

THE THIRD ORDER OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS

European Province

**CHAPTER MINUTES**

20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> February 2015

**Present:**

**Trustees:**

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

Howard McFadyen (Provincial Secretary) **(HM)**

Carole Selby (Link Tertiary, Central and Eastern England) **(CJS)**

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)**

Rona Duncan (Link Tertiary, South-West England) **(RD)**

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

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

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

***Non-Trustees Present:***

John Lovatt (Provincial Treasurer-elect) **(JL)**

Chris Jenkins (Provincial Communications Co-ordinator-elect) **(CJ)**

Jan-Eric Jonsgarden (Sweden Area Secretary) **(J-EJ)**

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

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

**1.1** AS welcomed all those present, particularly **JL** and **CJ**, who were attending the meeting of Chapter for the first time. She then opened the meeting with a time of quiet prayer, after reading a verse from Psalm 24. **AS** also reported that Br. Damian had successfully undergone brain surgery to remove a malignant tumour  
**CP** agreed to write a summary report from Chapter to TON. **Action.....CP.**

**1.2 Apologies for absence were received from: Christer Sall** (Area Minister, Sweden) (**CS**) and **John Reynolds** (Provincial Treasurer) (**JR**), who was awaiting hospital tests, possibly to be followed by surgery.

**1.3 Correspondence:** Robert Axford had been granted a sabbatical and has produced written material on St. Francis.

**2.Minutes of the last Meeting:** These were approved as a true record and signed by **AS**.

### 2.1 Matters arising from the Minutes:

**HM** had been in touch with Will Capel about security with regard to Part B of Chapter Minutes.

**HM** had nothing further to report with regard to finding a Forces Pastoral Officer.

**HM** had also almost completed compiling the record of previous Chapter decisions from research into Chapter Minutes going back as far as 2006.

**PB** reported that no ANG had as yet been found to join the Formation Team

The replacement of the old 'yellow form' by a new form for TSSF Postulants has been done.

An article on the TSSF networks is to appear in TON.

**PB** had sent a guidance note to Areas about keeping a record of renewal of vows and prolonged absence.

There is to be a training weekend for spiritual directors at Alnmouth in September 2015.

As requested, **TH** had produced a remit of the work of JPIC. Peter Canning has stated he will be delighted to receive invitations to speak about the work of Franciscan Aid at Area meetings.

**AS** would still welcome receipt of feedback from Chapter members about the conduct of Chapter meetings. **Action.....All Chapter.**

## 3.0 Review of Chapter Finances

**RD** presented three papers on behalf of the Provincial Treasurer and the Finance Sub Group: Financial Review Summary, 'Good to Go – Finance', and Budget Guidelines. She explained that TSSF finances involved not only its members but also conformity with charity law and the regulations of Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs. The members of Chapter (i.e. the Trustees) need to be kept fully informed of the financial position. The situation with regard to Gift Aid needs to be sorted out as a priority. At present the Provincial Treasurer's job is cumbersome and

time-consuming. The computer programmes used need to be 'fit for purpose' and the Provincial Treasurer must be someone with financial knowledge. Past financial records need to be put in good order and kept for 6 years. There must be careful budgeting ahead of each year. The Finance Sub Group must support and monitor the PT's work. **RD** felt that the work involved may become too big a job for a volunteer. All members of Chapter must share the responsibility for the work of the PT. **HM** endorsed the views put forward by **RD**.

