

**Anglican Church of Luxembourg**  
**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**  
**held on Wednesday 20 April 2016 at 8.00 p.m.**  
**in the Centre Jean XXIII, 52 rue Jules Wilhelm, L-2728 Luxembourg**

**1. Opening Prayer**

The Chaplain opened the meeting at 8.05 p.m. by welcoming everyone. There were 28 members present. He read from Ephesians, Chapter 3, starting at 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 magazine, the website, the pew sheets, congregational e-mails 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 Carol Birch, Elaine Birch, Marilyn Clark, Martin Curwen, Ovidiu Dragan, Jane-Anne Frankel, Philip Harvey, Victoria Hodgson, Bryan Rose, Evelyn and Michiel Sweerts, Barbara Thomson, Geoff and Ruth Thompson, Fiona Turner, Carole Vlachavas, David and Sadie Young.

**4. Declaration of the closure of the list of candidates**

Two nominations had been received for the Church Council and two for the election of two Churchwardens. The list of proposed candidates for the election of Church Council members and two Churchwardens was declared closed.

**5. Approval of the Minutes of the AGM of 22 April 2015**

The Chaplain referred the Meeting to the Minutes drafted with regard to the previous Annual General Meeting held on 22 April 2015. 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:

**"2015-2016 was a particularly challenging year"**

The last 12 months have been particularly challenging for our church, but we seem to have come through them fairly well, in ways which we had prepared for, but could not have predicted.

**Highlights of 2015-2016 – in chronological order**

Confirmation service

Decision to purchase two properties

Chaplaincy Council overnight meeting

Safeguarding conference

Recruitment of a new Music Director

Moving out of the Vicarage: the Chaplain to a new flat in the rue de Mühlenbach, the Office to the Centre Jean XXIII

## **Challenges**

The basic challenge has been to continue the provision of pastoral care, celebration of our worship and the mission of our church, in the midst of considerable change and uncertainty. Overall, we have managed to do this, but it has been hard work, and I would like to thank our staff team, Elaine, Lynn and Andy for contributing to making this possible, even though Elaine and Andy were off work for extended periods during this time.

## **Pastoral care**

Our commitment to being open and inclusive has practical implications for our pastoral work. We offer pastoral support to anyone within our community who asks for it, without asking them what they believe, or whether they are willing to join our church. This, I'm told by some other church leaders, is quite distinctive. One outcome of this is that Andy and I get to hear some extremely upsetting stories, some of which require specialised intervention: I have a list of useful lawyers and psychologists who I send people to regularly. Pressure of time means that I don't normally do straightforward friendship in my pastoral ministry, but over the last year it has been really good to hear about the different ways in which individuals and groups within our church have offered long-term support to people in need, through befriending, inviting people to their social events, or making hospital visits. It's about being salt and light to people, and enabling them to see life in a different way. It isn't about 'converting people' so much as offering them a sense of being known and acknowledged, especially at times of transition, when our sense of ourselves as human beings can be very fragile. This is something our church does well, I think, but I'm sure that some people still fall through our pastoral net.

## **Worship**

Doing pastoral care in this way is personally demanding. Worship is not only a form of mission in itself, but it also resources us so that we can do the business of being salt and light. So I'm very grateful to everybody who works to prepare our worship in so many different ways. But I'm especially grateful to the group of musicians who came together at the beginning of last year to constitute a recruitment team for a new Music Director. It was a very diverse group which included choir members, organists, members of the First Sunday Group as well as professional musicians who are members of our church, and they worked really well together to create a job description, and finally to select, from three very able candidates, our new Music Director, Ovidiu Dragan.

Music is the most noticeable aspect of our worship, but our worship experience is prepared and sustained by a very large group of people whose work is largely unseen. This year I have been aware of different teams coming together to work on how they do what they do and, in doing so, building new relationships, as well as some new ways of doing things, which will, I hope, result in a deeper fellowship and a deeper prayer life.

