

# THE THIRD ORDER OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS

European Province

## CHAPTER MINUTES **Part A**

14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2014

### **Present:**

#### ***Trustees:***

Averil Swanton (Minister Provincial) **(AS)**

John Reynolds (Provincial Treasurer) **(JR)**

Jackie Alexander (Link Tertiary, Central and Eastern England) **(JA)**

Tim Higgins (Link Tertiary, Wales, Severn, W. Midlands and Marches) **(TH)**

Jan Davies (Link Tertiary, Yorkshire and East Midlands) **(JD)**

Carol Robertson (Link Tertiary, Scotland and Ireland) **(CR)**

Roger Healey (Link Tertiary, Central Southern England and the Channel Islands) **(RH)**

John Wiltshire (Link Tertiary, London and South-East England) **(JW)**

Jeremy Plummer (Link Tertiary, North-East and North-West England) **(JP)**

Philippa Bird (outgoing Provincial Novice Guardian) **(PhB)**

Paul Bodenham (Provincial Formation Guardian) **(PaB)**

Chris Petrie (Provincial Communications Co-ordinator) **(CP)**

#### ***Non-Trustees Present:***

Ken Norian (Minister General) **(KN)**

Jan-Eric Jonsgarden (representing Sweden Area) **(JJ)**

Peter Dixon (Provincial Novice Guardian-elect) **(PD)**

Jennifer Robinson (Minutes Secretary) **(JRob)**

## 1. Minister Provincial's Introduction and Preliminary Matters:

1.1 AS welcomed KN, PD, JJ and JP (attending his first meeting as LT)

1.2 **Apologies for absence were received from:** Howard McFadyen (Provincial Secretary) **(HM)**, Hazel Sharp (Link Tertiary for South-West England) **(HS)** and Christer Sall (Area Minister, Sweden) **(CS)**

1.3 **Minutes of the last Meeting:** These were approved by Chapter and signed by AS after, in the first paragraph on page 6 (Item 4), the words "and possibly that a larger apartment can be found" were deleted, at the request of Bro. Benedict.

1.4 **Correspondence:** AS had heard from Freeland that Carolyn Clapperton is to be clothed as a novice in the Second Order. She will send a card on behalf of the Chapter at the appropriate date.

1.5 **AS** reminded Chapter that the Order's Bishop Protector will be retiring in the autumn and it will be necessary to appoint a new one, who has to be a diocesan bishop.

1.6 **AS** had received notification from the Membership Secretary that a new Provincial Pastoral Officer for the Forces will be required, as the term of office of the present holder of the post is coming to an end. AS will ask HM what is the role description or function of the Pastoral Officer and whether the person is appointed or elected. **Action ..... AS/HM.**

## 2. Minister General's Introductory Remarks:

KN introduced himself briefly and explained that he was visiting the Chapters of all the Provinces in order to get an overview of them.

## 3. Matters arising from the Minutes:

2.3 AS had replied to CS, but it had not yet been decided whether or not it is necessary for a representative from Sweden to attend every meeting of Chapter.

8.0 AS had written to thank Martin Gillham and Nancy Adams for their work on the Governance Working Group report.

With regard to the minute on page 22 of the report, AS had set up two 'flip charts': one for points for the rolling agenda and the other for key points arising from the Chapter meeting, and to be published in TON (**NB:** in future they are to be called "key points" and not "bullet points". She suggested that members might take it in turns to write a brief report on the proceedings of Chapter.

## 4. Link Tertiaries' Feedback:

4.1 JA had circulated copies of a written report from the meeting of Link Tertiaries which had preceded the full Chapter meeting. She said that it had been noted that several points were common to all Clusters, one being that the obligations of being a member of the Order need to be made clear during the novitiate and again at the times when vows are renewed, i.e. each year. These are: membership of a local group; membership of an Area; Community Obedience; reviewing and renewing; quiet days and/or retreats; consultation with a spiritual

director; having a personal rule of life; contributing to the Order (both financially and with time and talents). KN felt that obedience should also be on the list of obligations. Making an annual Report is also an obligation. The sentence “Discipline / Obligation is not so much **moral** as **wise**.” in the report, was commended.

4.2 There needs to be a system of welcoming people (especially novices) who move from one Area to another. The matter of non-attenders at meetings was another common factor. More attention should be paid to JPIC matters, including the environment.

