

346th Annual Assembly of Clergy Support Trust, held at St Mellitus College, London, on Thursday 10 October 2024 at 11.30am

Agenda

1. Opening prayer

2. Apologies for absence

The apologies for absence received will not be read out but will be recorded in the minutes.

3. Minutes of the 345th annual general meeting

- a) Approval of the minutes for signing
- b) Matters arising from the minutes (if any)

4. Governors deceased

5. Treasurers' report

This will include the presentation of the Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023.

6. Chief Executive's report

7. Keynote address by Dr Liz Graveling, Senior Researcher, Ministry Development Team, Church of England.

8. Elections and appointments

- a) New Governors
- b) Members of the Court of Assistants for the coming year (see below)
- c) Treasurers for the coming year
- d) Auditors

9. Date of 2025 Annual Assembly

10. Any other business

Any Governor who wishes to raise substantive business under this heading is asked to notify the Chief Executive at least two days prior to the meeting.

11. The Grace

Minutes

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Mr M Beaman, The Revd Canon S Butler, Mr A Chamberlain, Mrs C Chinhengo, Dr B Corley, Mr C Drummond, The Revd Canon R F Eversley, Mr R D Farmbrough (chair), The Right Reverend C Fletcher, Ms Mary Foster, Mr RJM Gilbert, The Reverend N Goodrich, Mr W S O'Grady Haly, Mr J A Hargreaves, Mr LL Lewin, Mr C Hoare Nairne, Mrs J Jordan, The Venerable D Lowman, The Reverend J Moodey, Mr J Prichard, Mr ED Roberts, Mr T Saywell, Mr S Slack, Dr W Scott, Mr JM Slater, Mr I Woolf.

IN ATTENDANCE: Members of the staff of the charity.

Mr Richard Farmbrough, the Senior Treasurer, welcomed everyone to the 346th Annual Assembly of Clergy Support Trust.

1. Opening Prayer

Prayers were led by The Reverend Nancy Goodrich (Treasurer).

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received with thanks, and accepted, from Governors as follows:

Mr W Aldwinckle, The Ven C Allsopp, Mr J Asbury-Bailey, The Very Revd T Barker, Mr Bartlett, Ms Bazalgette, Dr R Bethel, Mr P Bowers, Mr M Bithell, Mr J Briggs, Mr S Brooker, Ms A Brougham, Mr N Buchanan, Dr R Butler, The Rt Rev and Rt Hon The Lord Carey of Clifton, Mr M Cartwright, The Revd R Chavner, Sir C Clarke, His Honour P Clyne, Mr N Cocking, Mr D Cole-Adams, Mr M Cooper, The Revd Canon C Davies, Ms M de Cordova, Prof J de la Fuente, Mr S Doble, Ms B Dowsett, Mr J de Sausmarez, The Revd Canon D Eaton, Mr L Evander, His Honour R Foster, Dr P Gazard, Mr T Gazard, Mr M Gilham, Mr A Godfrey, The Revd Preb J Good, Ms A Gowman, The Hon Mrs L Green, The Revd Preb The Lord S Green of Hurstpierpoint, Mr G Greenhous, Baroness B Hale, Mr A Hamilton, The Revd D Hart, The Rev Canon N Harvey, Mr P Heckingbottom, Mr P Herbage, Mr L Hillman, Mr M Hockney, Mr T Hoffman, Mr S Hogg, Mr Rowland Hughes, Mr C Hurron, Mrs M Irvine, The Revd Canon D Jennings, Mrs A Joyce, The Revd Canon W Kennedy, Mr P Kennerley, The Rt Revd G Knowles, Miss M Leadbitter, The Rt Hon The Lord R Lisvane, The Ven A MacRow-Wood, Mr L March, Lady A Mawer, Baroness T May, Mrs A McDonald, Mr C Menzies, Mr P Miall, The Revd M Mookerji, The Ven J Morrison, Mr Mundy, Mr A Platt, The Revd Canon D Pritchard, Mr C Pownall, Mr N Pullman, Mr J Ray, Mr J Read, Mr N Redcliffe, Mr G Renwick, Mrs J Rich, Major General A Ritchie, Mr C Roberts, Mr M Roberts, Mr R Rokeby-Johnson, The Rt Revd D Rosedale, Mr R Noel de Montjoie, Mr M Rupp, Mr J Rushworth, The Rt Revd R Screech, Mr W Shand, Mr D Short, Dr P Simmons, Mr J Stace, The Revd J Staples, Mr K Stern, Ms L Stone, Mr J Strange, Sir J and Lady Stuttard, Mr R Sully, Dr J Thomson, The Revd A J Turner, Mr A Underwood, The Revd J Vasey, Lady Z Verney, Mr J Vickers, Mr D Wakefield, Mr T Watts, Mrs S Webb, Mr C Weller, Mr R Westbrook, Mrs C White, Dr D Wright and Mr S Wright.

3. Minutes of the 345th Annual Assembly of Clergy Support Trust

a) Approval of the minutes

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in November 2023 were approved for signing by the chair.

b) Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

4. a. Governors deceased

The chair invited those present to read the names of those Governors whose death had been reported during the past year and to remember them in a moment of silence and prayer. They are as follows:

The Revd Canon Michael T. H. Banks, Thomas D. Baxendale. Mark Cornwall-Jones, The Revd. Derek J. Duncanson, The Ven. Kenneth Gibbons, Nicholas Heal, The Revd. D. M. B. Mathers, Frances Maynard, The Revd. John Rose-Casemore, The Revd Canon Alan Watson.

b. Governors retired

The Chair drew members' attention to the list of retired governors, as presented on the slide: Ms H Bazalgette., Mr A Clark, Mr A Haas, Mr M Halsey, Ms E Holden, Mr C Hooper, Ms S Marshall, Mr D Newell, Ms J Plumptre, Mr M Rodgers, Mr T Robinson Stockwell, The Revd J Vasey, Sir B Wells, Mr C Wilson and The Revd Canon R. M. Wilson.

