

ECCLESIASTICAL LAW SOCIETY
Minutes of the 5th Annual General Meeting
as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation
held at 2.00pm on 27th April 2024 at St Peter's Eaton Square London SW1W 9AL

The Chair of the Ecclesiastical Law Society, Elizabeth Wilson, greeted everyone and invited the meeting to keep a period of silence to remember members who had died during the past year, especially Araba Taylor and The Rt Revd Colin Buchanan.

She then paid tribute to all who had facilitated the smooth operation of the Society during the past year mentioning, in particular, the Executive Team, the Trustees and Officers. She also thanked all who had contributed to the planning for and delivery of the Day Conference.

Elizabeth reported a very productive year that had included a strategy day which resulted in the formation of a governance review group. It was appropriate to note that there had been prolonged discussion concerning membership fees and the Treasurer would be reporting about decisions. The meeting was asked to note the new "Bite sized" ecclesiastical law sessions offered on line and reminded that in 2025 there would be a weekend conference, in Chichester, entitled Nicaea Received: 1700 years of Canons, Councils and Ecumenism when the principle speaker would be the Ecumenical Patriarch.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from 27 members.

2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting of the Society held on 10th June 2023 were approved as drafted.

3. Trustees' Annual Report

Introducing the Report, the Chairman thanked the Editor and Consultant editor of the Journal for all their work in maintaining a high standard. She also thanked The Rev'd Stephen Coleman and The Rev'd Russell Dewhurst for the continuing teaching of Canon Law in some of the Church of England's training institutions. She reflected that the working party on the seal of confession had worked to a tight timetable and submitted a substantial report to the House of Bishops. The newly reshaped training committee were thanked for all their work under the convenor, The Ven Moira Astin. Also thanked was Frances Godden for her work on the Newsletter.

The Trustees' Annual Report was duly received.

4. Statement of Accounts & Treasurer's Report

These items were duly presented by the Treasurer who said the independent examiner had certified that the accounts were correct. He reported to the meeting that the membership fees had been reviewed. Due to the fact that there had been no increase since 2019 – since then inflation had added 22% - and responding to the new CUP contract for publication of the Journal, it was necessary to increase fees from 1st July this year to £75 and £50 concession. He told the meeting that all

members will be circulated with details within the next 10/14 days. The Treasurer thanked the Finance Officer for all his work.

In response to a question the finance officer stated that we had in excess of 700 members.

The Accounts and Report were received.

5. Election of Chair

The President, the Rt Rev'd Christopher Hill, assumed the chair.

He expressed wholehearted thanks to the outgoing Chair, Elizabeth Wilson who he said had been a cheerful, efficient enabler during her term of office. Lizzie was thanked for her open approach which had brought a fresh dynamic to the Trustee body which was now more diverse and collaborative. Bishop Christopher thought that a comment made to him that morning summed up Lizzie's contribution – that she doesn't know how good she is. The meeting applauded these comments and were unanimous in expressing thanks to Lizzie.

The President stated that there had been one nomination for Chair and declared that Lee Coley was duly elected. Lee took the Chair.

6. Election of three Charity Trustees

There had been three nominations – Samuel Maginnis, Ola Olajide and Neil Patterson. They were declared elected.

7. Report from the Editor of the Journal

The Report was presented by the editor who recorded his thanks to the section editors and commented that it was clear that CUP would be looking for the Journal to be published online in the future. If we are able to retain a paper version it will depend entirely upon numbers.

8. To consider the following resolution:

This Society would welcome the introduction of a postgraduate qualification in canon law as part of the Common Awards partnership between the Church of England, Theological Education Institutions, and Durham University.

The Chair asked the consent of the meeting to vary the wording of the motion by inserting 'and Church in Wales' after the word 'England' in line 2. The meeting agreed.

Russell Dewhurst spoke to the motion and said that a similar meeting some 30 years ago had supported Norman Doe in the inauguration of the study of Canon Law in Cardiff and that, since then, countless numbers of our members had participated in the Masters programme. It was now necessary that the course be relocated to Durham under the Common Awards programme. Final details were still being negotiated but Professor Doe would welcome the Society's support.

The amended motion was proposed by Neil Patterson and seconded by Christopher Hill and passed unanimously.

9. Any other business

The President congratulated the Chair on an efficient meeting.

In response to a question it was stated that no one had any knowledge concerning whether or not Consistory Court judgements were available on CD rom.

The meeting concluded at 2.25pm