The Ecclesiological Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held online on Thursday 15 April, 2024, 6.30pm

Chaired by Mark Kirby, Chairman of Council.

Apologies: Graham White, Paul Velluet

AGM papers: The agenda had been posted to members in advance, and the draft AGM minutes, draft accounts, and annual report for 2024 had been made available on the Society's website.

1. Welcome. The Chairman welcomed attendees. 220 people had registered to attend, a record for the Society. (In the event about 86 were present for the AGM, and about 127 for the lecture.)

2. Minutes of the 2023 AGM. No comments were received and therefore the minutes were considered to be accepted.

3. Annual report. Becky Payne, Secretary, provided a summary of the year's events and activities.

Two visits had taken place, to two London churches, St Barnabas, Pimlico and St Mary's Bourne Street, Belgravia, led by Kenneth Powell, and a tour of medieval churches in York, led by Rob Andrews.

The Annual Conference had been held in October at St John's, Waterloo, on the theme of 'Stained Glass Revivals', with papers arranged in pairs to cover three main periods of revival, in the seventeenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Annual Lecture took place after the Society's AGM on 15 May and was held in person at St Mary Abchurch, Abchurch Lane, City of London and 'live-streamed' via Zoom.

Afterwards Professor Anthony Geraghty of the University of York spoke on 'The place of God in the design philosophies of Wren and Hawksmoor.'

The inaugural Geoff Brandwood Memorial Lecture was held at St James-the-Less, Pimlico on 22 November. Our speaker was Peter Howell, joint author of a new monograph on Street (available to order on the Victorian Society's website).

The Society sent out four e-newsletters during the course of the year, and in August we published volume 3 of the Society's conference proceedings, 'The Lay Experience of the Medieval Cathedral', comprising the papers from the 2021 annual conference. Issue 62 of*Ecclesiology Today* was published in August and two editions of *Church Crawler* were also published.

In the course of the year we welcomed Sam Hill, who was helping with publications, and bade farewell to Trevor Cooper and Paul Velluet, long-time stalwarts of the Society.

No comments were received so the 2023 Annual Report was deemed to be accepted.

The Chairman thanked Becky for her presentation and explained that technical and other difficulties meant that the Society would not be holding hybrid events until this becomes easier. For now lectures and events such as the AGM would be held online or in person, but not both.

4. Accounts for 2023. The draft accounts had been published on the Society's website. On behalf of the Treasurer, the Chairman reported that the Society had made a loss of about £13,000 in 2023. The return of inflation had made an impact, particularly on printing and postage costs, and the timetable of publications had to some extent skewed the figures. The Society was investigating ways of reducing costs, and it was hoped that with the increase in subscription fees at the beginning of 2024 this would help return us to profitability. A member asked whether *Church Crawler* might become a primarily digital publication, thereby reducing printing and postage costs, and the Chairman confirmed that this was one of the ideas being looked at. No further questions or queries were raised and therefore the accounts were deemed to be accepted.

5. Appreciation of contributions by our President and Vice-Presidents. The Chairman reported on the sad loss of two of our Vice-Presidents, Lord Cormack, who had recently died aged 84, and Lord Field, who had died aged 81 on the previous day. In addition to their wider achievements in the political sphere, both had in different ways contributed significantly to the conservation and promotion of ecclesiastical buildings and church heritage. He would be writing to the families of each, recording the Society's condolences and gratitude.

The Chairman also recorded the Society's gratitude to the President and other Vice- Presidents for their continued support.

7. Election of honorary officers and members of the Council. The following nominations had been received: Chairman: Dr Mark Kirby; Deputy Chairman: Andrew Derrick; Editor of *Ecclesiology Today*: Nick Chapple; Editor of *Church Crawler*: Phil Draper; Treasurer: Anthony Gilmour; Secretary: Becky Payne; Reviews Editor: Dr Christopher Webster; Membership Secretary and Website Manager: Graham White; Communications Manager: Paul Gray; Visits Secretary: Frances Cook; Events Administrator: Fiona Rosen. Other members of Council: Dr Paul Barnwell. Online responses confirmed that the meeting was happy for those nominated to be elected *en bloc*.The Chairman added his personal thanks to Council members for their support during what had been in some respects a challenging year. He thanked in particular Graham White, Fiona Rosen and Becky Payne, each of whom had in different ways gone 'above and beyond'.

8. Honorary Auditor. Mark Ockelton was thanked and commended for his careful scrutiny of the Society's accounts. He was duly re-elected as Hon Auditor (independent examiner), *nem con*.

9. Any other business. Mark Kirby announced forthcoming visits to churches in Richmond, York and South Wales, details of which are on the Society's website. He also gave notice of this year's conference, which would be held at St Alban's church in Holborn on Saturday 28

September, on the theme of *Competing Churches and Chapels, 1829-1939*. Details would be put on the website and posted to members soon.

The AGM was followed at 7pm by the Society's Annual Lecture, given by Professor Nicholas Orme, on the theme of *Cathedrals and the Reformation* (one of the periods covered in his wider history of England's Cathedrals, published by Yale University Press in January 2024). He described the fortunes of our cathedrals during those turbulent times, explaining why they had not befallen the same fate as the medieval religious houses, but had actually increased in number, albeit with considerable changes in their management, fitting out and ceremonial.