4.3 TH felt that tertiaries need to be made aware of the role of Chapter; the local group is the centre (or hub) of the organisation and Chapter represents the edges (or ‘rim’ of the organisation wheel’). Communication between the two is needed through the ‘spokes of the wheel’. PaB thought that the annual reports made by tertiaries are not necessarily to be regarded as confidential. PhB thought that Provincial Chapter needs to provide a tightening up of present procedures. She agreed that those with mental health issues need support and suggested that perhaps there needs to be a period of “convalescence”.. Mental health issues need to be handled with care, realising that certain issues could be beyond our competency. It was thought that maybe the leave of absence process would be useful in this situation. Link Tertiaries are requested to put this proposal to Area Teams for their consideration.

**Action .....LTs/Area Teams.**

## **5. Minister Provincial’s Report**

AS had circulated her report in advance of the meeting.

5.1 She reminded Chapter members that the Bishop Protector would be retiring in the autumn and that it would be necessary to replace him. She said that it was not necessary for the Third Order to have the same Bishop Protector as the First Order, though this would be preferable. She asked members to send her any suggested names. **Action..... all Chapter.**

5.2 AS also spoke about the need to revise the procedure for the conduct of elections within the Order. She felt that it would require time to do this, although it is something which needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

5.3 Together with KN, she will attend the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary General Chapter and the 6<sup>th</sup> Elective Chapter meetings of all (worldwide) Roman Catholic Franciscan Seculars in Assisi. AS said she would report back on their procedures for elections of officers. **Action .....AS.**

5.4 AS thinks that Chapter should give consideration, after consulting with the Areas, to the matter of the size of Areas and their boundaries, within our Province. Some Areas are increasing in size and some are decreasing. We should also consider mainland Europe and whether countries from there should be expected to send representatives to all Chapter meetings. Sweden has already been asked to think about this. The issue has been raised in the Report from Chapter and will be followed up after consultation with the Areas.

5.5 She felt that Areas should be discouraged from having the same person holding several roles and also that partners should be discouraged from serving together on Area Teams. . Statutes 6.5.1 and 5.6.3 cover these matters which could be considered at a future meeting of Chapter if required.

## 6. Provincial Formation Guardian's Report

6.1 PaB felt that he needs to see annual reports from the Area Teams, because he needs to be certain of the vitality of the Rule of the Order. He also recommended that an evaluation be undertaken of the exercise and the questions asked, before the next reports are due.

6.2 The meeting of AFGs in April 2013 had felt that the revision of the annual report form completed by every tertiary at Francis-tide is a matter requiring further attention. A working party of AFGs had met with PaB and drawn up guidelines for the form of these reports, which should be returned to AFGs at the time of renewal. In response to a query, PaB said that he had taken account of the relevant section in the Manual. The Formation Team was considering whether more consistency and accountability was necessary on the 'obligations of profession'. The outcome will be reported to the next Chapter meeting when a decision on promoting the new guidance will be made. He pointed out that Chapter will need to revoke a decision made in 2005 about the form to be used as the annual report. He agreed that the forms could have an opt-in tick-box regarding the matter of confidentiality of the report.

6.3 There is to be a weekend on spiritual direction, which has been advertised among AFGs. He requested that this be subsidised (£1,000) from the Whettam bequest account in accordance with a previous Chapter decision. **Chapter approved this nem con.** The weekend will be advertised in TON. **Action.....PaB/CP**

## 7. Provincial Novice Guardian's Report

7.1 PhB explained that the Guidelines which had been circulated to Chapter members represented the revision of what was previously TANG.

7.2 She had received 1,000 enquiries during the past six years (all but three of them through the website), and had trained about 400 Novice Guardians in 40 Areas. She had based her training on people rather than on processes (which had previously been the case in TANG). The important new piece of guidance is that Manuals are now to be given to candidates at their novicing. She pointed out that although there is a section on spiritual direction in the Guidelines, it should be made clear that the roles of spiritual director and novice guardian differ and should be distinctive.

7.3 AS thanked PhB for the enormous amount of work she had done on the matter of the training of novice guardians during her time in office. She suggested that the decision to endorse the new Guidelines should be taken at the next meeting of Chapter and that if members had any comments or questions, these should be made to PD before June.

**Action.....All Chapter.**

## 8. Provincial Secretary's Report

HM had circulated his report in advance of the meeting.

8.1 With regard to the 'Annual Reports' and the suggested Chapter dates for their discussion, AS said that the chairman of the Trustees of Franciscan Aid will be producing a report for discussion at the next meeting. Both TH and JP could represent Chapter on the JPIC Steering Group.

