**THE SWISS CHURCH IN LONDON**

**Annual General Meeting 2020**

The 2020 Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Church in London whose registered office is at the Swiss Church, 79 Endell Street, London WC2, took place on Sunday 19 July 2020 by Zoom at 11:00 a.m.

**MINUTES**

**Chairman**: Colin McIntyre – member of the Consistoire

**Members attending:**

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| * Reverend Carla Maurer, Minister of Swiss Church in London
* Barbara Wachter, President of Consistoire Steering Committee
* Colin McIntyre, Vice-president Consistoire Steering Committee
* Marco Mambelli, Consistoire Treasurer
* Cecile Mistry, Consistoire, catering
* David Hume, Consistoire member
* Hassan Mohanna, Consistoire member
 | * Marianne Fisher-Hertig
* Geoff Fisher
* Margrit Lyster
* Rosemarie Breitenstein
* Maria Kitsis
* Helen Alexandrou
* Emily Rose Simons Swiss Church In London Venue Manager, in attendance as member of staff and observer
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Proxy Voting Forms received from: Erika Tan, Heidi Nolan, Klara Grimaldi, Susanne Tse, Yvonne Camille, Margrit Rahman, Fernande Kunz, Philip Maillardet.

1. **WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN AND APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence had been received from: Yvon Tse, Company Secretary.

**Chairman’s Address:** I would like to officially open the Meeting by thanking all of you for attending the 2020 AGM of the Swiss Church in London held via Zoom due to the current Covid-19 crisis. Barbara Wachter will be handling the technical side of this virtual meeting.

Firstly, I would like to thank our Company Secretary Yvon Tse for all his hard work in organising the 2020 AGM of the Swiss Church in London. I would also like to thank Carla and the Swiss Church office team of Heidi Holenweg and Emily Rose Simons for sending out all the official documents relating to this AGM.

1. **MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON 16 JUNE 2019**

The chairman invited the members to adopt the Minutes of the AGM held on 16 June 2019
**Proposer**: Geoff Fisher
**Seconder**: Hassan Mohanna
In favour: 20 Against: None Abstentions: None

**3. ANNUAL REPORT**

The Consistoire asked the members to receive and approve the Trustees Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019. The Chairman invited any questions to be raised before voting on the Report – no questions raised.

The Minister presented a detailed report covering 2019 and the Treasurer provided details of the Financial Statements.

**Minister’s report – Rev Carla Maurer**

1. The Team

a) Anina Smith was Financial Administrator working two days a week until beginning maternity leave in March 2019. Heidi Holenweg is the present maternity cover financial administrator until September 2020 when Anina will return.

b) Emily Rose Simons was appointed Letting and Maintenance Administrator.

c) Josh Kelly continued in his role as Community Worker supervising the Breakfast on the Steps outreach work with the homeless and vulnerable.

e) Rupert Akroyd continued as caretaker undertaking many repairs and general building maintenance.

f) Peter Yardley Jones continued into his tenth year as Director of Music.

2. Activities

The Church held 23 services during the year including the Easter Service, annual commemoration service and the Christmas carol service. The Swiss Church entered a partnership with High Holborn Chamber Choir who sang at the Sunday Service on the first Sunday of each month. There were also baptisms and one memorial service for the life of member Margaret Reynolds. Visits continued from churches in Switzerland, including a city pilgrimage organised by the Reformed Church in Zurich.

Community events for the wider Swiss Community continued – Swiss National Day on 1st August and Samichlaus (Swiss Santa Claus) were celebrated at the Swiss Church.

Breakfast on the Steps provided breakfasts to the homeless each Tuesday.

Closer relationships were established with The Swiss Benevolent Society

**Treasurer’s Report ­– Tresurer Marco Mambelli**

Income

The **total income** for 2019 is £197,762, a decrease of 18% compared to £240,306 in 2018. The biggest contributor, 54% of the total figure, came from lettings of the church premises (£107,070) whilst donations contributed for 44% (£87,543). Other activities contributed to the remaining 2% (£3,149). Total income tied to our main sources equals circa £194,613 (a decrease of 12% compared to total 2018 figures). The main drivers of this result is a lower utilization of the church for commercial purposes compared to previous years, particularly in the first half of the year.

Support from Swiss donors remains strong (£59,160), registering a small increase from 2018 (£58,534). Contributions raised in the UK, including parish collections and events, amounted to £28,383, a 24% decrease compared to last year (£37,568) but in line with 2017 numbers. 2019 marked the second year in which no contribution by the SEK was received, however the generosity of entities such as the Synodalverband Bern-Jura-Solothurn, the Landeskirche Aargau, and the Kirche Sursee, along with many others, helped the SCL to continue to provide its activities for both the Swiss and local community.

