

THE SWISS CHURCH IN LONDON

Annual General Meeting

The 2019 Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Church in London took place at the Church, 79 Endell Street, London WC2, on Sunday 16 June 2019 at 12.15 p.m.

MINUTES

Chairman: Peter Staeuber, President
Attendees: Consistoire and 16 members

Apologies: Trustees - Katrin Voegeli (HR), David Hume (VP), Cecile Mistry (Catering)

1. WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN AND APOLOGIES

Consistoire

The Consistoire introduced themselves and outlined their roles briefly: Marco Mambelli (Treasurer), Yvon Tse (Acting Company Secretary), Philip Maillardet (Archivist), Manuela Ferrari (Embassy representative replacing Herrmann Aebischer since October 2018) and Colin McIntyre (Trustee and Safeguarding Officer since March 2019).

Staff

Anina Smith and Emily Rose Simons

Chairman's Address: I would like to officially open the Meeting with a few words about the achievements and performance of the Swiss Church in London during the past year as well as the challenges the Church faces going forward.

The Business Plan for 2018 was very professionally executed by the very able Team under the stewardship of the Minister, support of the Consistoire and lastly but not least the army of very dedicated volunteers which resulted in the Church meeting most of its objectives in terms of the core activities ranging from the Art programme to trying to improve the state of the building to meet the relevant regulations and making it fit for purpose. A vote of thanks to all those involved in making things happen was proposed and popularly received.

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2018 was also the first year of complete financial and structural independence of the Church. It is actually remarkable that the Church have managed to generate a surplus of about £34k compared with £17k for last year. The details of both the income and expenditure and annual report will be covered by the Treasurer and Minister respectively under agenda item 3. The financial, maintenance of the church building, recruitment of Trustees and increasing the membership remain a considerable challenge for the foreseeable future. However the Consistoire together with the Minister continue to work towards putting our Church in a better position to meet these challenges. The foundation for the ties with Parishes and Cantonal Churches in Switzerland has been laid and continue unabated.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The chairman invites the audience to adopt the Minutes of the AGM held on 17 June 2018 for approval

Proposer: Robert Kaufeler

Seconder: Susanne Tse

- In favour All
 - Against: None
 - Abstentions: None

Motion carried

3. ANNUAL REPORT

The Consistoire asked the meeting to receive and approve the Trustees Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2018. The Chairman invited any questions during each report before voting on the Report – no questions raised.

The Minister presented a detailed report mentioned in the Chairman's address covering this last year and the Treasurer provided details of the Financial Statements.

Minister's report – Rev Carla Maurer

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The gist of the Report had the following narratives:

1. The Team

a) Anina Smith came back from Maternity Leave to assume the role of Financial Administrator working two days a week. During the year she had one important assignment namely to perform the migration of Quickbooks, the accounting software. This has now been done successfully.

However Anina is going on Maternity Leave soon and will be replaced during her absence by Heidi Hollenweg.

b) Nat Breitenstein, the Venue Manager did an excellent job both in terms of the Hiring and Maintenance of the building. Nat has since left and is replaced by Emily Rose Simons

c) Josh Kelly continues in his role as Community Worker organising event as well as supervising the Breakfast on the Steps initiative. He has even started a Shoe bank raising money at the Swiss Embassy for distribution in winter time.

d) Colin McIntyre took over the role of Authorised person for marriages from Philip Maillardet

e) Rupert is appointed as caretaker

f) Peter Yardley Jones is Director of Music for over 9 years

During the Minister's Maternity Leave 15 August to 31 December 2018 the following deputises for her in their respective role designated beforehand:

Colin MacIntyre, Josh Kelly including Rev. Meret Engel, Nicollo Aliano and Mrs Marianne Fisher-Hertig who led the Services.

2. Activities

a) Educational evenings: Rev. Stephan Degen-Ballmer, Rev. Meret and Daniel Engeli run educational evenings on biblical and historic topics

b) Celebration of the Swiss National Day

c) Christmas family afternoon

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d) Showing on the big screen the matches of the Swiss Team playing in the FIFA World Cup competition

e) Both Swiss Rev. Stephan Degen-Ballmer from Kilchberg and Primary School Teacher Claudia Strack were on sabbatical during the year.

3. Relationships

a) Sister churches in Switzerland continue to stay connected and some of them have generously contributed financially

b) The trust between the Minister and Consistoire has never been better and the Minister is very appreciative for that.

c) Contacts were established with the local charities, businesses and the police to work closely together and engagement continues with other churches across London and Camden Council

d) Round table meetings were attended by the Minister at the various Swiss clubs in London and the UK to further joint efforts and collaboration to serve the Swiss community and promote the Swiss church as a meeting place for the Swiss.

e) In April 2018 18 participants went on a parish outing to Exeter. A day trip to Ely cathedral also took place.

To conclude the Minister said that Ariane Braillard, Kirsty White and Jon Driscoll have left the Art Committee. However there is good news about the 2019 Art initiative, 42 applications have so far been received.

