

THE THIRD ORDER OF THE SOCIETY OF ST. FRANCIS

European Province

CHAPTER MINUTES

12th – 13th June, 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)**

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

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

Non-Trustees Present:

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

Wendy Scott (Link Tertiary, Yorkshire and East Midlands designate) **(WS)**

Peter Thompson (Link Tertiary, Central Southern England designate) **(PT)**

Katharine Ames-Lewis (Chapter Minutes Secretary designate) **(KA)**

Jan-eric Jongsarden (representing Swedish Area) **(JJ)**

Sue Charles (representing Provincial Communications team – vice Chris Jenkins) **(SC)**

June Freshney (representing George Parrott, Area Minister, Lincoln – observer) **(JF)**

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

1. Minister Provincial's Introduction and Preliminary Matters:

1.1 AS welcomed all those present, particularly **WS, PT KA, SC** and **JF**, who were attending the meeting of Chapter for the first time. She then opened the meeting with a time of prayer. **JD** agreed to write a summary report from Chapter to TON. **Action....JD.**

1.2 Apologies for absence were received from: Christer Sall (Area Minister, Sweden) **(CS)**, John Reynolds (Provincial Treasurer) **(JR)**, and Chris Jenkins **(CJ)**.

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

2.1 Matters arising from the Minutes:

CP had written a summary of the last Meeting for TON.

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

The Finance Sub Group, consisting of Robert Dimmick, Denise Easteal and Michael Oram, with **RD** as Chairman, has agreed to support the work of the Provincial Treasurer.

PB had made a start on looking at the accountability of AMs.

AS reiterated her previous assertion that Manuals should only be given to candidates at novicing, and they are not to be given to enquirers.

Discussion on raising the profile of the Order would take place on a future Friday evening.

The matter of informing Areas about candidates for a Provincial election will be further considered. **Action.....HM.**

Areas are to be encouraged to make sure the Membership Secretary is informed of details of new members and of changes in a member's address, etc. **Action.....All LTs.**

It was agreed that the possibility of individuals, for whom profession as Tertiaries might not appropriate, becoming Associates or Companions of SSF would be discussed on a future Friday evening. The Formation Teams will also raise the subject of Companions SSF with the First Order Formation team in September.

The proposed Assisi Booklet on Ageing was mentioned in **PB's** report. An editorial group is needed to sort out the issues involved, and volunteers will be sought. **TH** felt that it should be made clear that the subgroup working on the ageing issues was not directly associated with issues of disability, because ageing was an issue in its own right **Action LTs.**

2.4 Correspondence:

AS had been asked if one could be a member of two different Orders or Communities. **JD** pointed out that Benedictine oblates have a rule of life, and asked whether it was possible for someone to have 2 rules of life. **PB** said that deciding which way to follow (Benedictine or Franciscan) was part of discovering one's vocation and should be part of the pre-novitate exploration. CMS and the Church Army both now call themselves Orders, but it was pointed out that in this case, like the Single Consecrated Life undertaking, Chapter had recognised in the past that this did not necessarily conflict with an individual Tertiary's rule. **PD** said that this is an issue to be explored in training material for the novitate. **Action.....PD.**

3. Elections to Profession:

The following were elected to profession, with prayer:-

Winifred Watkins	Canterbury
Mark Hoskin	Solent
Judy Benham	Solent
Karen Wainright	Devon
Alice Oakey	Devon
Sue Blackall	Devon
Jennifer Kennedy	Wales
Martin Cruiks	East Anglia
Amy Simeons	East Anglia
George Wilson	Cumbria
Nikki Wilson	Cumbria
Iain Greenwood	Cumbria
Clive Gray	Borders
Jason Melia-O'Brien	Ireland

4. Link Tertiary Reports:

AS pointed out that LTs are not now expected to give a full report at every Chapter meeting. In response to a query from **CJS** on behalf of Beds. and Herts. Area, **AS** said that the **saying of the Community Obedience is common to all tertiaries worldwide and is non-negotiable, having been agreed by IPTOC**. Additional suitable readings and /or commentaries may be used, but not alternative ones. In response to a query, it was also clarified that 'Novicing' and Professions should always take place within Area meetings but 'renewal' of pledges could be made in Local Groups if attendance at the Francistide Area Meetings was not possible.

JW reported that he had visited Brussels in order to meet with six tertiaries there. They were a Brussels-based group, but not all of them lived in Brussels. He found them very committed and enthusiastic. **AS** said she would report to the Ministers' Meeting the matter of whether at some point in the future, there should be separate Areas and ultimately a new Province of Tertiaries living in Continental Europe. It was pointed out that the two tertiaries in Norway are attached to the Swedish "area". **Action.....AS.**

5. Minister Provincial's Report

AS asked LTs to remind Areas that Manuals are only to be given to people at the time of their 'novicing'. She also said she would welcome a discussion on whether tertiaries should be asked to return their Manuals and their profession crosses if they leave the Order. It was pointed out that there would need to be sensitivity with the family in the event of death. **Action.....LTs.**

She mentioned the possible visit from Ambrose Kim from Korea, and emphasised that if a group is formed in Korea, it will not be the responsibility of the European Province.

