

Progressive Christianity Network – Britain

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 24th October 2009 at 10.45am, held at St James's Church, Piccadilly.

Present:

Names withheld from this web version of the minutes

1. Appointment of chair of the Annual General Meeting

Hugh Dawes, in the absence of John Churcher, Chair, who had been held up by public transport, welcomed everyone. He explained that Charles Hedley, who had been elected at the first AGM to chair the AGMs of PCN Britain, was not present, and was about to move to China. He proposed Mary McMahon to be the chair of this meeting, and this was agreed unanimously.

2. Apologies

Taking the chair, Mary McMahon reiterated a welcome to all and announced that the list of apologies would be displayed at the front of the church. They were:

Names withheld from this web version of the minutes

3. Notification of any other business

No further items of business had been put forward. A member from St James's Piccadilly mentioned a meeting due to take place concerning the Goldstone report.

4. Minutes of the fifth Annual General Meeting held on 22nd November 2008.

The minutes had been circulated to members prior to this meeting. Mary McMahon invited comment from the floor. Nothing was raised, and it was agreed by a show of hands that the minutes be signed as a fair record of the 2008 AGM.

5. Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising.

6. The Annual Report of PCN – Britain 1st January 2008 to 31st December 2008

Hugh Dawes spoke to the annual report, having been Chair of PCN for the year in question. He said it was a year of steady growth, being something of a lull between two years in which the Network had hosted tours by Bishop Jack Spong. There had been shared meetings with the Centre for Radical Christianity featuring both Marcus Borg and Don Cupitt. It was also the first year of the new website. Hugh Dawes mentioned the creative association with other organisations working together for a more radical church. In particular he paid tribute to Adrian Alker who had worked to increase the trust between the various parties which had led to the publication in Sept 08 of Together in Hope.

Hugh Dawes said it was also a year in which PCN had reminded the denominations that "we are here" and mean to be part of their life. PCN had attended the Lambeth conference, the Methodist Conference and the URC Assembly. Hugh quoted the former vice chair Charles Hedley describing the contact as "embedding ourselves in people's minds". It was also the year in which the PCN map of progressive churches in Britain had been launched.

Local groups, the strength of PCN, had been busy, growing in number in 2008 as they continued to do in 2009.

Finally, Hugh Dawes referred to the hard-working committee and expressed the Network's indebtedness to the committee members. At the 2008 AGM, PCN bade farewell to committee members Alan Powell and Monty Lynds whom he described as troopers and wise counsellors whose contribution was valued enormously.

7. The Financial Statements of PCN – Britain 1st January 2008 to 31st December 2008

Duncan Craig, Treasurer, referred to the financial statement at the back of the annual report. He said it was difficult to compare 2008 with 2007 because of the absence of a Spong tour, and a different year end. In 2009 we had identified a problem with standing order payments which related to previous years. PCN had benefited from two years' worth of Gift Aid tax refund; in addition, PCN had benefited from a donation from another likeminded charity, 'One', which had wound up and transferred its assets to PCN Britain.

Overall, PCN had "broken even" which was satisfactory. There were substantial reserves, which were necessary in order for PCN to carry the risk of organising meetings and conferences.

Answering a question from the floor, concerning the expected income for the current year (2009), Duncan Craig stated that the income would be higher as PCN had been active in recovering the lost Standing Order payments.

Following an invitation from the chair, Janice Booth proposed and Jane Westland seconded a motion that the Annual Report and Financial Statements for 1st January to 31st December 2008 be adopted, and the motion was carried by a unanimous show of hands.

8. Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2009

Peter Stribblehill was thanked for being the independent examiner in 2008. Peter agreed to be the 2009 independent examiner, and was formally appointed as such.

9. Proposal to alter date of the Annual General Meeting in the Constitution of Progressive Christianity Network – Britain from October.

The Secretary, Jill Sandham, explained that with the change of year end from April to December in 2007, the constitutional rule that the AGM be held in October or as soon as possible after no longer made sense, as it created too long an interval from the year end to the AGM. She suggested that paragraph 15i of the constitution be reworded to allow the date to be brought forward. The proposed new wording was:

15 Annual General Meeting.

(1) There shall be an annual general meeting of the Charity which shall be held within 12 months of the previous AGM or as soon as practicable thereafter.

Jill had taken advice from the Charity Commission, who had said that the naming of a particular month was not required, and there would be greater flexibility without doing so.

A questioner from the floor asked whether, by stipulating "within 12 months" the date of the AGM would not inevitably creep forward. Jill Sandham answered that this was the reason that the words "as soon as practicable thereafter" were added.

The constitutional amendment as started was proposed by Brian Slater and seconded by Jean Humphrey-Gaskin. There was an overwhelming show of hands in favour, with no one against and no one abstaining.

10. Elections to the Executive Committee of PCN – Britain

Jill Sandham as Secretary explained that there were two candidates: Mary McMahon, who was standing for re-election, and John Hetherington a former committee member, who had been instrumental in setting up PCN's original website. They were both longstanding members of PCN, and local group members in Scotland and the North-West of England respectively. A vote was not necessary, as there were more than two vacancies on the committee.

Both Mary McMahon and John Hetherington were therefore elected onto the Management Committee to serve three years.

Jill said that the management committee would decide at its next meeting if further members should be co-opted.

11. Any other business

A questioner from the floor asked what could be done to encourage non-members of PCN to join. Jill Sandham said the Spong tour was a good opportunity to reach out to non-members, as were other conferences arranged by PCN and also the network of local groups. She said that information about PCN and affiliation forms were available in the pack received on arrival. If people joined today they could enjoy 14 months membership, to December 2010, for the price of a year – meaning they received an extra newsletter.

Adrian Alker said that another incentive to join was the discount available to members for conferences, in particular the Marcus Borg weekend which is taking place next year, also advertised in the pack. Tickets would be available from the start of December and he suggested that members would get the first option.

The meeting was closed by the chair, Mary McMahon, at 11.15am.