Expenses

**Total expenditure** for 2019, including depreciation of the building and the organ, amounting to £31,652, came in at £232,173, an increase of 13% compared with last year’s figure of £206,227 but below the figure of 2017. As expected, the biggest contributions came from Staff costs & Professional Fees (£90,861), and Council Tax plus Maintenance carried out at the church and at the Vicarage premises (£36,315). Due to tariff increases, expenditure in Heat, Water & Light also increased considerably (£8,599). Overall, expenditure was in line with budgeted figures.

The **overall net income excluding depreciation for the financial year ended 31 December 2019** is a **loss** of £2,759. This is in line with possible variance expected when operating a budget that aims to break even each year.

Questions from members: Rosemarie Breitenstein asked why council tax had risen from £3838 in 2018 to £11,264 in 2019. The Treasurer confirmed that the SCL was only paying council tax on the vicarage at Womersley Road. The Treasurer would investigate the matter further and give members a more detailed explanation in due course.

The Tresurer informed the participating members at the end of the meeting that £2’800 had been paid for council tax on the vicarage in 2019. The rest of the figure of £11,264 was for other mis-allocated expenses. The Treasurer confirmed that he would issue a correction on this. Following a further analysis with the auditors, it was found that expenses grouped under “Council Tax” should have been allocated as follows: Insurance (+£1,678), Utilities bills (+2,665), Post/Printing/Stationery (+£2,067), and Professional/Legal Fees (+2,008). As this was a mis-allocation issue, total expenses have not changed.

Geoff Fisher asked whether, given the Church has been vacant for months, it is still covered by the necessary insurance and whether the insurance company is aware that the building is checked regularly by Rupert Akroyd. The chair responded that an email would be sent to the insurance company to inform them that while the Church was currently not used daily, a caretaker is undertaking regular visits and checks at the Church for the maintanance of electrics, roof and other applicances.

The Consistoire asked members to receive and approve the Trustees Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2019.

**Proposer:** Rosemarie Breitenstein
**Seconder**: Margrit Lyster

In favour: 20 Against: None Abstentions: None

**4. ELECTIONS AND RESIGNATIONS OF CONSISTOIRE MEMBERS**

(i.e. Company Directors and Trustees in accordance with the Swiss Church Articles of Association)

4.1.  Resignations: Marco Mambelli, Peter Stäuber

4.2.  Elections: Barbara Wachter, Colin McIntyre

4.3. Re-Elections: Marco Mambelli, Peter Stäuber

**Proposer**: Cecile Mistry
**Seconder**: Geoff Fisher
In favour: 20 Against: None Abstentions: None

**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.

**Proposer**: Marianne Fisher-Hertig
**Seconder**: Margrit Lyster
In favour: 19 Against: None Abstentions: 1

**6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Members were given a report of the steps taken by the Consistoire to deal with the challenges of the current Covid-19 crisis.

Firstly, the Church has been closed for all activities since the beginning of March. This meant that the 2020 budget had to be completely revised. To make strategic decisions by the Consistoire easier and quicker, a Steering Committee was formed, which is monthly on Zoom instead of the regular six annual meetings of the Consistoire at the Swiss Church. The Steering Committee members are: Carla Maurer as Minister of The Swiss Church London; Marco Mambelli, Conistoire Treasurer, Barbara Wachter, who is President of the Steering Group; Colin McIntyre, vice-President of Steering Group; Hassan Mohanna, new member of the Consistoire.

To reduce expenditure, non-essential spending was frozen. Emily Rose Simons, Venue Manager, was placed on the UK Government furlough scheme from 1 April to 30 June. The Minister agreed to work four days a week from 1 April rather than five days a week, and take a corresponding salary reduction. All staff are working from home and connect on a virtual team meeting weekly. The building is being regularly checked for maintenance and security purposes by Rupert Ackroyd, freelance caretaker and maintenance worker for the church.

The annual income of The Swiss Church in London is reliant on hire income of £100,000, a minimum of £8,000 per month. The revised budget forecasts minimal income for the rest of 2020. Carla Maurer and Barbara Wachter are working on fundraising from Swiss based donors. Emily Rose Simon’s role since her return to work on 1 July has been extended to include UK fundraising and grant applications. There has been some success already with new donations from Switzerland, and grants from the UK.

The last church service at Endell Street was at the beginning of March. Since then, online audio services have been produced. This relies on the technical expertise of Julian Simmons, Carla’s husband, who is a music producer. The audio services seem to be greatly appreciated by the congregation. We thank Carla and everyone for their hard work in producing these “virtual services”. Although government regulations have been relaxed to enable Church services to resume from 4 July, a survey of members revealed that members do not feel comfortable to return to church yet. We will continue to monitor the wishes of church members. Also, considerable work is being done by Venue Manager Emily Rose Simons, the Minister, the church team and the Consistoire to ensure all the government regulations and guidelines are in place to allow safe reopening and use of the church building in due course, for church services, social activities, arts events and commercial hire.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Minister for her continuing very dedicated service to The Swiss Church in London, and to the Steering Committee for leading the Church through the crisis.

The 2020 Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Church in London was declared closed at 12:05 p.m.