

Minutes of the meeting on 5 July 2019, York

1. SUMMARY

1 Welcomes & Apologies were made and noted by the Chair

JD then invited members to decide whether, in view of the unusually high number of members not present, item 5 should be taken this evening or postponed until February. After discussion, a simple majority vote clearly indicated a desire to debate and vote on this tonight

2 A Bible reading was given by Sean Doherty

3 The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2019 were unanimously approved

4 Chair's announcements

JD informed the meeting of the death of Norman Warren and asked us to remember Yvonne and family in our prayers

5 EGGs Constitution – proposals for change, discussion, voting

JD introduced this item and opened the debate, which was wide-ranging, rigorous, at times raw, revealing the different views within the current membership, and yet conducted with respect and consideration.

Members had been given a voting slip bearing a randomly generated number which they used to record their votes on 4 proposals:

- a. that the current wording of the Constitution replace the word 'chairman' with 'chair',
- b. that the Committee establish a list of non-members who wish to be considered Friends of EGGs and to be kept informed of its activities,
- c. that the Basis of Faith of EGGs be brought into line with that of CEEC by the introduction of 2 'additional declarations' (see Annex A),
- d. that other inconsequential and minor typographical amendments be made

6 THIS GROUP OF SESSIONS

JD led the meeting through various items of business due to be debated over the coming days. Various members spoke about motions or amendments they were proposing, and to make comment.

7 AOB

Ian Paul updated the meeting on progress regarding the concern expressed re House of Bishops guidance re the welcome of transgender people.

8 Result of vote at Item 5 (105 voting members present)

A – 86 / 17

B – overwhelmingly carried

C – 83 / 19

D – overwhelmingly carried

The Meeting closed in prayer and the Grace was said.

2. FULL MINUTES

(1) Welcome / apologies

Apologies had been received from:

The Bishops of Bath & Wells, Guildford & Peterborough, Andrew Atherstone, William Belcher, Andrew Bell, Barney de Berry, James Cary, Charlie Cleverly, Bob Edwards, Stewart Fyfe, Stephen Hofmeyr, Gary Jenkins, Angus MacLeay, Steve McGanity, Marian Nicholson, Frog Orr-Ewing, Kathy Playle, Chik Tan

JD welcomed

- David Hague
- Joseph Diwaker
- Simon Friend
- and the returning + Mark Tanner

JD introduced a procedural motion – unusually high number of apologies, over 20% of members ... Committee happy to withdraw and bring it back in February.

What is the mind of the meeting? A simple majority vote will follow discussion to determine what we do

- Stephen Lynas – could we have a discussion tonight but not vote?
- Gavin Collins – could we separate the 2 additional clauses?
- David Lamming – how many members present? Answer: 103 out of 138
- James Allison Leeds ... what happens if 100 new members join before February?
- Mary Durlacher – do we know how they would have voted? JD – majority in favour ...
- + Pete Broadbent – should go ahead with discussion and vote. Disingenuous not to do so?
- + Paul Butler – if same happens in February, do you delay again?
- Anthony Archer – put it to whole membership by email / post ...
- Peter Breckwoldt – ones who are here are here, let's carry on
- Debbie Buggs – on other hand, such a big decision, want to feel you've got the whole group here ...
- Lisa Battye – you're talking about chucking some of us out ... why can't we pause and pray?
- Patrick Richmond – in the light of Brexit, how soon before the question could be put again?!
- Simon Butler ... Is this EGGSit?
- Jayne O – very difficult to postpone ... very strong views on this, we need to have the discussion now ... to decide whether we have a vote ...
- + Jonathan Gibbs – bound by provisions of our own Constitution, but why not have the debate and then someone can propose we do or don't vote?
- David Lamming – can we add to the amendment to Constitution to include postal voting?
- Jenny Gillis – now we know that majority of those absent would vote in favour I am even more concerned. We should carry on to a vote ...
- Angus Goudie – already raised the possibility of splitting the 2 additional clauses
- Simon Butler – any other organisation would see 68% attendance as a quorum ...

JD put this to a vote and a clear majority moved to proceed to a discussion and vote ...

