which we are set, building up the network of relationships of confidence and trust that contribute to what has been called “social capital”, which will be an essential development in the growth of our society in Luxembourg. Many individuals within our community are already engaged at a personal level in local organisations and politics, and this is really important.

We have some distinctive things to say as an Anglican church, and as we also share some common themes with our sister churches which we communicate in a distinctive way. My hope is that in the coming year we will become more confident and more skilled in communicating our deep understanding of the Gospel so that the wider community may flourish.

Altogether, my hope for the coming year is that we will be deepening our understanding, strengthening our fellowship, broadening our engagement with the current issues of our society and being more effective in communicating the Gospel of hope.

Thanks to:

Andy Markey, for being crazy enough to come here as Assistant Chaplain, and to his wife, Caroline, for getting involved.

Sarah Parkhouse, for being Treasurer with a smile; she is now hoping to step down.

Michael Chamier, for being the Honorary Auditor.

Simon Norcross, for his work on the Church Fair.

Ralph Birch, for agreeing to coordinate this year's Church Fair.

Evelyn Sweerts and Paul Townend, for taking on new things.

Liz Alexander, for many things that she does within and beyond our church, and especially for having done the flowers and the linen as well as the flower rota for many years.

Susan Bolen and John Overstall, for holding the fort in so many ways over the last year, especially last summer, and for hanging in there on some difficult issues.

Felix Rusere and Sebastiaan Boelen, for their wisdom and positive approach, as they now step down from the Church Council.

Tania Buhr, for her dedication to the work of producing excellent minutes and for being a source of quiet but firm wisdom.

Elaine Birch and Lynn Barclay, for their discretion, efficiency and trustworthiness, as well as for making the Church Office a nice place to work.

Chris Vaudrey and Catherine Allen, for being Churchwardens, which involves a huge commitment in terms of time and effort; they work very well together and it is great to work with them.

All those attending the AGM, thank you for turning up.

And to everyone who is engaged in building up the life of our church. I am grateful for your support, and I am proud to be your Chaplain."

In response to various questions from the floor relating to the property issue, the Chaplain explained that, as regards the value of the Vicarage, the Church was effectively finding out what it was worth by asking for a sale price, and it had also been looking at the cost of the site itself. There had been a considerable amount of consultation with various people on this whole matter, and several different options had been considered. A straight swap of buildings was also a possibility. The Church was determined to get an arrangement that worked well for it. It was currently negotiating with the same developer as the one who was interested in the next-door property, there were a large number of site-related technical issues to be addressed. The project that was currently being worked on was a viable project.

On the matter of tax to pay back on the Vicarage, the Chaplain said that, in order to minimise such tax, the intention was to do an overall deal on the sale and rebuilding work. The Church was not required to pay transfer tax but would have to pay capital gains tax.

Chris Vaudrey explained that a stumbling block to selling the Vicarage had been the need to transfer its ownership from the English-speaking Church Community (Anglican Chaplaincy) *association sans but lucratif* to the Anglican Church of Luxembourg; that had taken a long time because of a lawyer's mistake, but the *asbl* had finally been liquidated in 2012, and the Vicarage was now owned by the Anglican Church of Luxembourg, which had the legal status of a *conventionnée* church of Luxembourg, as granted by a Luxembourg Act of Parliament.

The Chaplain said that it would be up to the Church Council to take the final decision about the sale or otherwise of the Vicarage. A special meeting of the congregation might also be held.

7. Churchwardens' Report

(By Chris Vaudrey and Catherine Allen)

"It has been a fairly eventful twelve months in the Anglican Church of Luxembourg and, as usual, the Churchwardens have been surfing the wave.

The Chaplain succumbed to gallstones and was relieved of them in April, a mere ten days before the arrival of the Bishop for Confirmation Day. These events coincided with the search for an Assistant Chaplain and intense activity on the part of interested property developers, throughout which the Churchwardens assisted and supported the Chaplain.

The Reverend Andy Markey was confirmed as Assistant Chaplain after a complex but interesting recruitment process involving the Chaplain and Churchwardens and overseen by the Bishop's Chaplain and Acting Archdeacon, Meurig Williams.