8.2 JD asked that in HM's report the timing of the report from the Contemplatives Steering Group should read "Annual Report for March discussion" and the two lines which HM had put on the list against that Group should be deleted. **Action ....HM.**

8.3 The election of a new Provincial Novice Guardian (PNG) was conducted successfully by Chris Petrie (as 'Returning Officer'), and concluded on 31st January with a clear vote for Peter Dixon. Voting was as follows:

|       |             |               |              |
|-------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
|       | Peter Dixon | Carolyn Tovey | David Faulks |
| Votes | 194 (43%)   | 133 (30%)     | 119 (27%)    |

Total votes – 24% of all eligible Tertiaries within European Province.

The concern expressed by Chapter about low voting percentages in previous elections is, regrettably, unresolved here and reflects the need for a greater sense of 'ownership' by Tertiaries in the Province. It is recommended that this might be discussed within the context of election processes at Chapter. **Action.....HM.**

## 9. Report from Provincial Communications Co-ordinator

9.1 CP said that a replacement is now needed for Roger Marks, who has served six years as editor of TON, and asked Chapter members to give thought to possible candidates. He also said that he himself would be standing down from his office after three years because of the pressure of the work and also for personal reasons. It will therefore be necessary to find a replacement for him, to whom he can hand over next spring. He would like to send out election papers with TON. **Chapter agreed this proposal.** **Action .....**CP.

9.2 It had been decided that Denise Mumford's book on Dorothy Swayne is not to be sent to all tertiaries, but one or two copies will be sent to each Area (one per Local Group if this is affordable), the cost of which will be met by donations.

9.3 The membership secretary is concerned that sometimes tertiaries are "lost" in the system when they move between Areas. Although it is ultimately the responsibility of the individual to make sure that they can contact people in the new Area, CP wondered if LTs could ask the Areas to make sure that the transfer goes smoothly. **Action .....**LTs.

9.4 As a result of the survey in 2011, it is obvious that most tertiaries appreciate receiving the "franciscan" and therefore there is no need to survey the membership yet again. The agreement about our bulk subscription does need to be renegotiated this year. AS will report this to the First Order and, with JR, will negotiate terms of a continuation of the agreement. **Action.....AS & JR.**

9.5 A review of the Order's donation to Franciscan Aid was requested. This is dealt with in the Treasurer's Report (10.1).

9.6 CP said that the fact that the production of the audio versions of both TON and "Little Portion" is to be taken over by Hilfield, will save our Order money.

9.7 JD spoke of the difficulty of obtaining written contributions from all the Areas for "Little Portion" and this was echoed by several others. The idea of using more individual profiles to tell people about our Tertiaries abroad was offered. RH will make sure that the matter is discussed again at the meeting of the editorial team. **Action.....RH.**

9.8 CP reported that the ownership of the domain name for the website has been transferred from Nancy Adams to the Provincial Treasurer.

## 10. Provincial Treasurer's Report

10.1 JR presented his budget for the coming year. He was asked by Chapter members to amend it in the following respects, because there was confusion on which items were one-off and which were ongoing expenditure.

Clusters Days: this should come out of reserves, being money left over from the last General Chapter

Assisi, Franciscan Aid and Friaries Support (£2,100 in 2012) are items that should be donations when we have a surplus and, with the exception of the flat in Assisi, are not regular TO commitments.

Franciscans International: this covers the travel expenses of the SSF Anglican representative at their one Board meeting of the year and comes from our contribution to the Central Fund.

Knox Dick Fund: JR did not know how this can be reimbursed to the Third Order; PhB explained the account in which this money is kept, and therefore no expenditure will be needed from the TO general funds

10.2 JR thanked Chapter members for pointing out these matters and asked those with specific responsibilities (such as Clusters, formation, the novitiate, etc.) to let him know what their expenses are likely to be.

10.3 Bequests have been received: £30,000 is in our account, but for reserves. A new bequest of £7,000 has been received and it has not yet been decided what this is to be used for.

10.4 It was later **agreed by Chapter** that a revised budget should be issued to Chapter and JR agreed to produce this when he had tracked down the correct account in which to place the amounts which had been mentioned. **Action .....JR.**

## 11. Governance Working Group Report

11.1 JW said that the Group had been working on the Chapter Handbook for about 18 months and that for practical purposes most of the work had now been done. Members of Chapter had two weeks to consider the document the Group had produced and it would then be finalised by AS, CP and himself. The safeguarding section has to be updated. AS thanked JW for all the work he had done on this. **Action.....Chapter; AS/JW/CP.**

PhB asked if the Area Team Handbook should also be updated, and PaB replied that in time this would be done.