The work of the Finance Sub Group (**FSG**) is to be ongoing. **AS** proposed to invite Robert Dimmock, Denise Easteal and Michael Oram, with **RD** as Chairman, to form the Group, and this will support the PT. **RD** has drafted Terms of Reference for it, which will be presented to Chapter for agreement at June's chapter. **Action.....AS.**

The terms of office of members of the Group will not be the same as those applying to other members of Chapter. **RD** had also revised the 'role description' for the new PT, which had been accepted by **JL**. It was proposed by **HM**, seconded by **JW**, and **Chapter unanimously agreed that this be accepted.**

The new PT needs to be provided with a laptop computer, since the financial business is at present recorded on the computer at Hilfield. Back-up for the system will also be required, and somebody needs to be available as a stand-in for the PT, if required. **The purchase of the new laptop and necessary accounting software was unanimously approved by Chapter.** It was agreed that this should be done **before** the next meeting of Chapter. **Action PT & FSG.**

**RD** explained the difficulties with regard to the administration of Gift Aid. Much work needs to be done, and it will be necessary to purchase software.

With regard to budgeting, the Area Treasurers will have to be informed about what is required. They will have to draw up budgets for any Area events, as will Provincial Office Holders. Expenses for General Chapter will be met from a general fund. **Action....LTs, PT & Chapter Office Holders.**

#### **4. Elections to Profession**

The following were elected to profession, with prayer:-

Ruth Faber	London East and South Essex (Brussels)
Floris Faber	London East and South Essex (Brussels)
Frank Sauer	London East and South Essex (Vienna)
Jane Lovick	Canterbury
Katherine Mary Plank	Berkshire
Robert Hughes	Winchester
Liz Lang	Wessex
Isobel Brazil	Severn
Millie Dews	West Midland

Kay Dyer	West Midlands
Ian Jackson	West Midlands
Dan Muthuveoe	West Midlands
Richard Woodfin	West Midlands
Ian Grantham	West Midlands
David Austin	West Yorkshire with Skipton
Jan Betts	West Yorkshire with Skipton
Jenny Fox Eades	Mersey Valley
Gill Lyons	Borders
Susan McLachlan	Scotland
Mark McDade	Scotland
Katrin Sorbris	Sweden

**5. See Part B Minutes (confidential to Chapter)**

**6. See Part B Minutes (confidential to Chapter)**

**7. Minister Provincial's Report**

**AS** felt that Chapter needs to agree whether there should be an upper age limit for new novices – to be discussed at a future meeting. She also thought that if a tertiary is a member of the Order for 50 years, then the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of profession should be marked in some way. **AS** writes to welcome new AMs when they take up office and also to thank them when their term of office ends. **Chapter agreed** the Formation Team should explore the accountability of AMs. **Action...PB.**

**8. Link Tertiaries' Report**

**CR** presented the report from the LTs' meeting during the preceding 24 hours. There was discussion on the following points:

Areas have limited interest in Provincial Chapter.

There are few "younger" tertiaries, and therefore the initiatives involving young people in Sweden, Oxford, London and Manchester are welcome.

In the context of an older and less mobile community, it is important to stress the permission that tertiaries have to review their Rule of Life. The suggestion was made that each Area needs a

designated person to contact and care for those with reduced mobility. Guidance is needed on how to deal with tertiaries who are experiencing dementia. The Alzheimer's Society is running courses for churches. They might also do so for Area meetings.

Several tertiaries expressed regret at the absence of printed obituaries, which used to appear in 'The Chronicle'.

The comment that tertiaries don't vote at Provincial elections because they have insufficient knowledge about candidates could be met by one Area representative making the relevant enquiries and sharing this information with the Area. Electoral Addresses and contact information for nominated candidates and Proposers is currently provided.

A number of Areas are experiencing difficulties in finding Area office-holders.

Concern was expressed about attendance at meetings, particularly Area meetings. One Cluster quoted attendance at Area meetings being about 40%, and about the same percentage attended the Cluster Day.

There is a tension between the themes of (a) a personal Rule of Life and (b) understanding TSSF as "a community in mission". Also, it is difficult for some to sustain their identity in the wider Order as well as in their Group or Area.

A few Areas are making use of Facebook and websites, and it was suggested that Skype could also be used.

In general more tertiaries are reviewing, renewing and reporting, but there was concern about some people leaving the Order because of their increasing awareness of 'the marks of profession'.