(2) Bible reading / prayer

We then sang *Before the throne of God above*, after which Sean Doherty gave a bible reading based on Ezra 1:1

(3) Minutes of meeting held on 20 February 2019

No requests for amendment having been notified, the minutes were approved unanimously

- Proposed: Jacob Vince
- Seconded: + Alastair McGowan

(4) Chair's announcements

JD informed the meeting of the death of Norman Warren and asked us to remember Yvonne and family in our prayers

(5) EGGs Constitution – proposals for change, discussion, voting

JD introduced the Committee's proposal, which contained 4 elements

- a. that the current wording of the Constitution replace the word 'chairman' with 'chair',
- b. that the Committee establish a list of non-members who wish to be considered Friends of EGGs and to be kept informed of its activities,
- c. that the Basis of Faith of EGGs be brought into line with that of CEEC by the introduction of 2 'additional declarations' (see Annex A),
- d. that other inconsequential and minor typographical amendments be made

With his focus on proposal c, JD made 2 comments

1. Reassurance regarding CEEC. Why? Some of us may be under the impression that CEEC is a narrow, conservative body. After its revitalisation 5 years ago, it is now a much broader body and more representative of the bulk of evangelicals – Fulcrum, New Wine, Awesome as well as vast majority of DEFs. Variety of names on Council – identifying across the networks: e.g . Lee Gatiss, Rachel Marzalek, Becky Harcourt, Mark Burkhill, Lis Goddard, Rod Thomas. 'Throw in a few bishops and TEI principals for good measure.' Introducing this change will align our group with the breadth of evangelicalism in our country
2. Need to bolster the clear evangelical voice on General Synod – JD has visited around half the dioceses to speak at DEFs, has preached many times in parishes across the UK ... time and again, the question is asked – when are we going to get a clear voice speaking for evangelicals at the national level? This change would address the longing of thousands of evangelicals across the country

- Jason Roach – background paper particularly helpful. We are ratifying what has historically always been the case
- Steve Boyle – it's what's the C of E already has in terms of marriage – majority of Anglicans would endorse this move
- Gavin Collins – this will close down discussion within EGGs. Evangelicalism at its best is about wrestling with scripture. We don't exist to be a subset of CEEC
- Ian Paul – at one level, this is very straightforward – it's what evangelicals have historically believed and the majority still do. Let's be honest – there is no point pretending our current membership all believe the same thing
- Alison Coulter – not able to support this: timing is not good, it's divisive. Intellectually – why this one issue? What about idolatry, greed, injustice, a concern for the poor?
- Stephen Lynas – been a happy member of EGGs for 12 years (apart from the singing). Very uncomfortable with this proposal: wish we could split the 2 clauses. Why should EGGs start putting up a fence? EGGs has historically been an open group where we could argue the toss. Should not be a single-issue group
- Graham Hamilton – if EGGs doesn't act and speak on behalf of classic evangelicals, who will?
- Simon Friend – only recently joined and so his could be the shortest membership on record. Great shame – we face a really important time over the next few years. Unity is not uniformity – very disappointed we're being forced into this
- + Alastair McGowan – evangelicalism a broad coalition. The second additional clause being proposed really is a set of words which sits unequivocally alongside Canon B30. Canon B30 doesn't exclude anyone ...