The Churchwardens were signatories with others to the Act of Liquidation of the ESCC *asbl* in June. There was general rejoicing as the intricacies of dissolution had caused the winding up to drag on for many years, especially as, in the end, the costs were minimal.

A process investigating the financing of *Cultes* was initiated by the Luxembourg government, and several meetings of varying levels of interest have been attended by the Chaplain, Churchwardens and others. The work of the Anglican Church in Luxembourg was admirably delineated by the Chaplain.

Property meetings have continued to take place over the entire year, and there is the possibility that there may soon be concrete proposals to present to the Congregation.

The Churchwardens have frequent meetings with the Chaplains, and are always happy to hear of issues which members of the congregation feel should be discussed."

8. Treasurer's Report

(by Sarah Parkhouse)

"Legal structure

Since January 1, 2006, the operating body of the Anglican Chaplaincy in Luxembourg has been "The Anglican Church of Luxembourg" and the presented accounts represent all of the Chaplaincy's activity. The accounts of the ESCC Asbl are effectively consolidated into the Anglican Church of Luxembourg. On June 7, 21012, the ESSC was put into liquidation and the net assets were transferred to the Anglican Church of Luxembourg.

Results of the Year

Income and Expenditure Account.

Giving by Standing Orders and Sunday by Sunday has remained stable this year. The Church Fair proceeds were higher than in the prior year.

The expenses have increased, primarily due to the additional costs incurred with the recruitment of the Assistant Chaplain. The main costs involved are rental costs and the costs of recruitment (interviews, travel, removal expenses). An amount of EUR 10,000 was released from the recruitment and relocation fund towards these costs. It is proposed that additional provision should be made next year against these potential future costs.

The salary costs are also higher as we have had a full year with two employees.

Balance Sheet Totals

The balance sheet totals have decreased as we had a net operating loss of EUR 4,847 for the year. The general Fund amounts to EUR 534,358 and the specific non-distributable funds amount to EUR 62,764.

Budget for 2013

A budget has been prepared for 2013. This has been based on the actual amounts for 2012 and amended to include the costs of accommodation for the Assistant Chaplain. It should be noted that it does not include any amounts for the maintenance of the Vicarage, as these remain uncertain. Budgeted costs have increased by 9.2% with no real increase in income. The increase in costs is predominantly due to the increase in accommodation costs. This would give rise to higher net losses at the end of the year.

Non-Distributable Funds

At the beginning of the financial year the Chaplaincy had three Funds within the accounts:

The Charity Fund

The policy is that the greater of 10% of the church's annual income or the net income of the Church Fair goes to charity. Discretionary charitable payments are made in individual cases of need.

The Capital Development Fund (formerly the Vicarage Fund)

This fund is dedicated to capital investment projects on property owned by the Chaplaincy or leased to the Chaplaincy on a long term basis.

The Recruitment and Relocation Fund

This fund was created to recognise the Chaplaincy's intermittent needs for substantial sums to pay for priests' expenses at the start and end of their time in Luxembourg, and to encourage the planning for these events with a regular annual payment.

Audit recommendations

The auditor and I have discussed several internal control weaknesses and these will be addressed.

The main point relates to the approval of various types of expenditure, as there is currently no formal process. The Auditor has suggested that a blanket annual authorisation be created which would give maximum limits defined by the Finance Committee for all repetitive expenditure. This will be introduced as soon as possible.

If anyone should have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask either at the meeting or by follow up."

The Treasurer added that working together with the new auditor, Michael Chamier, had been a good experience. For her part, she hoped to stand down in the course of the year.

In response to Stuart Alexander's query about the amount shown in the accounts for music, the Treasurer explained that it included licences and the payments to the Music Director.

9. Approval of 2012 accounts

Stuart Alexander proposed and David Young seconded the approval of the 2012 accounts and the motion was carried.

10. Adoption of Reports on Chaplaincy activities

Assistant Chaplain's Report (on file)
Written by the Rev'd Andy Markey.

Archdeaconry Synod Report (on file)
Written by John Overstall.

Sunday School Report (on file)
Written by Joanne Smith.

Crèche Report (on file)
Written by Eyi' Geers.

Child Protection Report (on file)
Written by Hilary Cole.

Music Director's Report (on file)
Written by Dana Luccock.

First Sunday Music Group Report (on file)
Written by Jon Grocock.

