



# the Company of Servers

Annual General Meeting  
Held via Zoom  
Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021

## MINUTES

1. **Welcome** - Belinda welcomed everybody to the meeting and Fr Clive then offered prayers.
2. **Apologies for absence** - Apologies for absence were received from:  
  
**Norwich Chapter** - Graham Owers, Robert Horne, Norman Powell, Terry Burkill, Margaret Warner and Fr Alan Warner SCP.  
  
**Southwark and London** - Karen Bransom, David Bransom, John Kitchener (also Central Committee)  
  
**Blackburn and Liverpool** - Sarah Hutchins
3. **Minutes of the previous AGM (11<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at Chelmsford Cathedral)** - Barry Moore (Norwich and Central Committee) proposed, and Mary Butcher (St Albans) seconded that the minutes should be signed as an accurate record. There were no matters arising from these minutes.
4. **Chairman General's Report** - Belinda reflected on the fact that many Servers are still not able to serve at the altar and carry out their ministry. Some larger Churches have been fortunate to be able to have servers. For those who have not been able to serve it can be disheartening.

Belinda was reminded of the passage in Ephesians about us being created in Christ Jesus for good works which God has prepared before us to be our way of live. This is or has been for us to serve at the altar. Our company prayer talks about us worshipping God and worshipping around the throne of God and the whole creation being part of that throne. Before things start to get back to normal, we need to take time out to listen to the Holy Spirit, to pray, read the Bible, worship with others (in whatever way is possible). Perhaps this was sent for a reason, as a reset button.

As a Company we need to take time out to see where the company is heading. We have a very important ministry in assisting the Clergy and leading the Congregation in worship. We are called to bring that healing peace of Christ to everyone by our supporting and serving ministry.

Belinda spoke about John Kitchener, our Treasurer General and a faithful member of the Southwark and London Chapter, who sends his apologies, who has been with the Company



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from its inception and has managed the accounts for the past 11 or 12 years. He is currently very unwell and in hospital, but even through his ill health he has always diligently managed the accounts.

5. **Treasurer General's Report** - Barry Moore read the Treasurer's Report that John had sent across in his absence. The text is copied below:

Hopefully, you are all able to see the receipts and payments account for 2020.

Last year was, of course, not typical but some receipts and payments continued.

On the Receipts side:

Our main source of income is, of course, the membership subscriptions. Last year these totalled just over £700, which is probably almost up to an average but there were a couple of unusual chapters missing.

Moving down the receipts:

All other receipts were nearly non-existent, much as might be expected due to the state of the year.

Moving on to the Payments:

The publicity expenses are just to keep our website going and the travel expenses covered the one face-to-face meeting of the Central Committee.

In the bottom box, you will see that overall, we had a net income of £529.32 much of which was due to the absence of an Annual Festival which has, in the past, cost us anything up to £500.

We therefore ended the year with a bank balance of £1992.54 which is reasonably healthy.

As for the future.

It's fairly difficult to say what will happen this year. Hopefully our subscriptions will continue as normal, and our web fees will still appear, but other income and expenditure are likely to be much the same as last year.

All in all, we should be in a reasonably healthy place and hopefully end this year on the positive side.

I should like to record a vote of thanks to Claire Stephenson for once again examining our accounts for last year at no cost to the Company.

Claire has stated that she is happy to do this again for the present financial year so I would like to propose her as Independent Examiner.

*(Claire is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales.)*



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One question was raised around the payment of Subs for 2020 and 2021 as many Chapters had not been meeting... No formal decision had been made by the Central Committee regarding the payment of 2020 Subs.

It was proposed by William Varlow (Southwark and London and Central Committee) and seconded by Patricia Brown-Dankwa (Central Committee) that the accounts be accepted. All agreed.

- 6. Young People and Serving** - This is about trying to encourage and utilise what is around them in terms of young people in serving at the altar. There is a document which Patricia produced which will be sent after the meeting. In her parish, Patricia and their Vicar are responsible for taking children at the local school through their First Communion and as part of this they start to train young people how to be Servers. This was how they managed to get new Servers. During Covid this hasn't happened, but they are just starting this up again. The document goes through some of the things that they do. It's not about standing at school gates, but speak to Headteachers, Youth Groups, and you can start to teach about Serving and get people interested. Patricia had permission to use the CoS logo so that she could create a certificate upon completion which can lead to a badge.

It's good to speak to your incumbent and ask for them to support this. If any Chapters would like to do that, Patricia is willing to help get things moving.

Questions:

**Is it a Church School that this is taking place in?** The school is a Church of England School so there is some knowledge. They approached the Headteacher, but also do some in non-CofE Schools. Some state schools don't want to bring a religious element into the school but are interested in what goes on behind the altar so they arrange visits, and the Ministry team will demonstrate.

**What is the minimum age for somebody to serve in Church?** There is no real age. There has been a 3-year-old who has served (accompanied). The main difficulty is keeping them once they move to Secondary School. As they have the First Communion as part of it, there is a constant flow of Servers. It is important as a Company that we have a flow and children seem to be the best vehicle for this.