- Debbie Buggs – sympathy with Alison’s comment, but we do need to give a clear evangelical lead; at the moment we’re crippled by not being able to do so
- Nikki Groarke – efficacy of EGGS will greatly diminish if we pass this. Open evangelicals will be excluded. It’s much easier to have dialogue with those with whom we share other common ground. This is badly timed, premature ... many of us will feel excluded
- Ed Shaw – by & large most evangelicals out in the real world face a wall of silence from their leaders. Part of what PAG group is doing is addressing this silence and asking both sides to speak with clarity – why should evangelicals not be clear?
- Jayne O – why do I keep coming? Not easy. I represent many of your children, who can’t and won’t talk to you about being gay ... the younger generation is in a very different place from senior leadership.
- David Lamming – our present Constitution states that our Basis of Faith shall be that of the CEEC. Have we not in fact, therefore, already adopted this without being explicit about it?
- Clive Scowen – this group was founded as a Synodical expression of CEEC – as CEEC has changed its Basis of Faith it is entirely consistent for us to follow suit. Bases of faith / creeds always arise in response to controversy ... this would not have been an issue for evangelicals 30 years ago
- Simon Heathfield – tribes have shifted over the years. I agree with all 4 parts of the proposal. But I am worried about inserting an ethical clause into what is broadly a theological set of doctrinal statements
- Andrew Cornes – EGGS doesn’t exist for itself. It’s the Synodical arm of CEEC, and represents the broad sweep of evangelicals around the country. Around the country I hear despair at the lack of clear leadership on this ... people are crying out for a clarity and strength of voice
- Caroline Herbert – we should vote in favour because this proposal follows the original intent in the historical link between EGGS & CEEC. The ‘Friends’ category allows those who feel unable to be members to still come and debate
- David Banting – EA has 2 million members. A question for those who want to vote against this proposal: are you speaking against the church’s traditional teaching on marriage? If so, please be honest and say so, don’t hide it behind the other issues. This proposal is not about Evangelical core beliefs but about *Anglican* core beliefs
- Angus Goudie – will vote against it and have to leave EGGS. Daughter has a wife, and she & many others are in wonderful stable relationships. St Paul wasn’t taking about this ... time has come to ask ‘Have we got this wrong?’ I respect those who hold a different view but can’t narrow things down and drive people away
- Mark Lucas – anecdote is no substitute for doctrine. GS today is more convinced by a cuddly anecdote than by Scripture, Reason & Tradition – each of those strands enforces the incontrovertible fact that the orthodox view is correct. Mark contradicted a previous speaker who had claimed to speak for his (and others’) children.
- Simon Cawdell – in maiden speech many years ago spoke of looking forward to the City of God. A city bounded by walls but with open gates. These proposals are entirely right – we have to be clear, but we are not being exclusive. We will continue to welcome Friends to debate and disagree. Membership of EGGS need to reflect the clear majority of evangelical sentiment around the world
- Rob Munro – divisive? Quite the opposite. Chester’s very dysfunctional DEF hadn’t met for years. When CEEC revamped 5 years ago, it enabled the group to come and work together. This will be a real instrument for unity
- + Pete Broadbent – CEEC’s basis of faith was written in 1986 by him and Michael Saward. EGGS adopted it when we needed it. These proposals will do no harm. This is C of E doctrine as already expressed. Not going back to a reactionary conservatism, it’s simply where we’ve always stood. CEEC decided to adopt the additional 2 clauses because they were needed. Some present will have heard of the 39 Articles – go and read 38 & 39. We need to have wording which offers a clear, distinctive evangelical voice in the troubled times that lie ahead
- + Tim Dakin – bishops agonise about how to hold together truth and unity. Unity which doesn’t have truth in it is false, as is truth without relationship. Won’t tell you how I’m going to vote – but I’ve always held to truth and will vote accordingly ...
- + Julian Henderson – aware it’s difficult for a number of people here. It has my support for many of the reasons already expressed around the room
 - Aligns EGGS with CEEC
 - Affirms the church’s current teaching on marriage – until the case is made for a change

- They create a voice for us in Synod – we need that voice, we need GS to know where this group stands: some might leave if the changes are *not* carried'

JD introduced a time of quiet prayer and then invited members to complete their ballot papers. Nikki Groarke and Philip Plyming were appointed tellers.

(6) THIS GROUP OF SESSIONS

Saturday business including:

Youth violence + knife crime

- Alistair McHaffie – we need the Government to respond with resources; there is a clear link between poverty and knife crime. Christian detached youth workers needed
- Jason Roach – make a difference one person at a time ...
- Mary Durlacher – backing Gavin Oldham's amendment ... about sense of lostness and a need to belong driving many young people into gang culture

Clergy Wellbeing

Simon Butler –

1. Theological essay written by an evangelical pastoral theologian
2. There is concern over the language of Covenant – Covenant is primarily between God and his people of course, but there are many covenantal elements to our life together

Peter Kay – moving an amendment to question, in gentle terms: where do dioceses fit in?

Afternoon seminars and workshops

- Jason Roach – 3 sections 'Where are we? 'Who are we? 'How do we hear God?' This is not starting with experience rather than scripture. We have to explain why we're writing thousands of words ... aim will be to receive it as a participant not as getting a point across ... feedback e.g. what am I not hearing, what is missing?
- + Tim Dakin – plead for evangelicals to turn up and learn! Things have changed ... marriage has changed ... role of women in marriage has changed ... be open to what God might have to say ... vital that we learn
- Ed Shaw – come to PAG groups and acknowledge that the pervading evils are among and even within us ...