## 12. Elections to Profession

The following were elected to profession, with prayer, following recommendation from their Areas:-

|                        |                             |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Tony Mitchell-Innes    | West Kent                   |
| Leslie Rogers          | London East and South Essex |
| Ruth Williams          | London West                 |
| Ursula Sonnewald       | London West                 |
| Leena Kristola         | London West                 |
| Sara Kontinen-Koski    | London West                 |
| Anne Lindell           | London West                 |
| Asmo Koskinen          | London West                 |
| Grace Bates            | Guildford                   |
| Paul Daish Miller      | Solent                      |
| Mary Hallett           | Sussex                      |
| Beresford Moyle        | Sussex                      |
| Tania Donaldson        | Winchester                  |
| Anne Watson            | Winchester                  |
| Esme Hopkinson         | Devon (retrospective)       |
| Malcolm Joyce          | Devon (retrospective)       |
| Nynka Arthur           | Oxford                      |
| Meg Roberts            | Oxford                      |
| Jane McNabb            | East Anglia                 |
| Valerie Robinson       | Durham                      |
| Kristin Bakkevig       | Sweden                      |
| Johan Boy Garde        | Sweden                      |
| Niclas Ember           | Sweden                      |
| Henrik Kristing Heldal | Sweden                      |
| May Kristing Heldal    | Sweden                      |
| Gunnvor Hovland        | Sweden                      |
| Ake Lundqvist          | Sweden                      |
| Bo Nordqvist           | Sweden (retrospective)      |

## 16. JPIC Issues:

This group's report will be received at the June meeting.

## 17. Franciscan Aid:

No report was received. A report was to be requested from the new chair.

## 18. Study and Prayer Enabling Group

The report from this Group will be received at the October meeting.

## 19. Contemplatives Steering Group:

JD presented the report from this Group and spoke about the continuing upset in some quarters about their naming as contemplatives rather than solitaries. The Group seeks more affirmation that it is a positive thing to be a solitary. It was agreed that "Little Portion" should

contain an article about the matter and that there should be a thumbnail sketch of life as a solitary. **Action.....JD.**

**Chapter agreed** that the text of the Area Team Handbook on the matter should be considered at the next meeting of Chapter and a decision will then be taken on whether the wording needs revision. **Action.....HM.**

RH said that the minimum requirement in terms of attendance at meetings for contemplatives needs to be spelled out. He also asked if the Group's newsletter could be sent to all members of Chapter and JD agreed to ask the Group members about this. **Action .....JD.**

JD says that the Group has 156 members in the network.

Alan Llewellyn is passing on the job of being the contact for the Group but a successor has not yet been identified.

## **20. Report from the Provincial Engagements Group:**

HS had circulated her report on the Group's activities. There is a need for members of the Third Order to help with missions. The suitability of people to fulfil this role needs to be considered: it is not just a matter of asking for volunteers. **Action LTs and Area Teams.**

## **21. Discussion on a possible General Chapter:**

21.1 This was a continuation of the informal discussion the previous evening. PaB had produced a paper setting out the possible objectives of a General Chapter. Three volunteers had already come forward to serve on the steering group: Anne-Marie Organ, Will Capel and Bruce Driver. PaB will now approach them "officially". **Action .....PaB.**

21.2 With regard to the possible objectives, **Chapter agreed** that the second of the three set out by PaB was the one which should be aimed for: "To be invigorated long-term in fulfilling the Aims of the Order; to reveal and value the diverse ways which tertiaries fulfil the aims; to identify how the Order can grow as a 'community in mission' by supporting and resourcing those endeavours".

The implementation of this, together with the planning of the General Chapter, are now to be on the Chapter's ongoing agenda. **Action.....HM.**

## **22. Paul Alexander's Film Project**

22.1 AS said that the project needs the recognition and acceptance of Chapter for Paul's Steering Group. She pointed out that the Brothers and Sisters of the First Order had, at their Chapter meeting, declined to back the project financially, although they wished it well. They felt that they had insufficient knowledge about the process of making a film. Chapter was supportive of Paul Alexander's vision for a film of the Life of St. Francis and considered it to be an exciting project which deserves our support. It was felt that the Steering Group might be encouraged to think in terms of setting up an independent Limited Liability Company to manage the whole project. JR said he wished to consult the Order's independent financial examiners to clarify what it is possible for the Order to do. **Chapter agreed that** the Steering Group would adopt a flexible approach to fund raising, as long as this involved ethical sources including other trusts. **Action.....JR.**

22.2 AS expressed Chapter's thanks to Paul Alexander for his initiative. JW agreed to pass on to him the views of Chapter. **Action .....JW.**

## 22 Feedback:

23.1 KN felt that the largest province in the Third Order (i.e. the European one) was in a healthy state and its management is in good hands.