**How does it work with regards to Safeguarding?** *This question was not answered, however in a School setting the expectation would be that they would abide by the safeguarding policy of the school, and in a Church context, the Church safeguarding policy.*

**Is there a manual for people to follow?** There isn't but Southwark and London Chapter do put on training sessions and would be a good idea if Chapters follow that type of model.

It's all about knowing your craft.



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Belinda liked the bit about the children having their own robes. Patricia added that they can label their own robes to give them some ownership. Those who will have specific roles will be trained for that role. There will also be a Lead Server, who will be able to do everything and direct others.

Lancaster Priory are doing some similar work within the Priory itself.

The text of the document sent by Patricia is below:

### Children's Ministry for Serving at the Altar

*'After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, and another generation grew up after them, who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel'*

*Judges 2:10*

Here is the reason why children should be brought in to perform the service that is within the church.

I am fortunate in finding servers to perform duties at my church. The reason is because weekly we do assembly services because our church serves our church school, and the Head is amicable to the church being part of their school environment.

To keep the service of servers of the altar a continual practice it is important to find ways of involving children to refill the server's rotas...

In the school that I serve with religious education is part of the school curriculum. After speaking to the head at school it was agreed that years 5 & 6 would lead on services.

They are trained to take positions of: MC, thurifer, boat, acolytes/candle bearers and crucifer. Each term I am responsible for training six children the aspects of serving.

- Processional order
- Garments - they put their names on the garments for ownership.
- The gifts of the altar and their significance: bread - body and wine - blood
- The importance of being assistants for the service
- Actions and movements: Genuflection or bowing and positions
- Instruments of service: ciborium, chalice, corporal, purificators and lavabo

A new team is created once per term (over a period of approx. 12 weeks) - those children that are trained, earn a certificate, and are invited to serve in church for a main service and they come with their families.



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Church and school settings are different. We must follow safeguarding guidelines procedures. Do not approach lone children. In the church settings please use youth ministry workers.

In school settings approach teachers, assistant heads or the heads of schools. Know your craft - as an altar server. Your chapter can help with training. Create rotas for children within your church setting utilise the groups that you belong to. Create teas or lunches for those that are interested. Create quizzes to gain knowledge. Make the environment special and children friendly. Enjoy what you are doing! Appraisals are essential for children. Please make your group of servers an 'all inclusive' group and please do this safely.

I have given some ways of how you may instigate the involvement of youth and I am willing to hear your ideas for your different church setting and areas and try to support that if it is essential.

*'And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord' Acts 11: 21*

Patricia Brown

7. **Announcement of Lifetime Membership Awards** - We move from one inspirational piece to another. A few years ago, there was a discussion and vote as people may have thought that if you were on Central Committee etc. you might automatically get Honorary Life Membership. A decision was made that it would be given to people for outstanding service, or long service. This year we have five members to bestow the honour on:

- Cathie James (Southwark and London Chapter) - nominated by the Chapter
- Carol Lawrence (Blackburn and Liverpool Chapter) - nominated by the Chapter
- Alec Crouch (Blackburn and Liverpool Chapter) - nominated by the Chapter
- David Simpson (York Chapter) - nominated by Yvonne Bowling
- Tony Parker (York Chapter) - nominated by Yvonne Bowling

There may be a delay with getting the ribbons as these are held by John.

William Varlow (Southwark and London/Central Committee) wished to make a request but due to sound issues Barry Moore made this on his behalf. During the presentation William and Barry had been chatting and something that was said struck a chord with them and both would like to nominate John Kitchener as an Honorary Life Member. He has been instrumental in training servers, writing materials, and with others started the Company of Servers. Michael Lewis (Southwark and London) echoed this. He is an example of a true servant, even with all his issues he still carries on. All on Central Committee agreed that this is the right decision.

8. **AOB** - Peter Court (ST Albans) noted that the date on the accounts was incorrect, should read 2021 rather than 2020. Barry will make contact to get this changed.



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Michael Lewis (Southwark and London) asked us to commend Sion Hughes-Carew, and Patricia Brown-Dankwa to our prayers as they will be ordained at Petertide. Sion will be moving to Newcastle Diocese and Patricia will be staying in the Edmonton Area of London Diocese.

9. **Date of Provisional 2022 National Festival and AGM** - We have been invited to Exeter for the festival in 2022 on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2022. They also have a group of people who make banners and hopefully there will be a Company of Servers banner which will be dedicated at the Festival Eucharist. There will be High Mass at 12 Noon, Evensong at 3pm and lunch and the AGM in between.
10. Fr Clive closed the meeting firstly by quoting a mug which he received from a parishioner. It says, 'never mess with a Priest who has survived livestreaming, empty pews, and the ever-changing regulations but never lost hope during the 2020 global pandemic.' The one thing he thinks was missing on the mug was... the lack of servers. As a Priest used to having Servers, over the last 14 months of having to do it all himself Fr Clive said he had spilled water everywhere. On behalf of the Ordained Members Fr Clive thanked everyone for their ministry. At this point Siri added... 'it's good to have work appreciated.'

Fr Clive prayed for the new lifetime members, and for those due to be ordained. He concluded with the Pentecost blessing.

The meeting closed at 9.02pm.