

Minutes of Chaplaincy Council Meeting
Anglican Chaplaincy of Midi Pyrenées & Aude
March 8, 2023 via Zoom

Attendees: Peter Hooper (President), Clive Billenness, Linda Billenness, Pete Burd, Gill Heyworth, Georgina Hodgson (Secretary), Bob Humphrey, Ginny Jenkins, Ross Jenkins (Treasurer), Patricia Launders, Kevin Megarry, David Phillips, Gavin Porter, Celia Scott, Jerry Silverthorn, Samantha Silverthorn (16)

Apologies: Sheri Arjangi, Margaret Snow, Heidi Worswick (3)

1. Opening Prayer

Georgina led the opening prayer. At Peter's request for a volunteer, Gavin agreed to lead the opening prayer at the next meeting.

2. Welcome

At 19:33h Peter welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. He then informed the Council that Malcolm Rigley had resigned his membership of the Chaplaincy Council, his position of Lay Chair of the Council and member of the Archdeaconry Synod Representative for MP&A.

3. Attendance & Apologies

As above

4. Minutes of the last Meeting on January 25, 2023

With no changes or comments the Minutes were deemed true and accurate and were approved unanimously. Pete proposed the motion and Celia seconded.

5. Matters arising

5.1 Ministry - Lent Worship

Peter outlined the programme for Lent Worship and invited us to join:

- Weekly Lent Study sessions organised online by the Aquitaine Chaplaincy and open to all.
- Dust and Glory: A Lent Journey of faith, failure and forgiveness offers a daily Bible reading, a short reflection and a practical challenge, as well as a prayer linked to the week's theme available on the Church of England website.

- Weekly online worship services from across the Church of England during Lent. Services start streaming from 9 am and the next one is on March 12 from St Mary's Horsham, West Sussex.

5.2 Update on Association 1905 Statutes

Peter informed us about the work being carried out on the new generic statutes for all Anglican Chaplaincies in France. The new statutes will be available shortly and before June 30, 2023. There are seven key elements:

- All new statutes will have to be renewed every five years;
- There will be a centralised point of contact in France for all Chaplaincies to deal with any arising problems or issues;
- Membership will be the Electoral Roll;
- Conseil d'Administration of the Association Cultuelle is the Chaplaincy Council;
- All work will be carried out in accordance with the Church of England Church Representation Rules (CRR) as well as those set out by French legislation;
- The new statutes will be generic to all Chaplaincies in France.

There will also be an insurance at Chaplaincy level against any liabilities and federated across chaplaincies in France as well as a common payroll system for ministers.

Ross asked if there was going to be an English translation of the new statutes and Peter confirmed that an accurate English translation will indeed be made available.

5.3 Update on obtaining the Chaplaincy Bank Card

Ross confirmed that the Chaplaincy Bank Card has been issued by BP Occitanie and that it is indeed a Debit card.

5.4 ACM Voting Process - technical clarification

A detailed note by Peter had been circulated to the Council prior to the meeting outlining the voting process at the Annual General Meetings namely:

A postal voting system as described in the CRR and Diocesan constitution will be applied

- to the election of lay chaplaincy council representatives at each Annual congregational meeting if there is a contested election, and
- to the election of lay representatives to the French Archdeaconry Synod at the Annual Chaplaincy meeting if there is a contested election.

In addition, for the AGM Zoom meetings, the rules are to be applied to all present and postal votes to be accorded to those who applied prior to the meeting and only when election is contested.

A discussion ensued on this issue with Clive proposing to return to the 2020 system when postal votes were given to all on the electoral roll in case of contested elections in the hope of increasing participation. David feels that the voting system should be left as outlined above and kept as simple and as clear as possible.

Clive however says that it is necessary the voting system be changed to the 2020 one whereby

- everyone is eligible to vote by post
- postal vote to be implemented for every decision

Clive proposes the motion be put to vote and wishes it to be named, Linda seconds.

Result:

- In favour: Clive Billenness, Linda Billenness, Jerry Silverthorn, Samantha Silverthorn **(4)**
- Against: Pete Burd, Georgina Hodgson, Peter Hooper, Bob Humphrey, Ginny Jenkins, Ross Jenkins, Patricia Launders, Kevin Megarry, David Phillips, Gavin Porter, Celia Scott **(11)**
- Abstained: Gill Heyworth **(1)**

The motion is rejected.

5.5 LLF Update following Synod

A detailed report by Clive was circulated to the Council prior to the meeting. It is clear that a great deal more work still needs to be done and will be discussed at subsequent Synod meetings. The implications for our Chaplaincy in the event of a request for a blessing of a same sex relationship:

- each minister needs to decide for himself/herself
- no obligations are to be put upon the ministers

Sam said that the members of Toulouse congregation come from many different cultures and that this issue could raise questions from some of them. Peter suggests that they should be referred to

- Bishop David's letter which is very clear on the matter
- Reverend Jacqueline Rodwell
- Reverend June Hutchinson

He stressed that we must also be mindful of our ecumenical relationships which are very important as we share many of our worship places with the Catholic Church.