The matter of training for Local Group Convenors has still to be resolved finally throughout the Province. However, Chapter was advised that a 'pilot training event' for local group convenors is planned for 14 November 2015, probably in London, and a notice will be placed in TON.

Membership of a particular Local Group by a tertiary has also to be determined; as to whether it is the choice of an individual or should be guided by the Area Team.

She then spoke about membership of the Board of Franciscans International and pointed out that the original intention was that representation on that body of SSF as a whole should alternate between the First and the Third Orders, and that it was hoped that this would be shared across the Provinces. Br. Clark Berge has succeeded her. AS said that she would raise this subject at the MPs meeting in New Zealand. **Action.....AS.**

There are vacancies for representatives from Chapter on the Study and Prayer and Contemplatives networks. **JP** agreed to serve on the Contemplatives network, **PB** on the Study & Prayer network and **TH** on the JPIC network.

The First Order smaller houses would welcome contact with members of the Third Order and would like to get to know tertiaries better. **Action.....LTs.**

6. Provincial Novice Guardian's Report:

PD presented his proposed new papers for training during postulancy. It was pointed out that the length of the postulancy will be doubled if these are used. However, the papers were agreed to be complementary to material produced earlier by Philippa Bird (ex-PNG) and met with general approval from Chapter members. They are to be circulated to novice guardians only. Some corrections were made to the paper entitled "The Postulancy".

The upper age limit for admission was then considered. It was agreed that a potential tertiary must be able to play a part in the life of the Order. The Formation Team will explore this matter further. **PD** agreed to send Chapter members a revised paper on age-related issues, which **SC** offered to help proof-read. He said he would introduce ANGs to the new material first of all, before it is made available for general circulation. **Action.....PD.**

7. Communications Team Report:

The questions at the end of the report were considered. Additional help for the Third Order Distribution Centre can be sought through TON and/or Little Portion. Members of Chapter agreed that the latter is greatly appreciated. It was pointed out that there is now much less emphasis put on the terms “cascading” and “downwards”, and the words “spreading” and “sharing” should be used in their place. It was agreed that the Manual could be reprinted and used in a simpler A5 binder with a ‘front label’, but it was felt that it was unnecessary to reprint the ‘brown book’ of the Principles because they are already part of the Manual, and these could be down-loaded from the Web in future, if so desired. With regard to a suggested amount for TO subscriptions, it was agreed that this should be handled sensitively, and information on annual expenditure could be included by means of a pie-chart in either TON or Little Portion, to enlighten tertiaries on the costs within the Province.

JP said he is well-versed in the matter of copyright for hymns used by the TO, and thought it unnecessary to detail suggested actions on the issue to Area Teams.

8. Provincial Formation Guardian’s Report:

PB had produced suggested guidance for Area Annual Reviews, which was unanimously approved by Chapter, with an addition to the last point under ‘How?’ – to include an open question about what Provincial Chapter should be discussing.

The matter of Chapter’s report back to tertiaries, the ‘Provincial Annual Review’, is to be discussed in more detail at the next meeting. The Annual reports received from Areas should lead to the Provincial Annual Review, as a response.

9. Provincial Secretary’s Report:

HM asked all present to check the grid he had produced, giving details for contacting Chapter members, and also the revised timetable for discernment. **Action.....all Chapter.**

He had also circulated his paper about the revised programme structure of Chapter meetings and a list of future dates of meetings, which had been approved by Chapter. The Chapter Handbook had also been circulated to new members of Chapter.

AS asked if members had found the more spaced-out programme beneficial, and also the development of worship within Chapter. Both were agreed to be helpful.

10. Provincial Treasurer’s Report: This was presented by RD on behalf of JR. An over-view of expenditure over the past year was given, and it was explained that the figures were very similar to those of the previous year. Full accounts for the last Financial Year will be presented by JR to the October 2015 Chapter. **Action.....JR.**

10.1 Finance Sub-Group’s Report:

RD advised Chapter that, from next year, provision should be made annually to meet the costs of a future General Chapter. The 'designated' fund for this is 'unrestricted'; which gives flexibility.