## **Mission**

It is very heartening that new people join our church all the time. But the mission of our church is not primarily to recruit people. Rather it is to witness to God's grace and purpose in the world in which we are set. There are many different ways of doing this, and our Anglican tradition of being open, inclusive and centred is distinctive and, I think, increasingly important in a time of increased social anxiety and conflict. We are open in that we are public and we try to be as transparent as possible about what we do, we are inclusive in that we don't make any conditions of entry into our church community, people come as they are, and we are centred in that our life together is focused on core beliefs, values and attitudes which the most committed of us hold firmly, and express as clearly as possible, without erecting any sort of boundary or dividing line between those

who are strongly committed and those who are just looking. This combination of having both a clear understanding at the centre and a freedom at the edge to drift in, and out, try out some new ideas, is both different to the way most other religious groups are organised, and, I think, increasingly important. As social pressures grow, and questions of religious identity and personal freedom become more acute in our society, I think our way of doing church offers an important resource to our community. I'm encouraged in that view by the feedback I receive from our wider community, and I'm increasingly committed to this understanding of the way of the Gospel after the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels, and their repercussions on our society in Luxembourg. Living out Jesus's commandments to love our neighbours, and also to love our enemies, has never been something that the church has done well, but it is becoming a much more urgent and more complex task year by year. I hope in the next few months to offer some training about some of the social questions which are becoming more pressing, and to which we need to develop an informed response.

This is not just an airy theological idea, it has some practical implications. For instance, we send the Lumen magazine to everyone who signs up to be on our Contact Register. 14 years ago we distributed it only to people who were signed up members of our Electoral Roll and paid a subscription. Our Communications Committee works very hard to make sure that we are in touch with our membership and the wider community as well as we can be. So at this point I would like to express a very special word of gratitude to John Dimond, our webmaster. He not only works faithfully to update our website on a regular basis at least once a week, but he brings an astonishing technical expertise to this task, and a great sense of dry humour. Our way of doing mission is not something that just happens, it requires an openness on our part, as well as an efficient administration to ensure that our time and resources are used efficiently. It also requires that we are present and active within the wider society, not only turning up to 'churchy' things, and this takes time and energy too.

I do my best personally to do this, and have continued to do this throughout this year. What is really heartening is to discover that other members of our church also do this, not wearing an Anglican badge, or carrying a burden for the church, but just being themselves, giving their time and energy to being salt and light in some way within our society.

But the biggest way we have been present in this community over many years is through the Church Fair. So I know that the decision not to hold it this year will come as a surprise to many people. The Church Council made this decision with regret. We want to see something happen next year, it is important for us all to have a good time and to make contact with the wider community. Raising money is an offshoot of that activity. But the Fair is an enormous task and we have to satisfy many requirements as regards technical matters, insurance, etc.

**Thanks to:**

- Paul Townend and Evelyn Sweerts, stepping down from the Church Council;
- Lucyna Muscat, for organising the flower rota and, more importantly, continuing to develop the sense of fellowship within that group;
- Phil Harvey, Evelyn Sweerts and John Overstall, for taking services;
- Tania Buhr, for her dedicated work which is invisible to most of the congregation and brings her no moments of personal glory, but which is absolutely essential to the working of the Church Council;

- Chris Vaudrey, for taking on the role of Treasurer at short notice when Felix Rusere became unable to continue in that role because of new work and family commitments;
  - Simon Norcross and Philippa Seymour, our Churchwardens; much of their work is invisible and they provide great support and advice to me; apart from that, they have also been involved in the negotiations for the '*Convention*';
  - Andy Markey, for his friendly presence and perseverance, for being a living illustration of the diversity of ways of being a follower of Jesus in today's world, and for his work with young people in our congregation and with Junior Church leaders, which has been very much appreciated;
  - Elaine Birch and Lynn Barclay, for all their efficiency and hard work in the Church Office, and for settling in so well in the new office premises,
- and to every one of you for being engaged in building up the life of our church. I'm grateful for your support, and I'm proud to be your Chaplain."

The Chaplain then responded to questions from the floor.

Stuart Alexander asked about the situation regarding the **Konvikt chapel**. The Chaplain said that the situation was still uncertain, as the Catholic Church's plan to redevelop the whole Konvikt site was on ice, and much depended on the enactment of the new '*Convention*' legislation. The former Vicar-General had assured the Chaplain that another church would be found for us. In response to Justin Loasby's enquiry about the Church's **property purchases**, the Chaplain explained that the Church had bought a flat for the Chaplain's use in the rue de Mühlenbach and had signed a '*compromis de vente*' for another nearby flat, under construction, to serve as a church office. It was hoped that the sale of the Vicarage would cover the costs of these two purchases. The Ville de Luxembourg had only very recently granted permission for the Vicarage site to be developed, the developers now had to arrange their financing, which would take time; this was why the '*acte définitif*' for the sale of the Vicarage had yet to be signed. The Church would have to take out another loan if the sale of the Vicarage was not finalised before the Church had to sign the '*acte définitif*' for the office flat.

