

Anglican Church of Luxembourg
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held on Tuesday 29 April 2014 at 8.00 p.m.
in the Sœurs Franciscaines, Salle Feschmaart, Avenue Gaston Diderich,
Luxembourg

1. Opening Prayer

The Chaplain opened the meeting at 8.15 p.m. by welcoming everyone. There were 28 members present. The Chaplain read from Isaiah, Chapter 40, starting at verse 27, 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 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 Elaine Birch, Carol and Ralph Birch, Sebastiaan Boelen, Mary and Peter Bond, Cheryl Fisher, Deborah Chamier, Margo Robertson, Sue Rollason, Felix and Maina Rusere, Edward Seymour, Barbara and Campbell Thomson, Carole Vlachavas, David and Sadie Young.

4. Declaration of the closure of the list of candidates

One nomination had been received for the Church Council (Simon Norcross) and two for the election of two Churchwardens (Catherine Allen and Chris Vaudrey). The list of proposed candidates for the election of a Church Council member and two Churchwardens was declared closed. The Chaplain said that a by-election would be held after the 11 am service in three weeks' time to elect a second person as a member of the Church Council.

5. Approval of the Minutes of the AGM of 9 April 2013

The Chaplain referred the Meeting to the Minutes drafted with regard to the previous Annual General Meeting held on 9 April 2013. 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. Anthea MacDonald commented, with regard to teaching at the European School (page 3 of the minutes), that she taught religion to the first and second year primary-school children.

6. Ministry Report

The Chaplain presented his report:

"This has been a full and busy year, but overall a positive one, with new people joining our church. The highlight for me was Easter Sunday, which was very well attended.

Earlier this year, in February, we held a congregational meeting on "Responding positively to an uncertain future" at which we discussed some of the challenges facing our church. And things are still very uncertain, on three counts. First of all, politically, as the new Luxembourg coalition Government is committed to changing the whole relationship between the State and the Church, and in particular the teaching of religion in schools. We are on the periphery of that discussion, which is mainly between the

Roman Catholic church and the Government. The Prime Minister, Xavier Bettel, has said he does not want to be precipitative; the Government, which has to make big spending cuts, is currently reviewing the issue of funding for religious groups in Luxembourg. This would affect our church too. However, the Luxembourg Catholic Church has said it would bear the brunt of any cuts.

A second uncertainty is the Vicarage; we are currently negotiating to sell it, hopefully soon, and will be looking for office space to rent as of next year. It is very important that we have a meeting room for the congregation. Things are moving forward fast.

Thirdly, there is the Konvikt Centre. On this point, we have no more details, but we know that the RC Church wants to demolish it as soon as possible and redevelop the site. The RC Church is facing big challenges, one of which is how to manage all their Luxembourg City buildings. Luxembourg as a whole is facing big challenges, in particular the taxation situation and banking secrecy – but there are many others.

The important thing is that we are responding as positively as we can. All this is challenging for us. Two aspects of this are compliance and complexity. We have to do things transparently, we have to exercise good governance in all we do, as every aspect of our life as a church is under scrutiny and we have to comply with very complex rules – take, for instance, the safeguarding procedure.

But we have wisdom to offer: there are aspects of our theological and philosophical tradition that are in demand. The banking sector, for example, wants to hear about ethical banking. Together with Simon Norcross, I attended a meeting, with other churches, with the Luxembourg Prime Minister, where the presentation we gave of our church was well received. We as Anglicans have something to offer: we have a long experience in running a coalition! We pointed out at that meeting that we are here to resource the wider community.

We have to work together, but this is not always easy. For example, the key saga: on Easter Sunday the hotel gave out the wrong set of keys for the sacristy, lots of people were then involved in trying to locate the right keys. Eventually Lynn Barclay insisted with the hotel and the keys were finally found. But all that took up lots of time and energy.

There is also lots of pastoral work going on. The Assistant Chaplain is now doing an increasing amount. I myself have found this work particularly challenging recently, as it has involved dealing with a couple of difficult deaths, one of whom was a personal friend of mine. But the people in the congregation are very supportive. I feel supported by this congregation. I am inspired by Steve Jobs and, like him, I regard my role as being to keep the ship, which is always in danger of sinking, pointing in the right direction! We have to be a community of love and care, we have to maintain “bonds of affection” with each other.

There are a number of people I would like to thank: Andy Markey, for accompanying me quietly and spreading warmth and affection; I would like to congratulate Phil Harvey who has just been selected for training as an ordinand; Rani Roloff and Neil Ross, who are stepping down from the Church Council after three years’ service, and Rani for her work as editor of the “Konvikt” magazine for over seven years; Dennis Robertson, for taking on the role of helping with the finances and the Vicarage sale, for rallying the troops and giving us the benefit of his advice; Tania Buhr, for writing the minutes of what are sometimes long and complex Church Council meetings; indeed, I am grateful to the whole of the Church Council; Elaine Birch and Lynn Barclay, for putting up with the pressures of life in the Church Office – Elaine is very patient and discreet and has been very valuable to us for 10 years now; Lynn is also very discreet and at times impatient, which is good, and together they make a good team; the Churchwardens, Catherine Allen and Chris Vaudrey, who now have one more year to go of the six years they can serve as churchwardens – despite what they say in their report, they have done an enormous amount this year, they have been very supportive of myself and the Assistant Chaplain, they are wise, discreet and loyal; John Overstall and Moira Hogg, for continuing to be our

Archdeaconry Synod representatives, for their endeavours to build up the life of the Church Council and for their catering efforts; Susan Bolen, for her presence and for the stuff she does; and, indeed, I would like to thank everyone, for showing up, and for making the Gospel spread.