There was discussion about whether or not it would be beneficial if non-Chapter tertiaries could observe Chapter at work .

It was noted that many tertiaries are involved in social outreach, i.e. Franciscans being Franciscans in the local community.

Clarification was sought about where to obtain Manuals and the point at which they should be given (at novicing or during postulancy – see note below).

Age: does the Order reflect the demography of the church and also of the community at large? How about raising up seniors?

One Area is going to try having professions take place at a public Eucharist, though it is thought that few Church members are aware of the existence of TSSF.

It was agreed that the time allocated to LTs before full meetings of Chapter could be reduced. This could perhaps be done by their having only two sessions on the Thursday and then joining in with everybody else for the open discussion that evening.

**AS** said that it is worldwide practice to give Manuals to candidates at novicing, and this had been agreed by Provincial Chapter. TO Distribution should be notified that Areas need to hold a few copies to be used for training purposes with postulants.

**Action...LTs & CJ.**

**Chapter agreed**, and **HM** will put on the ongoing Chapter agenda, that an AM should be invited to attend a Chapter meeting. **Action.....HM.**

**Chapter agreed** that it is quite in order for professions to take place publicly – no Eucharist should be considered to be a private occasion.

**Chapter also agreed** that it should be seen to be responding to the matter of an ageing TO membership. Tertiaries could well consult their Spiritual Directors about the matter of adjusting their Rule of Life to suit their advancing years. Chapter agreed that this could possibly become the subject of an Assisi booklet; **PB** agreed to pursue the idea by talking to the Formation Team and the Disability Advisor about it. He will bring ideas back to the next meeting. **Action.....PB.**

There was some discussion about raising the profile of the Order and how to interface with the dioceses. **It was agreed** to be a future agenda topic for a Friday evening discussion. **Action.....HM.**

**AS** thought the idea of revising the use of the LTs' time before the full meeting of Chapter was a good one. **HM** stated that this is an option for developing Chapter Programmes. **Action.....HM.**

**HM** said that Areas must be urged to circulate information about candidates before a Provincial election. **Action.....LTs.**

## **9. Report from Provincial Formation Guardian**

**PB** said that Chapter must listen to what the Areas are saying to it. He would like Chapter to explore how it can shape its agenda to reflect this. He suggested that it is necessary to continue with an exploration of the meaning of Formation for the next three years. **AS** agreed that Areas are now more open to the idea of Formation. It was suggested by **PD** that AMs attending a meeting of Chapter should be asked to make a short report for TON. **TH** suggested that there is a difference between communication and 'Formation': 'Formation' is more than just imparting facts. He felt that what was proposed came under the aegis of communication, whereas Formation is about building community. The role of LTs is to build a relationship with the Areas.

**PB** felt that there should be a stronger communal dimension to Formation. He also suggested that Provincial Chapter should make annual reports. Chapter must be clear about the way in which it responds to what Areas say.

He pointed out that the statistics show that there are differences between the Areas and thought that it is necessary to discover what consistencies there are.

**PB** proposed that consistent questions need to be put to Areas for Francis-tide reports; Area Teams need more guidance. Questions for the annual reviews and the possible scope of a Chapter annual report are to be decided at the June Chapter meeting and it also needs to be decided whether the request for statistics is to be repeated every year. **Action.....PB.**

**PB** also pointed out that communication and the choice of words is very important.

There was discussion about how the training of Convenors should be offered – whether by Clusters or in a larger meeting (similar to the one for AFGs which **PB** organised previously). An outside speaker, whose role would be to share and to facilitate, should be invited.