In response to questions about the cancellation of the 2016 **Church Fair**, the Chaplain explained that the previous Fair organiser had not wished to act as coordinator this year, and others who had been approached had not been available or willing. A coordinator needed to have been in place by Easter to ensure the smooth running of the Fair. This had not been possible, so the decision to cancel had been taken. It was suggested that an event manager might be employed in future to run the Fair. The Chaplain agreed that much voluntary work was now being professionalised; the Church was obliged to meet many standards when organising an event and this all took time, money and skill. Although there had been much disappointment about the cancellation, the congregational meeting to be held in May would offer an opportunity to discuss how the tradition of the Church Fair could be continued in some way.

On the subject of **safeguarding**, the Chaplain thanked Moira Hogg for taking on the role of Safeguarding Officer; a meeting had been held last October about the high safeguarding requirements we were obliged to meet, and work on this was ongoing.

The Chaplain said that the **profile of our church** was changing in that it was becoming less British, young families were joining as well as some single adults; there was a turnover in the congregation, it was fine if people came and went, but we still needed to recruit a body of people to run things.

On the subject of **church giving**, which Campbell Thomson observed was at the same level as in 2005, the Chaplain said that the Church was not as concerned about this as it should be; what had been a substantial cushion of finance was now wafer thin, and State funding would be arranged differently once he retired.

As this was the **Assistant Chaplain's** last AGM, he was invited to speak. Andy Markey said that the period of nearly four years he had been in his post had been an interesting time and an enjoyable experience. It had been a stage in his journey through life and his ministry. He thanked everyone for their help and support and hoped that he had been able to offer wisdom and insight and open people's eyes to new possibilities. Philippa Seymour thanked Andy Markey in particular for his work with Junior Church, pointing out that he would be leaving us with a legacy of three years of prepared Junior Church work.

## **7. Churchwardens' Report** (by Simon Norcross and Philippa Seymour)

"The year since the last AGM has seen no major upheavals requiring urgent intervention by the churchwardens, but even in this 'normal' year we have supported the Chaplains while they dealt with big or difficult issues such as selling the old vicarage, buying two flats, moving the church office and the proposed change of service times. We also work together with the Treasurer where we can in his task of ensuring that everything is properly recorded and audited. We have further dealt with some much smaller issues – such as collection bags, leaflet rack, general tidiness of the chapel.

We notice that a large part of the job is asking people to do things, so we would like to say thank you to all the people who have responded positively to such requests. This church functions as well as it does because of the efforts of a surprising number of people – not just the Church Council, but also all the people on the rotas and many who are not even on rotas but just do stuff. Where possible we try to notice what needs doing and match that with members of the congregation who have the skills and time to do it. Again, our thanks go to all who have been generous with their time and skills and will continue to do so.

Finally we try to help ensure the smooth flow of the worship services, notably by checking as far as possible that the people shown on the rotas as having responsibilities on any given Sunday are indeed present."

## **8. Treasurer's Report** (by Chris Vaudrey)

(The Anglican Church of Luxembourg's financial statements for 2015 were circulated, together with one appendix, showing the beneficiary charities.)

The Treasurer, Chris Vaudrey, pointed out that the balance sheet showed a doubling in the size of the assets; this was because the church now owned two properties, the Chaplain's flat and the Vicarage. The income and expenditure account showed nothing exceptional. He thanked all those who donated to the church as otherwise it would not be possible to run the church properly. Employment costs for 2015 had been lower, as Dana Luccock had no longer been on the payroll for part of the year. The new Music Director, Ovidiu Dragan, had started work in October 2015 and was being paid on the basis of a service contract rather than an employment contract, so the costs relating to his work were shown under 'Music'. Other expenses in 2015 were in line with those in 2014 except for depreciation, which was lower because some furniture and fittings were fully depreciated. The net loss before provisions was €25 358. Once the Vicarage was sold, the situation would be more rosy. The church did not yet know how much it would receive for the Vicarage, as the sale price was based on a calculation of the area of the site on which the developers could build, but it would be between €1.1 million and €1.50 million. The new office flat, presently under construction, would have to be paid for in instalments over the next 18 months.

The Treasurer then responded to questions from the floor.

As regards the replacement of, and relocation costs for, the Assistant Chaplain, provision had been made for these costs; under the present '*Convention*', the Church was not allowed to recruit anyone new on the same basis as before, this question would be clearer in October once the legislation was enacted.