It was also announced that sadly the church has lost the following long standing members namely Helena Bertrand, Edith Cragg, Anna-Maria 'Meieli' Webb, Ursula Talary and Margrit Reynolds since the last AGM.

As for the future the church has a good business plan in place and is striving very hard to try and meet all the challenges.

Treasurer's Report- Marco Membelli

Income

2018 is the first year in a new world for the finances of the Swiss Church in London, as it was the first year in which the church received no contributions

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from the SEK. Excluding one off events (FX revaluation and Maternity Pay cover) the drop in income from 253'000 to 222'000 (31'000 vs 34'000 received from SEK in 2017) reflects this event. However, one off events have contributed in increasing the income for 2018 to 240'306 (7'000 of which from FX revaluations). As in 2017, lettings and contributions from parishes in Switzerland greatly helped the SCL, as they covered more than 75% of total income.

Expenses

Unlike 2017, when expenses grew by more than 10%, 2018 brought the number in line with previous year, around the 200'000 mark. The biggest expense, aside from staff costs, was once again maintenance to the churches' premises, at £30,692. Staff costs were kept below £80,000, in large part thanks to the coverage solutions found to mitigate Rev. Maurer's maternity leave. Building expenses (bills, cleaning, etc) were in line with last year, at circa £23,000. The category "other", is composed for its majority of the various activities carried out by the Swiss Church like parish activities, (£10,000, Swiss Church News, £4,000, Support to Local Community, £6,000, Cultural Events, £5,000, etc.). Total expenditures for 2018 amounted to £206,227

Comments

Like in 2017, the net surplus in 2018 was positive, amounting to £34,079. However, this was driven primarily by one off events and the number should be reduced to circa £16,000. To survive without contributions from the SEK, on the income side, the church will have to make sure that a target of £120,000-£130,000 from lettings and of £40,000-£50,000 from Swiss parishes is sustainable. Moreover, a stronger push will have to be carried out on the fundraising side to ensure stability. On the expenses side, maintenance costs will have to be monitored closely and changes will probably have to be introduced to mitigate the swings in the GBP-CHF exchange rates once more clarity on the Brexit process is reached. Staff costs, although significant, are largely under control and a predictable item. Bills are expected to creep higher, as new three year tariffs had to be discussed for items such as electricity and gas. It should be noted that cash reserves, both in CHF and GBP, are strong and would allow the church to weather unforeseen negative circumstances in the coming years.

Cash is steady at £420,000, of which 300,000 Swiss Francs.

In conclusion I would like to thank Anina immensely, not only for the day to day job she did but also for being a big part of the churches' transition to a new online accounting system, and the support of everyone at the SCL.

2019

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Budget

For the current year, budgeting was once again carried out as in 2018. Activities were broken in 4 areas (Swiss Community, Art Music & Culture, Local Community, and Parish) whilst 3 main areas of expenditure were identified (Admin & HR, Church Premises, and Vicarage). This will allow the Church to target donors for specific initiatives closer to their interests as well as understanding which of its activities are closest to the Swiss community's heart. Target for expenses and income was set at £190'000, with the flexibility to move expenses higher to £200,000 if income is found to fund certain maintenance activities to the vicarage. Overall building maintenance target stands at £25,000-£35,000. A project has also started to make sure the acoustics can be upgraded in future years, although the spending is forecast to be significant (circa £50,000). Furthermore, it was decided to continue targeting a gross (i.e. excluding cleaning and staff costs) income figure of around £125,000 for lettings, although more could be feasible, in order to not overburden the church premises with commercial activities, given its main purpose of existence is to serve the community. Moreover, this was done to ensure that the new venue manager did not have to achieve unrealistic numbers, especially in a year in which we will have to deal with Brexit uncertainty. The budgeted income is lower than this year to factor in the uncertainty over donations coming from Swiss parishes.

The Consistoire ask you to receive and approve the Trustees Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2018.

Proposer: Cecil Mistry

Seconder: Geoff Fisher

- In favour All

4. ELECTIONS AND RESIGNATIONS OF CONSISTOIRE MEMBERS (i.e. Company Directors/Trustees in accordance with the Swiss Church Articles of Association)

4.1. Resignations:

David Hume

Philip Maillardet

Cecile Mistry

4.2. Elections:

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Peter Staeuber

- Re-Elections
David Hume
Philip Maillardet
Cecile Mistry

Proposer : Geoff Fisher

Secunder: Marianne Fisher

- In favour – All

5. REPORTING ACCOUNTANTS

To re-appoint Morlai Kargbo, Moracle Chartered Certified Accountants, for the incorporated charity to hold office from the conclusion of this meeting until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting and to authorise the Consistoire to determine their remuneration.

- In favour All

All agree to reappoint Moracle Kargbo

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Consistoire had not received any issues to be listed as items at this Annual General Meeting.

No other items were raised for discussion

The Annual General Meeting 2019 of the Swiss Church in London was declared closed.