Chapter was in favour of some form of training for local group Convenors, but the level and type of this should be discussed further. **PB** felt that the request for it should come from the Areas. LTs are asked to feedback their Area Requirements to PFG. **CS** will co-ordinate. **Action... CS & all LTs.**

## **10. Report from Provincial Novice Guardian**

**PD** said that he was clear on the two fundamental questions which need to be asked of all enquirers: What are you looking for in an Order?: And: What is Francis for you? He feels that there is a need to draw a thick line between Postulancy and the Novitiate, since as a novice one becomes a member of the Third Order. Novice Guardians must be aware that it is not necessary to try and push people through to profession. He spoke about queries with regard to whether there should be an upper age limit for enquirers and **AS** agreed that this is a matter which should be carefully considered by Chapter. This is a subject for the ongoing agenda. **Action.....HM.**

## **11. Report from Provincial Communications Co-ordinator**

**Chapter agreed** with **CP's** proposal that TON should be reinstated on the website. **CP** also proposed that the Disability Advisors should also cover the elderly and the housebound; **this was also agreed.** Chapter members felt that it was unnecessary for the Membership Secretary to send out a questionnaire about the format of membership lists. LTs should make sure that Areas are aware of what is available. **Action....All LTs.**

The matter of whether voting should be regarded as obligatory is to be put on the Chapter forward planning agenda. **Action.....HM.**

In response to a question about fulfilling the requirements of data Protection legislation, and obtaining the formal consent of postulants to TSSF processing their data, it was stated that the centrally produced form for postulants can be completed and sent to Areas by e-mail.

LTs were requested to ask Areas to make sure that the annual information sent to them by the Membership Secretary is carefully checked and amended where necessary and then returned to her. It is important that there is consistency in the record-keeping of the Order and this should be emphasised to all the Areas. **Action....All LTs.**

## **11. Provincial Secretary's Report**

**Chapter agreed** with the 3 yearly discernment and election timetable proposed by **HM.** The returning officer's timetable (**CP**), for the election of replacements for the two LTs who are stepping down in June 2015, was also endorsed. **HM** had also produced a new contact list of those serving on Chapter.

With regard to the discernment process for the Minister Provincial, a slight modification was proposed to this, viz. that the Bishop Protector will be advised that this is to take place and all Chapter members will then be consulted for their views. **HM** will then forward these views to the Bishop Protector. **Chapter approved** this minor amendment. **Action.....HM.**

A replacement Minutes Secretary will be needed before the end of 2015. **HM** will produce a brief list of duties. **CS** has proposed some names of suitable candidates who live within easier reach of Ely. She undertook to liaise with potential candidates in the first instance. **Action.....HM & CS.**

**AS** had given consideration to the structure of the programmes for future Chapter meetings. (**HM** had submitted draft of programme options to Chapter.) She suggested that, for the February meeting, LTs would meet on the first afternoon and all Chapter members should then arrive for Evening Prayer on that first day. The shortened LTs programme would then allow extra time for full Chapter the following morning. **This was agreed by Chapter**. With regard to the June meeting, it was suggested that there should be a Quiet reflective 'half-day' every year, so there would be an extra Chapter day for all members each year. She would invite the Bishop Protector to lead Chapter in this time of Reflection, but it is most unlikely that he would be able to come before June 2016.

**AS** announced that on the Thursday or Friday evening of the June 2015 meeting there would be the first showing of the new film. She hoped that in October there would be an opportunity to spend more time with the representatives from the First and Second Orders.

**AS** asked **PB** to lead the Quiet afternoon in June 2015, providing the dates could be revised.

**HM** will ask **BWH** if it is possible to book for the revised dates, and will also circulate to members the proposed dates for 2017, once agreed with **BWH**. **Action.....HM.**

**Post Meeting Note:** Regrettably, it will not be possible to extend the June 2015 Chapter into Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June.

## **12. Update on Plans for General Chapter**

**PB** had circulated a summary of the meeting of the Steering Group. Its members had decided that they should serve for the same term of office as other TSSF office holders. It was planning for the General Chapter to be held towards the end of 2016. Local Groups will be asked to appoint one representative each, and pay for their expenses, though it will be proposed that travel expenses be met by the Order. Big financial decisions regarding the General Chapter will need to be taken at the next meeting of Provincial Chapter. **PB** will forward an idea of costs to the Provincial Treasurer and the Finance Sub Group (**FSG**). People will need to find their own accommodation.