On the question of this year's charity giving, the Treasurer said that, as there would be no proceeds from the Church Fair in 2016, the Church, in line with its commitment, would be giving 10% of its gross income for the year to charity. All contributions to church funds were welcome.

Stuart Alexander said that some of the columns of figures did not add up, and so the accounts could not be approved as they stood. (**NB.** It subsequently transpired that these anomalies were due to the effects of rounding.)

Michael Chamier, the Honorary Auditor, said that he could not sign his report as auditor because some documentation was still outstanding (concerning the buildings and the loan agreements). He remarked that the Church was in a dangerous situation of legal limbo, as the '*compromis de vente*' for selling the Vicarage had expired on 31 January 2016 and had not been replaced by any other contract (as would usually be the case). The Churchwardens' letter to the developers' lawyer of 29 February 2016 had been too softly expressed. He felt that the buyers should be charged interest for the delay being suffered, just as the Church had paid interest to the sellers of the Chaplain's flat when that deal was delayed. There was no fixed price for the sale of the Vicarage, but he thought the Ville de Luxembourg's documents stating the site's exact square-metre area for development should be available to the Church.

If there was a '*compromis de vente*' for buying the office flat, this should be noted in the accounts.

In the meantime, the interest being charged on the bank loan was very high. The Vicarage and the Chaplain's flat were not the Church's own property, they were both mortgaged (on one mortgage). He considered that lots of clarification was still needed. As for the other routine matters in the accounts, he had no remarks to make.

The auditor also recommended that the Church make enquiries with the tax authorities about the possibility of obtaining a refund on the VAT payable on the purchase of the office flat, given that an owner who occupied a new property was usually entitled to a refund.

The Chaplain said the auditor's remarks were worrying; however, the Vicarage site developers had been in touch and our lawyer had drafted the '*procurations*' needed for the deal to go ahead. Checks on the developers had been carried out before the Church entered into the deal in the first place. It seemed unlikely at this stage of the proceedings that the developers would pull out of the deal. We could, however, demand interest from them for the delay we were suffering.

The Chaplain thanked Chris Vaudrey and the auditor for the huge amount of work they had put into this. As the auditor had said that he could not yet issue his report because some matters still needed clarifying, the Chaplain then **adjourned** agenda items 8 (Treasurer's report), 9 (Auditor's report) and 10 (Approval of the 2015 accounts) until a further date. An extraordinary AGM would be held to deal with these matters.

## **9. Auditor's Report**

Adjourned.

## **10. Approval of 2015 accounts**

Adjourned.

## **11. Adoption of Reports on Chaplaincy activities**

Archdeaconry Representative's Report (on file)  
Written by John Overstall.

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

Breakfast Bible Study Report (on file)  
Written by Graham and Isobel Weller.

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

Community Group Report (on file)  
Written by Rani Roloff.

Crèche Report (on file)  
Written by Eyitayo Geers-Faderin.

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

Junior Church Report (on file)  
Written by Andy Markey.

Lions and Lambs Report (on file)  
Written by Cherry Kent.

Lumen Magazine Editor's Report (on file)  
Written by Edward Seymour.

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

Music Report (on file)  
Written by Edward Seymour and Ovidiu Dragan.

Safeguarding Officer's Report (on file)  
Written by Moira Hogg.

Webmaster's Report (on file)  
Written by John Dimond.

Wellsprings Report (on file)  
Written by Cheryl Fisher.

Youth Group Report (on file)

Written by Andy Markey, Caroline Kafka-Markey and Evelyn Sweerts.

The Chaplain urged the congregation to read these very interesting reports, which were available on the website. He drew particular attention to the Lumen magazine report and thanked Edward Seymour for his considerable amount of work as the magazine's sole editor, as well as for his role in the Music Committee and the choir.

The Chaplain invited any questions from the floor about what had been reported. The adoption of the Reports was proposed and accepted.

## **12. Election of Churchwardens, members of the Chaplaincy Council and Archdeaconry Synod representatives**

The Chaplain explained that the two Churchwardens, Simon Norcross and Philippa Seymour, having been elected last year for a six-year term of office, still needed to be re-elected each year. Both had submitted nomination forms for the post of Churchwarden: Simon Norcross (proposed by Tania Buhr and seconded by Chris Vaudrey) and Philippa Seymour (proposed by Jane-Anne Frankel and seconded by Lynn Barclay); they were both duly re-elected as Churchwardens for another year.