Other Chapter members agreed that the agenda is now managed well and that business is able to be dealt with more speedily.

23.2 AS said she would circulate her report on the proceedings; there are to be no “bullet points”.

## 23 Dates of Future Meetings: (all to take place at Bishop Woodford House, Ely)

### 2014

13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> June Full Chapter

17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> October Full Chapter, with SSF, CSF and OSC representatives

### 2015

19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> February MP and Link Tertiaries’ meeting

20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> February Full Chapter

12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June Full Chapter

16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> October Full Chapter, with SSF, CSF and OSC representatives

### 2016

11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> February MP and Link Tertiaries’ meeting

12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> February Full Chapter

16<sup>th</sup> June Quiet Day

17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> June Full Chapter

14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> October Full Chapter, with SSF, CSF and OSC representatives.

## 24 Future and Ongoing Agenda items

General Chapter – work of steering group and objectives **ONGOING**

Attendance at Area/Group meetings, including those in the Contemplative Network;  
Support for Local Groups **June 14**

Chapter Handbook sign off **June 14**

Complaints and safeguarding **June 14**

Size of Areas and development in Europe \*

Conduct and process for elections \*

Leave of absence **March 15**

Purpose and use of bequests **June 14**

Upper and Lower age limits for novices

What are Areas asked to report after Francistide

Review of the annual report form **June 14**

**Note:** Items with \*\* are long term

It would be helpful to identify any of the above items that would sit well in the Friday evening slot, or any items that could be taken together. **Action.....All Chapter.**

## **25.Summary of Chapter Proceedings for TON**

### **Chapter 13/15 March**

Rather than sending out a list of bullet points, it was decided a more personal way of sharing what happened at the meeting would be produced, which would be supplemented by the reports of the Link Tertiaries. Our Minister General, Ken Norian was with us for the whole of Chapter and he pointed out that since we are the most numerous Province, it was important that we were in good spiritual health, since this affected the whole of the Worldwide Order.

In the meeting of the Link Tertiaries on the day before Full Chapter the matters raised by the Areas, especially those regarding our spiritual health, were discussed and included the following. Great stress was laid on the fact that we are a community with individual members both receiving and contributing service to the Order. It was repeated that the marks of the Professed Tertiary are the saying of the Daily Obedience, Report and Renewal of the Pledge and Contribution in service and finance. The Areas were very keen it should be made clear that if a Tertiary does not renew his/her pledge and gives no explanation, the Area Team would request the release of that Tertiary from the Order.

**All novices** need to be nurtured in this, together with the expectation that we belong to both a Local Group, where we test our vocation and seek to grow in the company of our brothers and sisters and also a wider Area Group to widen our outlook It would be helpful if Local Groups could share in the Area what topics/activities they have found fruitful. It is the Local Group which cares for the housebound, visiting and providing an opportunity for Renewal. In some cases the individual's Rule should be simplified to accommodate infirmity.

There had been a positive response to the **Cluster Days** and there would be more in Clusters which have not yet had one.

**Various pastoral issues** were raised, including Tertiaries with mental health and other problems. The Area's ability to support the individual, whilst realising that certain issues could be beyond our competency, was seen as crucial. The breakdown of pastoral care was evident in some cases when there was a move from one Area to another, particularly during the novitiate, when an individual may be vulnerable. It was agreed that there needed to be a named person to meet the newcomer and introduce him/her to the group and area.

**The size and composition of the Areas** was raised and it was agreed that Areas be asked to consider some re-arrangement of boundaries, so that those with smaller numbers

might amalgamate, and thereby increase the number of people prepared to take on responsibility. No decision would be taken in a hurry and Areas are asked to come up with some suggestions. Another matter of concern was the number of individuals who hold two or more roles and the Groups/Areas where couples hold key roles. This too is something to be addressed over time, and Areas are asked to take note.

Other key issues were the proposed new format for **General Chapter**, details of which are in the current Little Portion, and an exciting project – the making of a film on the life of Francis, which deserves our support.

There were also reports from various groups, including the **Contemplative Network**, which pointed out that joining this group was not an alternative to being a member of a local group.

In all it was a good meeting with time for worship and fellowship and much laughter.