

Minutes

of a meeting of the **Evangelical Group of the General Synod**
held on Wednesday 21st April at 7.30pm by ZOOM

(1) Welcome / apologies

59 members present

Apologies were received from: George Newton, Peter Breckwoltdt, the Bishop of Durham, Stephen Trott, Graham Campbell, Andrew Brydon & James Dudley-Smith

(2) Bible reading / prayer

Kate Wharton offered a brief reflection on 2 Chronicles 20:3-12
'O Lord, we do not know what to do ... but our eyes are fixed on you'

(3) Chair's mentions

- Thanks to Clive Scowen for standing for Chair of BC. How close elections can be: please ensure you always vote!
- Retirements from Committee – Paul Langham retiring as Secretary; James Lee is about to be ordained so no longer a member of GS. We are very close to the end of this QQ and Synod is mainly online. So we propose that the Committee will carry on to end of QQ, but all Committee posts and members will need to be elected afresh once the new Synod is elected
- Please be aware of the EA letter to the PM re conversion therapy and legal advice obtained by Ed Shaw: see CEEC website
- William Belcher (lay member Gloucester) – wife Karen now half way through a course of radiography after which chemotherapy.
- + Peter Hancock taking early retirement through ill health

JD prayed for William & Karen ... and for Peter and Jane ...

(4) THIS GROUP OF SESSIONS, including:

- a) International Religious Freedom (Friday 3-5pm) – paper attached.

Number of speakers commented :

- Thanks to + Truro for helpful briefing paper ...
- Clive Scowen considering an amendment to invite specific prayer for Christians being persecuted around the world, but +Leeds not keen: motion is about religious freedom not Christian persecution.
- Stewart Fyfe – every instinct agrees with Clive, but + Philip specifically asked us not to do this in his briefing paper, in order to build the maximum possible consensus.
- Margaret Parrett – a member of MPAC which is putting forward this motion: such an amendment would not fit with our aims.
- + Robert Innes – support last 2 speakers: there is considerable sympathy where Christians speak up on behalf of others. Such sympathy disappears where it appears Christians are engaged in special pleading ...
- Clive S – helpful to know what others are thinking ... this is simply adding a sub-section (e) addressed to our own parishes, not to UK Government

b) Crown Nominations Commission (Saturday 1.30pm)

JD invited Jane Patterson (JP) to speak to this issue

JP – thanks to Aidan Hargreaves-Smith and team for their work on this

Corrected a typo – 38 recommendations (not 438)

JP & JD have served on CNC since 2012 – sometimes a really challenging environment

On over 90% of occasions has been possible to agree a candidate

Questions: is it working / is it broken / can it work better

We think it's working reasonably well, given the constraints. A few occasions it hasn't ... Oxford ... Sheffield ...

We support much of the Report. Please see bulleted points in paper written by myself/John Dunnett .

Jamie Harrison proposing an amendment, replacing 'endorse' for 'receive' and is meant to be friendly. Helps those who can't vote for the whole package to do so with a clear conscience.

Discussion followed.

Chair encouraged members to support JH amendment ... 'Make your speeches positive'

c) Safeguarding (Saturday 3.20pm)

Various comments offered including :

- Thanks to + J Gibbs for his helpful work on this
- Stephen Trott: PMM asking for a removal of 12-month time limit for SG complaints
If want to support, need to do it online:
- David Mills: support Stephen Trott
- + Robert Innes ... oppose PMM due to the risk of increasing the problem of vexatious complaints
- Ian Paul: in SG matters, time limit may be lifted anyway ...
- Clive S – BC has already agreed to extend time to sign support for PMMs

(5) GS elections this year

Current members of EGGs who have indicated whether they will be standing for re-election:

- 50% standing
- 25% not
- 25% undecided

In response to Q's from the chair, Carl Hughes offered the following :

(a) Good preparation now ?:

- Key is data: understanding who your electorates are for both clergy and laity
- Build a database of orthodox clergy & lay members of Deanery Synod ...
- APCMs coming up ... ensuring each parish takes up its Deanery Synod places ...

(b) Question most often asked: how many candidates should we put up?

Ideally, every diocese should have the same number of orthodox candidates as there are spaces in each house
Part of reason for this is to ensure that we maximise the number of people who could be elected. Also, if there are casual vacancies in the first two years, the election is re-run without the successful candidate, so the next placed candidate is in poll position

(c) What help do we (CEEC etc) need over coming months?

JD has created a GS election website, at present publicly open but will have a members' only section in due course ...

- Help to address the tricky question liberals will be throwing at orthodox candidates
- Please send your 2015 election addresses to JD / CH as possible templates for new candidates.

- If you'd be willing to be an editor to help those considering standing prepare their election statements, please contact Carl Hughes
- Dos and don'ts for election addresses ...
- Helpful answers for tricky FAQs

Paul Langham – there are orthodox people beyond evangelical circles: good for DEFs to make links with others who are orthodox within other wings of the C of E

We must swallow our distaste and do the politics.

(6) GS officers/posts

JD: Come November, GS will be electing officers, in Spring 2022 Boards and Councils, in Summer 2022 GS members of CNC.

Any of you who currently hold a post, and are not standing, or are standing, please let JD know

(7) Fletcher Report

JD: not an opportunity to discuss the 31:8 report, nor express our own thoughts about what has happened. Rather, the aim to give an update on what CEEC is doing in the area of Culture, Power and Abuse

Ed Shaw – a CEEC convened group has been meeting for a few months, and addressing a number of matters including :

- How we can be better at listening to survivors
- How can we encourage evangelicals to lament what has been done in our midst?
- Can we signpost the many good resources out there to help us understand how to spot early signs of an abuser at work ...
- How do we change some of the unhealthy aspects of evangelical culture?

(8) Notified AOB (please email Chair by Tuesday 9am 20th April – jdunnett@cpas.org.uk)

James Dudley-Smith has tabled a PMM ... a lovely little teaser ... suggesting that in support of ABC drive against deference ... referencing Matthew 23 ...we should remove titles such as 'venerable', Right Reverend etc.

(9) Prayer

JD closed the meeting in prayer

Prayed again for William & Karen Belcher ... and + Peter & Jane Hancock ...

Prayed for the Queen and the Royal Family

Chair : John Dunnett, jdunnett@cpas.org.uk

Secretary : Paul Langham, Paul.Langham@ccweb.org.uk