It has been a good year to be your Chaplain.”

The Chaplain then responded to a number of questions from the floor. When Stuart Alexander pointed out that neither the Chaplain nor the Assistant Chaplain were good at starting the services on time, the Chaplain said that the 11 am service usually began pretty much on time, not so much the 9.30 am one, and the 6.30 pm service started on time. If there was a problem, people should talk to him about it.

With regard to questions from Clive Munn and Simon Norcross about the future of the Vicarage, the Chaplain explained that professional advice had been sought and that instead of redeveloping the Vicarage site, we were now looking into proceeding in a different way – it would be easier to sell the Vicarage, vacate the site and move up the road to other premises. We now had a clear strategy for moving forward on this. Within the price being offered for the sale of the Vicarage we would be able to get the accommodation we needed, i.e. we could rent, and eventually buy, office space/meeting room and a clergy flat nearby, possibly in the rue de Muhlenbach. The Chaplain would like to find a three-bedroomed flat, to allow for guest accommodation and a study. The clergy flat would not need to be any bigger than that, as it was unlikely that his successor would be bringing a family with them to Luxembourg, because of language and schooling problems. The new Diocesan policy meant that the Chaplain’s successor would have only a five-year term of office.

In response to a question from Simon Norcross about the strategy/amounts of money involved and whether this would be communicated to the congregation, the Chaplain said that the details would not be disclosed during the negotiations. This was a new strategy agreed by the Church Council after robust and lengthy discussions. If there was a shortfall between the sale price and the cost of buying something else, we might need to do some fundraising.

Phil Harvey asked whether there was a strategy for attracting new people to the church. The Chaplain responded by saying that there was no strategy as such; he thought it was more important to build up our capacity to deal with a new influx, e.g. by developing our youth work, which we were in the process of doing. There were many dedicated people keeping the show on the road, but, despite some people at the February meeting saying ‘give us a project, we have energy’, it was nevertheless still a constant challenge to find the people we needed who were willing and actually had the time to do things.

Clive Munn asked whether there was a back-up plan in the event of the Konvikt Chapel being demolished. The Chaplain explained that the RC Church would find it difficult to just chuck us out without anywhere else to go, and Archbishop Hollerich and the Vicar-General had said they would support us. The church in Hollerich might be a good place, but it was an old building with structural problems. Whilst some of the churches in the Luxembourg city area were not well attended and therefore might, hypothetically, become available for use by us, they did not have good facilities. There were other plans for the future use of the Carmel convent, which did not in any case belong to the Diocese. Dennis Robertson returned to the discussion at the “Responding positively” meeting. Lots of good ideas had been aired on that occasion, but there had not been much feedback to the groups and that was demotivating. Credibility would be lost if no further action were taken. Perhaps more people should be approached personally and asked to do things. He asked what the congregation needed to do to make the Chaplain drive the church forward. The Chaplain said he personally was working at well over his capacity. He said that it was his fault that the “Konvikt” magazine had not so far been issued this year, but said it would go out before the Church Fair. He personally had been heavily involved in the Vicarage issue and the “convention” issue. Moving forward was not a

linear progression. He needed to find ways of doing things differently, perhaps by asking other groups of people to get involved.

Clive Munn asked whether there was someone on the Church Council responsible for public relations – for example, the congregation should have been told how much last year's Church Fair made. Dennis Robertson also thought that specific responsibilities for various tasks, i.e. PR, finance, etc. should be allocated to Council members. The Chaplain said that was not the way forward. Various responsibilities were taken on by people not on the Council (the Charities Committee, for example). The Council members were there to represent the congregation, with the Chaplain giving direction and laying down concepts. Implementation was not his strong point. Management was by the churchwardens. It was important to find people with the time and energy to carry things through. Whilst many people in our congregation had gifts to offer, some of them were coming and going and were only available for a limited time, whilst there were core issues that needed stability. Philippa Seymour and Catherine Allen pointed out that the Council's communications team had been discussing PR and that information was indeed available in the "Konvikt" magazine and on the website.

7. Churchwardens' Report (by Chris Vaudrey and Catherine Allen)

"Having reviewed the Council Minutes of the past year the Churchwardens concluded that they had actually done little for the last 12 months. Either that or their activities were so confidential as to be necessarily unmentionable.

The fact is, election of a new government has produced a variety of novel situations and uncertainties. Decisions that once seemed clear-cut have become opaque. The Churchwardens' main task has been to support the Chaplains as we all try to discover what will happen next. Will we still have a *Convention*? Will we lose the Konvikt Chapel? Will we have to pay a significant tax bill if we sell the Vicarage? Will we be able to afford a new Vicarage as well as new offices?