Sunday business including:

Safeguarding

- ABs have declined to welcome the Blackburn ad clerum
- It will be good to have indications of support for + Peter and Blackburn ad clerum

Mission and Ministry in Covenant

- Mike Booker has been at the Methodist Conference ... he brought greetings from MET who are asking for prayer and feeling deeply shaken. They would welcome the chance to work with us but would understand if we couldn't support this following the Conference vote for sex outside marriage and same-sex marriage. Remember that Methodists operating in Anglican parishes would be under Anglican discipline ...

- + Pete B – where are the Methodists now? Do we want to be with them? Real challenge over episcopal ordination. Our Catholic friends are very concerned ... and this will lead to a huge amount of additional bureaucracy ... we are not ready for this. We need to send a strong signal and vote this down
- Jonathan Alderton Ford – chair of Ministry Council: votes in Methodist Conference – this sets the Conference in tension with the bishops and GS. Lots of flirting but not much heavy lifting ... a litany of euphemisms. It's a real challenge to enter a covenant with another organisation which is travelling in a very different direction on such a major issue
- Clive Scowen – we've twice led the Methodists up the aisle and we're about to do it again: there won't be the necessary majority in each house to pass this; it's time we put this quietly to death
- Charles Reed – may now be a friend rather than a member of EGGS ... danger of following a Catholic view of ministry – not the only model on the table
- + Robert Innes – big misunderstanding. Not a proposal to merge. Rather to accept inter-changeability ... in Europe we work well with Old Catholics, Lutherans etc. ... to turn this down would send a hugely negative message to Methodists

Refugee professionals

- Nicholas Lebey – Each diocese to make provision to support one professional refugee to get accreditation. This is a great opportunity to help them and the nation. There are 2 amendments, one from + Durham – it's friendly but we will resist it to keep the sharp focus of the motion
- Nick Land – take a 'Setting God's People Free' line ... to make this work, you have to have professionals willing to mentor and invite them into the NHS. Without that first step it won't work. This is costly but vital
- + Paul Butler – intended as a friendly amendment but also to expand the motion: lift the ban on asylum seekers working. CBI, NHS, Care Organisations – all saying we must stop drawing a line between professionals and non-professionals

Monday business including:

Cathedrals measure

- Carl Hughes – an excellent conversion of report into action. Concern over degree of opposition from some of the Cathedral communities

Archbishops' Council budget and triennium funding

Carl Hughes – speaking as John Spence's deputy. Very good news on the triennium funding solution: changing the baseline inflation index will generate an additional £155m. One concern is the very small amount going into social impact ...

[Mission-Shaped Church and Fresh Expressions 15 years on]

[Standing Orders Committee report]

Tuesday business including:

Setting God's People Free

- Adrian Greenwood – this was unanimously approved by GS 2 years ago – but now runs the risk of sinking without trace ... this is a progress report, keeping it on the agenda ... 2 cultural shifts the report is seeking
 - That we live out our faith throughout the week
 - Increased mutuality between clergy and lay – release the 98% of church members who aren't ordained will lift some of the burden upon clergy – ties in well with Clergy WellBeing ...

Church Representation Rules amendment

Clive Scowen – be there and vote for! Needs 2/3rd majority. Already BMOs people are represented on Deanery Synods but not on GS. This isn't just a London thing – most BMOs are in the north

Anyone with a PMM?

- Carl Fender – Impact of Legal Aid cuts in 2012: sun is setting on it because it's the 3rd Synod. Need to get over 100 signatures.
- David Lamming – 2 PMMS, 1 has 101 meant to be reinstated. 5 guiding principles. 2: asking house of bishops looking at lay presidency ... 4 signatures so far

JD apologised that he had forgotten the dementia debate ...

- Angela Scott – Anna chaplaincy, there is a fringe meeting on Monday lunchtime

(7) AOB

JD then invited Ian Paul to update us on meetings with the bishops over guidelines for trans welcome. Ian reported that there had been a frank and free exchange of views – really substantial theological and pastoral debates. Fair to say the bishops recognised there are some major issues which they hadn't thought through ... interesting concessions, some of which have been rowed back on ... but kicked it into the LLF process. It seems we will now get round to the theological work that should have happened before the Guidelines were published in the first place ...

(8) Result of vote at Item 5 (105 voting members present)

| Proposal | For | Against | Abstention | Total |
|----------|-----|---------|------------|-------|
| a | 86 | 17 | 2 | 105 |
| b | 97 | 5 | 3 | 105 |
| c | 83 | 19 | 3 | 105 |
| d | 101 | 3 | 1 | 105 |

The Meeting closed in prayer and the Grace was said.