**Action...PB.**

## **13. Feedback from Friday evening discussion**

**JW** said that the two visitors who had been present for the Friday evening discussion would continue that discussion themselves. He would thank them for coming to join the Chapter for that evening discussion.

**Action.....JW.**

**Post Meeting note:** There was insufficient time to discuss the Brussels TO Area development fully and so this will now be covered by **JW** in his report to Chapter in June. **Action.....JW.**

**AS** also requested that the new Bishop Protector (+Stephen) be approached to request advice, particularly legal advice, from his specialist staff for the TO European Province, in case it might be needed for issues such as 'safeguarding', and that he be invited to continue the relations with the Deputy Bishop Protector, begun by Bishop Michael Perham. **HM** & **JW** undertook to draft a letter for **AS** to send.

**Action... ..HM & JW.**

**Post meeting note:** (Bishop Thomas Soderberg of Vasteras, Sweden was approved as Deputy Bishop Protector, by both the Swedish House of Bishops and TSSF Chapter in October 2012).



## 14...Summary of Chapter Proceedings for inclusion in TON

Chapter held a full discussion on TO finances and the way ahead; this addresses the responsibility of Chapter as Trustees to all tertiaries, whose money is used to further the aims of the Order.

Chapter considered carefully the ratification of Area recommendations for professions (names listed below), releases from vows and requests for leave of absence. All those involved were held in prayer.

We discussed informally the size and viability of TO Areas. This is NOT determined by Chapter but by consultation with areas. Similar discussion of membership of Local Groups is recommended to Area.

Chapter heard about the number of enthusiastic Tertiaries in Finland, and of more than they can cope with, who are interested in the Third Order. There may be a new area when the Finns are ready, with help and support, particularly from London West.

An Assisi booklet is proposed on the topic of Managing Age and Tertiaries growing older. The Formation Guardian and team are looking at this.

Area Ministers will be invited to attend a Provincial Chapter as a visitor to see how Chapter does its business, and to write their impressions for TON.

Chapter agreed that issues of TON may be put on the website, after checking that no inappropriate personal information is included.

## 15. Minister Provincial's Brief Summary

AS wished to respond to the request for the meeting to be less pressured and for Chapter members to have more time for reflection on matters being discussed. It was suggested that there might be pauses for 15 minutes thought from time to time. LTs agreed that the MP's presence at their meeting was very valuable.

Members agreed that the MP's choice of repetition of a theme from Psalm 24 had been helpful. AS asked members to continue to pass questions and comments about the conduct of the meeting, to her. **Action.....All Chapter.**

## 15. Ongoing and Forward agenda Items – (With Chapter Date and lead Sponsor)

Review of Chapter Election Procedures	(HM)	June 2015
Elections – should voting be obligatory?	(HM)	June 2015
Age Limits for young and older enquirers & Tertiaries	(PD)	June 2015
Contemplatives Annual Report and Remit statement	(JD)	June 2015
Annual Report on Safeguarding & Policy	(JW)	June 2015
Annual Report on Complaints and Appeals Policy	(JW)	June 2015
JPIC annual report and Remit Statement	(TH)	June 2015
Franciscan Aid Annual Report	( )	October 2015
Study & Prayer Enabling Group Annual Report	( )	October 2015
Provincial Engagement Group (PEG)		Awaits restructuring
Discussion: What can TSSF members offer their diocese?		Friday eve – to be decided
An Area Minister to be invited to future Chapters	(HM)	June 2015.

## **16. Dates and Venue of Future Chapters**

To be notified to Chapter by Provincial Secretary after discussions with Bishop Woodford House.

**Action.....HM.**

**Post Meeting Note:** The Chapter agreed programme structure and the dates agreed with Bishop Woodford House have now been promulgated.