

# THE SWISS CHURCH IN LONDON

## Annual General Meeting 2021

The 2021 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 20 June 2021 by Zoom at 2:30 p.m.

### MINUTES

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

#### Members attending:

- Reverend Carla Maurer, Minister of the Swiss Church in London
- Colin McIntyre, Consistoire member
- Barbara Wachter, Consistoire member
- Marco Mambelli, Consistoire member, Treasurer
- Cecile Mistry, Consistoire member, Catering
- Jenny Breitschmid, Consistoire member, Volunteer Coordinator
- Katrin Frey, Consistoire member, Safeguarding Officer
- Philip Maillardet, Consistoire member
- David Hume, Consistoire member
- Manuela Ferrari, Consistoire member, Observer from the Embassy of Switzerland in London
- Marianne Fisher-Hertig
- Geoff Fisher
- Margrit Lyster
- Rosemarie Breitenstein
- Elsbeth Baldeo
- Fernande Kunz
- Emily Rose Simons, Swiss Church in London Venue Manager, in attendance as member of staff and observer

Proxy Voting Forms received from: Margrit Rahman, Heidi Nolan, Susanne Tse, Susanne Singh, Yvonne Camille, Erika Tan, Gregory Allegro.

### 1. WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence has been received from: Company Secretary Yvon Tse, Susanne Egloff, Maria Kitsis, Philip Vasey, Michelle Armstrong, Emel Rochat.

**Chairman's Address:** I would like to officially open the Meeting by formally welcoming and thanking all of you for attending the 2021 AGM of the Swiss Church in London held via Zoom. In 2020, we have held the annual AGM on Zoom for the first time, and, due to the continuation of restrictions and uncertainties, have decided to hold it virtually again. Barbara Wachter will handle the technical side of the meeting and compile the minutes.

I would also like to warmly thank our Company Secretary Yvon Tse for his hard work in organising the 2021 AGM of the Swiss Church in London. Furthermore, I would like to thank Marco for liaising with the accountants, and the Swiss Church office team including Carla Maurer, Emily Rose Simons and Ryan Moshwe for sending out the documents relating to this AGM – an essential part of the meeting preparation.

## **2. MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON 19 JULY 2020**

The chairman invited the members to adopt the Minutes of the AGM held on 19 July 2020.

**Proposer:** Fernande Kunz

**Seconder:** Geoff Fisher

In favour: 12 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 2020. The Chairman invited any questions to be raised before voting on the Report.

The Minister presented a detailed report covering 2020 and the Treasurer provided details of the Financial Statements.

### **Minister's report – Rev Carla Maurer**

- A) Overview: Before the beginning of the lockdown, three points are worth mentioning. Firstly, community worker Josh Kelly left SCL employment. Secondly, Heidi Holenweg took over this role for a few months. Thirdly, we were able to hold a few church services, Andy's Catwalk to raise awareness for homelessness and the Goldsmith exhibition.
- B) Covid-19: Then the lockdown came into effect. The main task that presented itself was for the team and the Consistoire to figure out how to work remotely and effectively under the new circumstances. We quickly changed to audio services online and started various Whatsapp groups to stay connected. A big thank you is due to Julian Simmons for his support on these audio components. Another big task was the funding gap that manifested itself due to the hiring income falling away in lockdown. Up to 60% of our income had to be raised in different ways. The Consistoire had to find new ways of leading the church: it put in place a Steering Committee to make the decision-making process smoother and quicker. This arrangement worked very well. The Steering Committee has now been **dissolved** and the Consistoire has returned to working in a bigger group. Due to lockdown, the SCL also had to close its homeless outreach, as many volunteers had been office workers in Covent Garden. But we continued to support outreach efforts of other local churches financially.
- C) Achievements: The last year presented many challenges for the team, but we can be proud that we could keep everyone in employment, with a few temporary pay

cuts and furlough to ease the financial situation. The leadership we put in place in the form of the Steering Committee, the close connection we were able to maintain with the congregation, and our success in closing the funding gap are the other main achievements of this difficult period.

- D) Highlights: Last October, we came together for a baptism, and Anina Smith returned as Finance Officer after her maternity leave. Heidi Holenweg stayed on as Project Manger and started to assess and conduct important groundwork on the SCL Record Management and Archives. Furthermore, we built important relationships with local organisations, notably with Camden Council. We received a grant from Camden Council for a youth support scheme, which allowed us to recruit Ryan Moshwe as an intern. The grant also helped open doors and SCL is now seen as a more active church in the area.
- E) Looking ahead: Fortunately, the SCL is in a comfortable financial position, especially compared with other local churches. There is a lot of trust and great collaboration – within the team, within and with the Consistoire and especially also with the congregation and members. This made the challenges of the last year surmountable.

### **Treasurer's Report – Treasurer Marco Mambelli**

To start, I can say that we were able to effectively weather the storm last year. When Covid-19 hit, we had to re-think our strategy, but the staff's flexibility and willingness to take temporary pay cuts were an immense help for hitting our budget.