Paul Townend and Evelyn Sweerts were stepping down as Council members at the end of their three years. Two nominations for the Church Council had been received, namely Gabriel Chelladurai, proposed by Edward Ojo and seconded by Simon Norcross, and Catriona Gillham, proposed by Philippa Seymour and seconded by Gerry Muscat. Both were duly elected by acclaim to the Church Council for a three-year period.

John Overstall, the Archdeaconry Representative, and Moira Hogg, the Assistant Archdeaconry Representative, had already been elected in 2014 for a three-year term.

## **13. Appointment of the Honorary Auditor**

Michael Chamier was re-appointed as Honorary Auditor for a further year.

## **14. Any Other Business**

None.

## **15. Closure of the Anglican Church of Luxembourg AGM Meeting**

The Chaplain proposed that the meeting be adjourned to a future date. Having thanked those present for their participation, he closed this part of the AGM at 10.30 p.m. The hymn "Now Thank We All Our God" was sung, followed by the Grace.



**Continuation of the Annual General Meeting for 2016  
held on Sunday 29 May 2016 after the 11 am service  
in the Konvikt Chapel**

The Chaplain, as Chairperson, opened the meeting at 12.25 pm. There were 15 people present. He explained that the AGM held on 20 April 2016 had had to be adjourned because of some technical issues relating to the accounts. These had now been resolved. Due notice of the continuation of the AGM having been given to the congregation by e-mail, in church and on the pew-sheets, the AGM could thus be resumed. The agenda consisted of the three items adjourned at the previous meeting: the Treasurer's report, the Auditor's report and the approval of the 2015 accounts. The Treasurer, Chris Vaudrey, had already circulated the original accounts at the earlier meeting.

**The Treasurer's report**

The Treasurer presented an amended version of the 2015 accounts, explaining that the earlier meeting had had to be adjourned because of arithmetical errors (due to the effects of rounding) and because the Auditor had required more evidence. These errors had been corrected, the Auditor had been provided with additional information and the notes to the accounts had been expanded. The amended accounts showed a net loss after provisions for 2015 of €19 858.

2015 had been a complicated year in terms of the accounts because of the Church's various property transactions. The sale of the Vicarage had not yet gone through but, since the AGM of 20 April 2016, an '*avenant*' to the '*compromis de vente*' had been signed, agreeing a sale price that was more than we had originally expected. There would thus be no problem in the future with repaying our loans or paying the instalments due on the Jules Mersch flat. The Auditor has ascertained that the notes to the accounts reflected all this, and the accounts had now been signed by the Auditor.

In response to some questions from the floor, the Treasurer explained that there was still no date for final closure of the Vicarage sale; the purchasers were waiting for their bank to approve the financing, but they had already received approval in principle from the bank. However, our notary was not concerned about the lack of a final date, and it was expected that the deal would go through. The Luxembourg authorities had stated in writing that no capital gains tax would be payable on this property deal.

A motion to accept the Treasurer's report was proposed by Simon Norcross, seconded by Barry Crisp and carried *nem con*.

**The approval of the 2015 accounts and the Auditor's report**

The 2015 accounts had been signed off by the Honorary Auditor as follows:

'I have examined the accounts of the Anglican Church of Luxembourg for the financial year ended 31 December 2015. In my opinion, the Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Account, together with the accompanying Notes, as prepared by and presented to me by the Treasurer, give a true and fair view, in all material respects, of the Church's financial position as at 31 December 2015.

Luxembourg, 27 May 2016.

(signed) Michael Chamier, Honorary Auditor'

The Honorary Auditor thanked the Treasurer for all his work and his patience, and explained that his Management Report drew the Church's attention to certain points regarding the financial situation.

The Chaplain thanked the Auditor for the 'tough love' he had meted out at the 20 April meeting, and for his perspicacity, patience and perseverance. He asked if he would agree to act in the same capacity for another year and the Auditor agreed.

As regards finding a new Treasurer, the Chaplain said that we would ask Chris Vaudrey to hold the fort for the meantime and would perhaps consider using the services of a *'fiduciaire'*.

In response to further questions, Chris Vaudrey and the Chaplain explained that no budget for the coming year had yet been established as there had been too many uncertainties at the time of the AGM; now that the sale price was agreed, however, the Church knew that there would be a surplus left over after the cost of the Chaplain's flat and the office flat had been paid for. The Church hoped to ensure that its expenditure met its income, and to make use of that extra capital. If we were given a church building by the Ville de Luxembourg, we might perhaps use some of that capital to adapt that building to our needs.

The Chaplain closed the meeting at 12.50 pm.