

# THE SWISS CHURCH IN LONDON

## Annual General Meeting 2022

The 2022 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 June 2022 at 12:30 at the Swiss Church.

### MINUTES

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

#### Members attending:

- Reverend Carla Maurer, Minister of the Swiss Church in London
- Colin McIntyre, Consistoire member
- Yvon Tse, Company Secretary
- Barbara Wachter, Chair of the Consistoire
- Cecile Mistry, Consistoire member, Catering
- Robert Kaufeler, Consistoire member, Adviser
- Jenny Breitschmid, Consistoire member, Volunteer Coordinator
- Katrin Frey, Consistoire member, Safeguarding Officer
- Philip Maillardet, Consistoire member, Archives
- Geoff Fisher
- Margrit Lyster
- Rosemarie Breitenstein
- Fernande Kunz
- Lotti Terroni
- Yolande Birch
- Lisa Hall-Zeller
- Helene Alexandrou
- Simon Streit
- Silvia Greenfield

Proxy Voting Forms received from: Susanne Singh

### 1. WELCOME BY CHAIRMAN AND APOLOGIES

**Apologies for absence has been received from:** Marco Mambelli, Consistoire member, Treasurer (outgoing), Emma Brown, Consistoire member, Treasurer (new), Manuela Ferrari, Consistoire member, Observer (Embassy of Switzerland to the UK), Emily Rose Simons, Swiss Church in London Venue Manager, in attendance as member of staff and observer, Maria Kitsis, Anthony Plowman

**Chairman's Address:** I would like to officially open the Meeting by formally welcoming and thanking all of you for attending the 2022 AGM of the Swiss Church in London. In 2020 and 2021, – due to the Covid-19 pandemic – we held the annual AGM on Zoom for the first time in Swiss Church history, and I am in this context even

more pleased to welcome you all back to the Church in person at last. There is a further reason to celebrate: today marks the 260<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the holding of Swiss Church AGMs, with the first one having taken place in 1762 according to Swiss Church records.

Barbara Wachter, Chair of the Consistoire, will take today's minutes and will pass around an attendance sheet. I would also like to warmly thank our Company Secretary Yvon and other Consistoire members for their efforts in the preparation of the 2022 AGM. Furthermore, I would like to thank Yvon, Marco and Emma for liaising with the accountants, and the Swiss Church office team including Carla, Emily Rose and Ryan for sending out the documents relating to this AGM – an essential part of the meeting preparation.

The Chairman invited all members of the Consistoire to briefly introduce themselves and their functions (see titles in above participants' list).

## **2. MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON 20 June 2021**

The chairman invited the members to adopt the Minutes of the AGM held on 20 June 2021.

**Proposer:** Rosemarie Breitenstein

**Seconded:** Fernande Kunz

In favour: 11 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 2021. The Chairman invited any questions to be raised before voting on the Report.

The Minister presented a detailed report covering 2021 and the Chairman (on behalf of the Treasurer) provided details of the Financial Statements.

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

- Back in 2019, we certainly did not expect a pandemic with effects that we have seen over the last years. What we can however state today is that we haven't only come out of said pandemic, but have come out of it successfully and in some ways even stronger than before. This is something that would not have been possible without the support from the congregation. The success shows in our financial reports, but also in the fact that the congregation is returning to our Church. This is an amazing achievement and demonstrates the commitment of our office team, the great leadership of the Consistoire and the growing interest and engagement of our volunteer base.
- On the topic of volunteers, I note with joy that BoS is now running again weekly, with a growing number of volunteers from various different backgrounds taking

part and helping. We also have a strong Arts Committee led and being supported by a variety of new faces in the Church. Both these areas, which are very important for our community work, are constantly growing and getting stronger.

- In this regard, I also notice increasingly that the SCL's reputation is spreading across London, including within the local community, arts community, Camden, local Churches, charities etc.
- One challenge I identify is that while the Church's different areas function very well in and of themselves, they function too much as just that: as bubbles and individual universes, without much synergy or cross-connections between each other. Such connections are however crucial are we to further grow. And I want to highlight that as your Minister, I am not able to create and sustain these connections between all parts of the Church alone. We must do this together.
- So what can we do? I encourage you to ask questions of each other, e.g. how you can support each other, and to attend events and meet people you don't usually attend or meet. This is how we plant the seed for growth.
- I would like to extend a task to you all for the next AGM: ask yourself which part of the church you are least familiar with or maybe most irritated by and then engage with exactly that part at least once until next year. This will help us create the web that is the foundation of our church.

#### **Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31.12.2021 – Colin McIntyre on behalf of (outgoing) Treasurer Marco Mambelli**

**Income:** The total income for 2021 is £208,992, an increase of 36.5% compared to £153,073 in 2020. The biggest contribution, 79.7% of the total figure and an increase of 2 percentage points from 2020, was originated through donations (£166,644 – up 56% Year on Year) whilst lettings of the church premises contributed for only 20.3% (£42,348 – still a 19% increase Year on Year). The main drivers of this result are a continued lower utilization of the church's premises for commercial purposes compared to pre-COVID years, and a strong focus on donations from swiss entities, trusts, and collections to enable the church to be as close as ever to its constituents. Support from Swiss entities and private individuals (£96,606) was crucial for the church, registering a substantial increase of 20% from 2020 and amounting to 46% of all income. Contributions raised in the UK, including parish collections and events, amounted to £70,038, an 85% increase compared to last year. 2021 marked the fourth 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 – headlined by a very generous donation from the D.H Watson Trust – helped the SCL in continuing its activities for both the Swiss and local community.