#### Income

The **total income** for 2020 is £153,073, a decrease of 23% compared to £197,762 in 2019. The biggest contribution, 77% of the total figure, was originated through donations (£107,070 – up 34% Year on Year) whilst lettings of the church premises contributed for only 23% (£35,585 – down 67% Year on Year). The main driver of this result is a much lower utilization of the church for commercial purposes from Q2 onwards compared to previous years, driven by the COVID pandemic. Its impact was greatly mitigated by an increase in fundraising activities and donations, as well as a thorough review of the church's expenditures.

Support from Swiss entities and private individuals (£79,631) was crucial for the church, registering a substantial increase of 35% from 2019 (£59,160) and amounting to 52% of all income. Contributions raised in the UK, including parish collections and events, amounted to £37,819, a 33% increase compared to last year (£28,383) and incorporating a 2019 GiftAid Tax Recovery correction. 2020 marked the third year in which no contribution by the SEK was received, however the generosity of the many "Kollekte" organised in Switzerland along with support to specific projects, and the donations of individuals both at home and in the UK helped the SCL in continuing its activities for both the Swiss and local community.

#### Expenses

**Total expenditure** for 2020, including depreciation of the building and the organ, amounting to £31,652, came in at £178,942, a decrease of 23% compared with last year's figure of £232,173 and for the first time in the last 3 years below the 200k thresholds. As expected, the biggest contributions came from Staff costs & Professional Fees (£74,993 | 17% less YoY), and Maintenance carried out at the premises owned (£12,864 | 49% less YoY). Likewise, all other expenses were reduced vis-à-vis 2019 in line with the reworked budget agreed post COVID.

The **overall net income excluding depreciation** is a **gain** of £5,783, in line with possible variance expected when operating a budget that targets neither loss nor profit. Notably, this was also achieved thanks to the favourable exchange rate movements and the church owning a majority of its cash reserves in Swiss Francs.

In closing, we can say that we are in a comfortable and safe situation and don't have to worry about the situation of the Church moving forward.

Questions from members: Rosemarie Breitenstein asked about the grant the SCL received from Camden Council, which was listed in the restricted section of the budget. Carla Maurer explained that the full grant was about £8000, and was paid in two parts. Colin McIntyre added that it was restricted because it was dedicated to cover the internship, i.e. Ryan Moshwe's salary and other associated costs. Effectively, the grant allowed us to have Ryan with neutral costs. Carla further clarified that there is no requirement to feed back to Camden Council on the progression of the internship, but rather that SCL had requested a feedback process. Due to a lack of capacity on the part of Camden Council, a feedback process may not be possible, however remains yet to be seen.

Fernande Kunz expressed her appreciation for all the work the team has done, thanked Carla for her leadership and the team to be so much in all the members hearts during this period.

The Consistoire asked members to receive and approve the Trustees Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2020.

**Proposer:** Rosemarie Breitenstein

**Seconded:** Fernande Kunz

In favour: 13 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** – Colin McIntyre, Cecile Mistry, Philip Maillardet

**4.2 ELECTIONS** – Hassan Mohanna (due to moving overseas, Hassan Mohanna resigned as trustee at the beginning of 2021, however still needs to be elected for the period he was SCL trustee in 2020)

### **4.3 RE-ELECTIONS – Cecile Mistry, Philip Maillardet**

**Proposer:** Margrit Lyster

**Secunder:** Geoff Fisher

In favour: 14 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:** Margrit Lyster

**Secunder:** Rosemarie Breitenstein

In favour: 13 Against: None Abstentions: None

### **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Carla Maurer remarked on the reason why the AGM is being held on Father's Day: the first weekend of June, when the AGM had previously taken place, is Carla's birthday, and it was therefore decided years ago to shift it to the third weekend in June. Cecile Mistry proposed to hold the AGM on the first weekend of July going forward.

Geoff Fisher asked Carla Maurer whether the annual assembly of the Vegsil Club for former members of the SCL who have moved back to Switzerland will take place this year and whether any confirmation classes were scheduled for the rest of the year. Carla clarified that the Vegsil Club annual assembly will indeed take place, on Sunday 24 October in Albisrieden, Zurich. Regarding the confirmation classes, Clara outlined that there has been a lot of demand for sabbaticals, internships and class visits, however due to the continuing restrictions, they may not take place this year. 2022 will probably see more such projects than a normal year, due to the gap with Covid-19. Carla Maurer will send Geoff Fisher the list of enquiries and inform him about next steps. Geoff Fisher also inquired about Manuela Ferrari's role on the Consistoire and expressed his appreciation for the great collaboration between the Embassy and the SCL, and for the continued support from the Consul. Manuela Ferrari confirmed that she has been on the Consistoire as an observer from the Swiss Embassy in London for three years, and for one more year.

The 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Church in London was declared closed at 16:08 p.m.