In answer to a query about Cluster Day funding, it was stated that a designated fund (which is not a restricted fund) had been put in place for this purpose. There was discussion as to whether Cluster Days should be self-funding, though **JD** said she had previously been told that an amount of £1400 was available for each Cluster day, if needed. **HM** advised that, because it had been decided in 2011 that there was to be no full General Chapter (such as those held in York) in the near future, on grounds of difficulty and exclusion of some individuals because of high cost. It was therefore agreed that the money that had been set aside for that event could be divided up and used against Cluster Day costs, if necessary. **RD** advised that the Treasurer needs some feedback on the incurred costs of Cluster Days and it was requested that LTs should advise the Treasurer in advance when a Cluster day is planned, so that funding can be set aside: (It normally takes over a year to plan the event). It was agreed that the future of Cluster Days needs to be discussed following an evaluation of those which have taken place already. **Action.....LTs.**

All Gift Aid up to December 2014 has now been processed and recovered.

The Finance Sub-Group had not yet met, but they have held telephone conferences. They plan to meet this autumn.

A new laptop has been purchased for the new Provincial Treasurer and a SAGE accounting package has been selected for its software. However, it will take two or three months to get the new accounting system functioning. **JL** will have some training from the software manufacturer. **AS** said an allowance for training should be made in the budget, and she thanked the members of the Finance Sub-Group for their work.

With regard to the Areas' expenses, **JL** had submitted a proposal that he should himself pay all the bills received by Area Treasurers. He felt that the amount of inaccuracies warranted this action, which would relieve the ATs of responsibility. However, members of Chapter did not accept this proposal and determined that it is appropriate and consistent for Chapter to continue to devolve responsibility and accountability to the Area Teams.

RD explained that, within the Area accounts, the amount of errors was less than 2% and these had been audited and agreed by our 'independent examiner'. This showed that the Area accounts provided by Area Treasurers were remarkably accurate.

JL also put forward a proposal to alter the budget headings, so that they aligned more closely with the aims of TSSF, and witnessed to the Christian nature of the organisation. **AS** pointed out that, at the last meeting, Chapter had agreed on the budget headings to be used. It was further clarified by **RD** that these headings could be subdivided into analysis codes. Chapter agreed to keep to the previously agreed budget headings. **AS** then asked **JL** to draw up a budget with the headings that had been agreed at the previous Chapter, and issue it to all Chapter members. **Action.....JL.**

11. General Chapter 2016:

PB said that in the budget for 2016 it would be necessary to make a provision for this of up to £50,000. **RH** said that he did not feel he could agree to such a large expenditure for a 'one-off' event. However, other members of Chapter expressed their support; and it was observed that it uniquely reflected the missed contributions from a number of previous years. **PB** confirmed that it would be a two-day event, and the draft programme and outline budget which had been drawn up, was accepted in principle 'nem con' by Chapter.

There was some discussion about the financial aspect of the event, and it was explained that the Charity Commissioners would expect us to spend some of our reserve funds, providing they were being used for a purpose which is in accordance with the aims of the Order.

PB said that there was still much work to be done and volunteers will be needed. The Bishop Protector is to be invited to speak on the first day. It was unanimously agreed to proceed along the lines which had been proposed.

12. Annual Report on Safeguarding Policy:

JW said that there was nothing to report.

13. Annual Report on Complaints and Appeals:

JW had nothing to report.

14. Contemplatives' Annual Report and Remit Statement:

JD reported that they now have someone to deal with their administration. The Group felt that it would be useful to explain their position in the Order in one of the TO publications, but would value advice as to which publication should be used and how often it should be done. **AS** recommended that they should put a paragraph in TON once a year. The network wishes to be seen as fairly fluid and not 'set in stone'. Anne Spalding was not happy that Chapter wanted to keep the list of members of the group on the TSSF database; she felt that it should be made known that the contemplatives are free to do their own thing.

HM pointed out that the Membership Secretary had been provided with the current list of names by the Contemplative Group, which she could then keep securely on the TSSF database, so that it was available to contact people, if necessary. **JP** will become the chapter link to the group. It was agreed to invite Anne Spalding to a meeting of Chapter, if she would like to come.

15. JPIC:

TH expressed his thanks to Caroline Ugbo, who was stepping down from this group. This was endorsed enthusiastically by Chapter.

16. Any Other Business:

An Area Novice Guardian is needed for the Formation Team. **Action....PNG & All LTs**

17. Minister Provincial's Brief Summary:

AS felt that it had been an enjoyable meeting overall. She thanked those who had come as guests for coming, and giving reports on their spheres of activity in the Order, and she asked members of the Chapter to give further thought as to how new members could be inducted into their new roles. **Action.....all Chapter.**

She asked members to note the dates of future meetings, which were now confirmed.

18. Future and Ongoing Programme:

Amongst subjects for future discussions were Companions and the SSF, our relationship with the dioceses, and a review of election procedures. Reports due in October include: Franciscan Aid, and the Study and Prayer network. There will be ongoing discussion on the General Chapter 2016. **Action.....HM.**