6. Safeguarding update

Celia informed the Council that four members have so far completed the Basic Awareness Course. If any more have completed it they should inform her and forward the certificate.

7. Communication subcommittee

7.1 Update on Audit Process

The report from Comms committee was circulated prior to the meeting. The Audit process was started in February this year. Starting this month all members will be informed about the meaning and the importance of the process by several means: all documents sent out, Church Mouse, Notices etc. Effective immediately, a letter explaining the process will be read out at all services. In Vayrac it was read on March 7.

Samantha said that she had received notification of an alleged data breach, had reported it, as required and is undertaking further investigation.

7.2 Expected date for completion and submission of recommendations

The work is expected to be completed before the end of April this year.

8. Finance subcommittee

8.1 Update on Chaplaincy Finances

Minutes of the Finance subcommittee meeting of February 22 and the briefing paper on chaplaincy finances requested by Malcolm were circulated prior to the Chaplaincy Council meeting.

All tax certificates for 2022 to members giving by bank transfer have been issued this month and in time according to the requirement by French authorities.

Worship activity is expected to continue at the present level throughout the chaplaincy until the ACM. The present budget for 2023 is therefore adequate. The new council will be tasked with developing a longer term plan for worship enabling more accurate budgets to be prepared.

8.2 Report & Accounts for 2022 and selection of independent examiner

The accounts for 2022 have been prepared and will be sent to an independent examiner after the text of the annual report has been approved by the President.

Mr. Graham Gardner was proposed as the independent examiner for our 2022 report and accounts. His selection was confirmed by the Council: 14 in favour, 2 abstained.

8.3 Charitable giving and MPA-Aid

This complex issue needed further investigation. Future diocesan policy may lead to the rationalisation of individual chaplaincies' 1901 associations. In the meantime, work will

continue to ensure that MPA-Aid is legally compliant until its future could be decided at an ACM. In order to do so a new Bureau was nominated:

Peter Hooper, President

Gill Heyworth, Vice-President

Ross Jenkins, Treasurer

Georgina Hodgson, Secretary

David Phillips said that the Chaplaincy Council has no legal authority to decide anything for MPA-Aid.

Individual congregations were encouraged to continue with their own projects to assist others in need. All ad-hoc fundraising projects are welcomed but the process should be kept simple.

The council voted by a majority (12 for, 4 against) to donate £200 to the Bishop's Lent appeal, to be contributed from our diocesan account in the UK.

Gill will put information on the Bishop's Lent appeal in the next Church Mouse.

9. Date and time for the Annual Chaplaincy Meeting

A detailed proposal of timing for ACM 2023 was circulated to the Council prior to the meeting. Congregational meetings to elect their representatives are to take place May 14 - 24. These elections can begin at the earliest 15 days after publication of the Revised Electoral Roll.

Bob pointed out that Vayrac would not be able to hold their meeting within the prescribed time limits. Peter will be in touch with the Vayrac congregation to find a solution.

Sue and John Baylis have confirmed that they will continue their role as Electoral Roll officers.

The Annual Chaplaincy Meeting will be held on May 25, 2023 at 19:30h (French time) by Zoom

10. Nomination of 7 members of the Association

One of the requirements for the obligatory re-registration of the Association to be carried out before end of June this year is submission of a list of seven people who live within the defined area of the Association and are on the Electoral Roll. The Council was asked for volunteers and many hands went up. The seven members are:

Richard Holmes, Kevin Megarry, Sam and Jerry Silverthorn, Gavin Porter, Celia Scott, and Ginny Jenkins.

Georgina will be contacting each member for information required to fill in the forms.

11. AOB

- Question was raised by email by a member from Cahors congregation about being able to assist at Congregational and Chaplaincy Council Meetings as observer. The Council confirmed that this was possible and that Zoom link should be given upon request.
- Georgina submitted the required documents to the *Maison des Associations* in Cahors in view of obtaining the Chaplaincy official address. Having ascertained that we were a **religious** Association and not a cultural one we were told that *Maison des Associations* was not allowed to grant us domiciliation. Two other options open to us:
 - To be domiciled at Terre Rouge in Cahors - Georgina sent a request to the Diocese of Cahors
 - To be domiciled at the private address of one of the Bureau members. Ginny and Ross Jenkins have kindly offered their address.

Clive said that he had details of several firms offering domiciliation services even to religious organisation and that he will provide the secretary with information.

The Council agreed unanimously for the Terre Rouge option. Should that not be possible then we should pursue with the alternative options.

- Jerry asked if it was again possible to pass the collection plates around the pews. It was confirmed that this was indeed possible now that Covid rules do not apply any more.
- David was pleased to announce that the Carcassonne congregation had secured a new place of worship: a lovely church in 11720 Floure, Aude. Very convenient because close to the A61, accessible, with good parking and other conveniences.

12. Date and time of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on May 3, 2023 at 19:30 h (French time) by Zoom

13. The meeting closed at 21:35h with Grace led by Peter.