We meet frequently to discuss these matters as well as other, more pastoral, issues. It is certainly very interesting, but progress is frustratingly slow."

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.

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 also stable.

The expenses have increased significantly during the year. There are two main reasons for this:

1. The increase in salaries due to the fact that from July 1, 2013, Dana Luccock became an employee of the Church.
2. Due to the first full year of accommodation costs for the Assistant Chaplain. Costs such as heating were not well budgeted.

An amount of EUR 2,500 has been provided in relation to recruitment and relocation costs. These costs will be significant, as not only do we have to pay the incoming costs of an Assistant Chaplain but also Andy Markey's costs on departure. It is proposed that further provision be made next year. A second provision of EUR 20,000 has been made in anticipation of repairs and maintenance of the Vicarage. It has been a number of years since any work has been undertaken and it would be prudent to anticipate that work will be undertaken this year.

Balance Sheet Totals

The balance sheet totals have decreased as we had a net operating loss of EUR 48,848 for the year. The general Fund amounts to EUR 485,510 and the specific non-distributable funds amount to EUR 87,331. We have material debtors at year end due to the granting of personal loans to the Chaplain and Assistant Chaplain.

Budget for 2014

The budget was prepared with all the information available as at March 31, 2014 and does not reflect any impact arising from the changes in the status of the Vicarage.

A budget has been prepared for 2014. This has been based on the actual amounts for 2013 and amended to include the costs of a full year's employment for Dana Luccock. This shows stable income (based upon actual for 2013 and actual for the first three months of this year) but an increase in costs of 6.4%.

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. It also includes provisions made for the repair of the Vicarage.

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 the current process could be improved upon. The Auditor has suggested that consideration should be given to implementing a simple system whereby annual expenditure authorisations are confirmed through the adoption by the AGM of the detailed Budget for 2014. This process should authorise the Treasurer to pay all amounts up to the Budget limit for each type of expenditure. If there is expenditure above these approved Budget amounts,

specific authorisation should be sought from the Chaplain and/or approved by the Church Council.

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

In response to Stuart Alexander’s query about how the church quota was worked out, the Treasurer explained that the Diocese calculated it on the basis of the electoral roll and the figures we provided for our income; it was invoiced every year in January.

In response to Clive Munn’s question about possible capital gains tax payable on the value of the Vicarage sale, Dennis Robertson said the Church was seeking an exemption from this tax.

9. Approval of 2013 accounts

Stuart Alexander proposed that the 2013 accounts be approved and the motion was carried.

The Chaplain thanked Sarah Parkhouse for all her work as Treasurer since 2009 and said that, as she had some time ago expressed her wish to step down, he thought someone had at last been found to replace her.

10. Adoption of Reports on Chaplaincy activities

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

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

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

Church Fair Report (on file)
Written by Ralph Birch.

Crèche Report (on file)
Written by Jane-Anne Frankel.

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

First Sunday Group Report (on file)
Written by Jon Grocock & Jim Kent.

Junior Church Report (on file)
Written by Joanne Smith.

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

Lions & Lambs Report (on file)
Written by Evelyn Sweerts.

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

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

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

Website Report www.anglican.lu (on file)
Written by Chris Vaudrey.

Wellsprings Report (on file)
Written by Susan Bolen.

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

Youth Group Report (on file)
Written by Andy Markey, Caroline Kafka-Markey and Evelyn Sweeters.

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 Archdeacons Synod representatives

The Chaplain explained that the Churchwardens needed to be elected every year. Christopher Vaudrey (proposed by Sarah Parkhouse and seconded by Philippa Seymour) and Catherine Allen (proposed by Sarah Parkhouse and seconded by Philippa Seymour) were elected by acclaim to continue as Churchwardens.

One nomination for the Church Council had been received, namely Simon Norcross, proposed by Rani Roloff and seconded by Clive Munn. Rani Roloff and Neil Ross were stepping down at the end of their three years. Simon Norcross was duly elected by acclaim to the Church Council for a three-year period. A further new member of the Council would be looked for within the next three weeks.

John Overstall and Moira Hogg were elected for a three-year period as Archdeaconry Representative and Assistant Archdeaconry Representative respectively.

12. Appointment of the Honorary Auditor

On a proposal from the Chaplain, seconded by Dennis Robertson, Michael Chamier was re-appointed as Honorary Auditor for the next year.

Michael Chamier thanked the Church for re-appointing him and thanked the Treasurer, Sarah Parkhouse. He said everything was in order with the 2013 accounts and read out the audit certificate for the preceding year. He had a few proposals for internal control improvements which he had submitted to the Chaplain in writing for future discussion by the Finance Committee.

13. Any Other Business

None.

14. Closure of the Anglican Church of Luxembourg AGM Meeting

The Chaplain, having thanked those present for their participation, closed the meeting at 9.55 p.m. The hymn “Now Thank We All Our God” was sung, followed by the Grace.