**Total expenditure:** Total expenditure for 2020, including depreciation of the building and the organ, amounting to £34,477, came in at £192,523, an increase of 7.4% compared with last year's figure of £178,942 but still well below the 200k threshold. As expected, the biggest contributions came from Staff costs & Professional Fees (£90,896 | 15% increase YoY), and Maintenance carried out at the premises owned

(£23,702 | 10k more vs 2020 YoY). Premises expenses were higher YoY due to the higher utilisation, while all other expenses were in line.

The **overall net income including depreciation** is a **gain** of circa £16,500, in line with possible variance expected when operating a budget that targets neither loss nor profit. Fluctuation of the CHFGBP exchange between the start and end of the year were minimal, so the FY2020 numbers are not impacted by it even though the church holds the majority of its assets in CHF.

**Comment:** Prior to Covid-19, the SCL had established a stable financial pattern, which was to raise income between 200 and 250k per year to meet our expenditure. Most years we achieved this and broke even. 2020 then presented us with a previously unknown challenge: the potential income streams were hit in a big way, and especially the 100k letting income was suddenly at high risk. As the Treasurer however noted, even though we somewhat reduced our income in 2020, we still closed with a suprisingly substantive amount given the circumstances of that year. In 2021, we were still dealing with the challenges of Covid-19, however had somewhat more flexibility and more opportunity to raise income, not least thanks to Carla, Emily Rose, Andreas Feller-Rys (Breakfast on the Steps) and Barbara in terms of their work on fundraising, notably by writing a substantive amount of successful funding grant applications (both in the UK and in Switzerland from cantonal churches and individual parishes). Overall, we have therefore seen a substantial increase in donations and grants – which is a welcome development.

In 2021, the SCL received a substantial donation of over 40k from the DH Watson Trust – a trust set up in the name of Laurent Lourson, who was Consistoire member at the time when the SCL became a registered company. Upon his death, a certain amount was to go to SCL, money which we should be (or have recently TBC) receiving this year (2022).

In terms of expenditure we have seen a slight increase in 2021 in terms of staff costs and professional fees in comparison with 2020. This is due to special circumstances of 2020 including furlough, reduced staff hours, and Anina's maternity leave.

In December 2021 upon the initiative of Andreas Feller-Rys (Breakfast on the Steps), the SCL participated in the Big Give Charity Fundraiser to raise £7500 of donations, which would then be matched with the same amount by the Big Give charity for the purpose of Breakfast on the Steps (BoS). This effort was successful and we now have 15k earmarked funding for BoS. Provided we continue to do this fundraiser every year (as is planned for this Christmas), BoS would thereby become entirely self-funded. Members are encouraged to give their donations through the Big Give Fundraiser, as every £1 given will be doubled by the charity.

**Question from Rosemarie Breitenstein:** Rosemarie points out that she was member of the Consistoire and Company Secretary during the period of 2004-2014, and that in 2009, they had to empty the Church due to the renovations. Since then, she has

been storing a lot of the SCL archives in her home. Given their delicacy and the importance to properly look after the archives, she asks the Consistoire to please find a solution promptly as to where these should be kept in the long term. Project Manager Heidi Holenweg who no longer works for the SCL had worked an archives project, however the papers and documents kept at Rosemarie's were not yet taken. The Chair says that he will get in touch with Rosemarie to drive things forward on the archives front and make it a top priority to find a new home for them. Rosemarie also pointed out that beforementioned Laurent Lourson had painted the Swiss Church building – a painting that had been printed on SCL Christmas cards for many years. She is unsure where that painting is today.

**Proposer:** Rosemarie Breitenstein

**Secunder:** Fernande Kunz

In favour: 11 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** – Barbara Wachter, Marco Mambelli, David Hume, Hassan Mohanna

**4.2 ELECTIONS** – Katrin Frey, Jenny Breitschmid, Colin McIntyre

**4.3 RE-ELECTIONS** – Barbara Wachter, Marco Mambelli

**Proposer:** Lottie Terroni

**Secunder:** Colin McIntyre

In favour: 11 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:** Fernande Kunz

**Secunder:** Rosemarie Breitenstein

In favour: 12 Against: None Abstentions: None

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

##### **Approval of dispatch of future AGM documents electronically**

The Chair explains that the proposal is to use electronic sendout of AGM documents as the default option from now onwards (as opposed to paper sendout as the default), but to still dispatch AGM documents by regular mail to those who are

unable to receive email or explicitly say that they prefer a paper copy. In due time, the compliance procedures to change the policy of AGM document sendout will be redone and the members shall be informed before this change of policy will take place. Part of the reason of this suggestion is that it takes a very long time to coordinate the sendout, as well as environmental considerations.

**Question from Fernande Kunz:** Fernande inquires what will happen to those who do not have access to an email. She also voices her willingness to support others in the congregation who do not have email access by passing on the electronically sent documents to them ahead of the AGM. The Chair answers that Fernande's offer is well received and that it is great if we can all support each other in this. Those who do not have access to email or notify the Consistoire or Reverend that they would prefer to receive paper copies will continue to receive AGM documents by mail.

**Proposer:** Fernande Kunz

**Secunder:** Rosemarie Breitenstein

In favour: 14 Against: None Abstentions: None

The Chair issued a vote of thanks to Carla for manoeuvring her tremendously challenging and difficult job. He spoke on behalf of the Consistoire and congregation in saying that we are immensely grateful for all that she does. He also thanked his fellow Consistoire members, the office team, the congregation, the volunteers and others – who, altogether, make up the Swiss Church, its history and traditions.

The 2022 Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Church in London was declared closed at 13:30.