Konvikt Magazine Report (on file)
Written by Rani Roloff.

Young Adults' Group Report (on file)
Written by Paul Townend.

Charities Committee Report (on file)
Written by Martin Curwen.

Wellsprings Report (on file)
Written by Susan Bolen.

Mothers' Prayers Group Report (on file)
Written by Rani Roloff.

Environmental Footprint Group Report (on file)
Written by Philippa Seymour.

Quiet Day Report (on file)
Written by Susan Bolen.

Webmaster's Report www.anglican.lu (on file)
Written by Chris Vaudrey.

Church Fair Report (on file)
Written by Simon Norcross.

Ordinand's Report (on file)
Written by Susan Bolen.

The Assistant Chaplain, Andy Markey, also gave an oral report on the Junior Church. He said that Junior Church was thriving, with lots of children attending. The name had been changed from Sunday School to Junior Church to reflect the idea that what was offered was church for children, not school of any kind. The aim was not to spoon-feed the children, but to develop their thinking about faith and start their questioning. The plan was to start using new teaching material once the current subscription expired soon. The children had lots to contribute. Susan Rollason liked the fact that the children were now reporting back at the end of each service on what they had been doing in Junior Church, and Susan Bolen wanted to hear the children sing more often in church. Stuart Alexander regretted that the children had not been present in church on Easter Sunday. The Chaplain added that it was difficult to ensure that children did in fact come when an event had been planned.

The Chaplain urged the congregation to read these very interesting reports, which were available on the website. He invited any questions from the floor about what had been reported. The adoption of the Reports was proposed and accepted.

11. Election of Churchwardens, members of the Chaplaincy Council and representatives

The Chaplain explained that the Churchwardens needed to be elected every year. Chris Vaudrey (proposed by Paul Townend and seconded by Katarina Townend) and Catherine Allen (proposed by Cheryl Fisher and seconded by Simon Norcross) were elected by acclaim to continue as Churchwardens.

Two nominations for the Chaplaincy Council had been received, namely Evelyn Sweerts, proposed by Caroline Kafka-Markey and seconded by Tim Hicks, and Paul Townend, proposed by Chris Vaudrey and seconded by Cheryl Fisher. Sebastiaan Boelen and Felix Rusere were stepping down at the end of their 3 years. Both Evelyn Sweerts and Paul Townend were duly elected by acclaim to the Church Council for a three-year period.

Having been duly elected the previous year for 3 years, John Overstall and Moira Hogg were confirmed to continue as Archdeaconry Representative and Assistant Archdeaconry Representative respectively.

12. Appointment of the Honorary Auditor

The Chaplain said that Michael Chamier was willing to continue in his role as Honorary Auditor for the next year.

Michael Chamier thanked the Church for appointing him and thanked the Treasurer, Sarah Parkhouse, for her patience and understanding. The audit certificate for the preceding year had been signed and he had only a very few management comments to make.

13. Any Other Business

Bryan Rose raised a point concerning the vote on women bishops taken at the November 2012 meeting of the General Synod of the Church of England and the approach adopted by the lay representatives of the Diocese of Europe. He said that the motion had not achieved the two-thirds majority needed to approve the appointment of women bishops. Neither of the lay representatives of the Diocese of Europe had voted in favour of the motion, as one had voted against and one had not voted at all. He asked to what extent these representatives had consulted the people they represented and whether we as a parish had been consulted. The Chaplain said we had not been consulted directly; this was an issue that was controversial in many of the Diocese's congregations. Bryan Rose, regretting that these two women had apparently not made any attempt to ascertain the views of those whom they represented or to justify the way they had voted, was keen to ensure that, prior to the forthcoming scheduled resignation of one of these representatives, the views of the person replacing her could be established in advance. He proposed the following motion: "the Annual General Meeting of the Anglican Church of Luxembourg calls on the representatives of the Diocese of Europe to consult with the parishes of the Diocese prior to any vote on the appointment of new representatives". The motion was seconded by Neil Ross and passed unanimously.

14. Closure of the Anglican Church of Luxembourg AGM Meeting

The Chaplain, having thanked those present for their participation, questions and perseverance, closed the meeting at 10.25 p.m. The hymn "Now Thank We All Our God" was sung, followed by the Grace.