5. Senior Treasurer's report, including the presentation of the Trustees' Annual Report (TAR) for the year ended 31 December 2023

The Chair presented his report as Senior Treasurer, including the Trustees' Annual Report for 2023, and explained the rationale behind bringing the date of the Assembly forward by a month: to make discussion of the TAR a little closer to the preceding year-end, as well as to avoid any diary clashes with Remembrance Day commemorations. He highlighted the sustained demand on our grants and services, with 22% of serving clergy supported over the last year, and the pressures, both societal and ecclesial, felt by our applicants. The vast increase since 2019 in the numbers both of households supported and of grants allocated seems to be tapering a little recently, perhaps owing to a renewed focus from the Trust on both prevention and advocacy as well as cure. However, our grant expenditure reached its highest figure ever, at £6.47m. Richard also drew Governors' attention to further key highlights of 2023, measured against our strategic priorities, including:

- growth in our Visiting Caseworker service, Wellbeing Workshops and research;
- the introduction of a new and widely improved application processing system;
- work on our internal committee structure and governance regulations;
- continued improvement to our annual Festival, including a less formal format for the Dinner, to enable increased and more inclusive attendance.

The Chair concluded his report by paying tribute to staff and Trustees for another year of sustained hard work and dedication, by thanking the Venerable Ruth Newton, recently appointed Archdeacon of Carlisle and outgoing Trustee, for her commitment during her tenure, and by welcoming The Venerable Antony MacRow-Wood, who will be joining the Board, subject to election later in the meeting.

In response to a question from a Governor seeking clarification on the Trust's investment policy relating to benchmarking performance versus our target of CPI+4%, to our total returns policy and to the issue of redeeming capital from our endowment, the Chair observed that the first two issues were live questions currently debated at Court and Investment Committee meetings; in

terms of drawing down capital, Trustees took the decision in 2022, after careful consideration and following a period of capital growth and budgetary underspend, to transfer £8m from the endowment into a high interest cash account in order to meet the sudden growing demand on our grants and services. In response to several questions and comments about fundraising, the Chair responded that the need to develop our fundraising activities was currently being discussed at Court, and observed that since it was significantly more challenging for a charity with large reserves to raise money, our strategy in that domain was long-term and focused currently on legacies; in the meantime, we will endeavour to meet the needs of every eligible applicant, but criteria are under regular review, together with external factors such as changes in the stipend. In response to a question as to why Cazenove did not feature in the list of fund managers' annualised returns in the Financial Review section of the Annual Report, the Chair confirmed that following a thorough review of our Fund Managers' performance and asset allocations, it had been decided to redeem our allocation with Cazenove entirely and transfer it to CCLA.

6. Chief Executive's Report

The Revd Ben Cahill-Nicholls began his presentation by thanking Governors for their earlier questions, as the topics they raised dovetailed neatly with the activities of the Trust over the last year. He observed that we as we reached just beyond the halfway point in the Trust's current strategic period, we had continued to achieve considerable progress across all objectives, and highlighted the following:

- We continue to give more grants to more people than ever before;
- More specialist support, including the launch of a new coaching service, which extends to spouses and partners;
- Significant preparatory work on the development of an online portal, giving us the opportunity to build on our reputation as a trusted brand and offer a "one stop shop", beyond our services and grants, to signpost to other services and resources, as well as to a clergy-specific suite of materials;
- Good, if steady, take-up of Wellbeing Workshops (Governors are encouraged to promote this within their respective diocesan circles if possible);
- The Visiting Caseworker service, which is targeted at those households in the most challenging circumstances, has been very successful, in particular by maximising income from other, statutory sources and in taking cases to tribunal (PIP, Universal Credit); two new Visiting Caseworkers are shortly to join the team;;
- Our research continues to seek answers to our questions on clergy wellbeing and finances.

Ben then drew the Governors' attention to the facts and figures in his slides, especially the continued growth in applications, which was projected almost to reach our strategic objective of helping 3000 households by the end of 2024. The rate of growth, however, was slowing, which perhaps implied a point of "saturation", having worked hard to extend our reach to those who can and wish to apply. He raised two points of concern: firstly, £2m of our grant expenditure is spent funding those basic things which one would expect to either afford to buy (school uniforms, car repairs, appliances) or to be provided for by one's employer, such as laptops. Secondly, as illustrated on

slide 17, we are supporting well over 25% of clergy in many dioceses and close to 40% in some. Our levels of engagement have risen exponentially, thanks in part to social media and brand recognition, but also increasingly to our reputation as a trusted supporter, and peer-to-peer recommendation. Lastly, our robust and reliable data has enabled us to make considerable progress in our advocacy work on clergy finance and wellbeing, which has focused on three key asks: an increase in the stipend, funding from the Church to pay for the basics alluded to earlier, and to work in partnership with the Church to find preventative, longer term and more sustainable solutions to support current and future generations of clergy in their financial retirement planning as well as general wellbeing.

Ben concluded his presentation by referring to a new workstream in the area of fundraising and introduced our new will-writing service. This is a no-obligation, free service offered in partnership with Farewill, and he encouraged Governors to utilise this, and spread the word among their respective networks.

7. Keynote Speech: Dr Liz Graveling, Senior Researcher, Ministry Development Team, Church of England.

The Chief Executive introduced the speaker, Dr Liz Graveling, who presented her research on clergy wellbeing and highlighted the four key challenges clergy face: tiredness, isolation, demoralisation and financial anxiety. She called on the Church to develop ways to support clergy further and enable them to flourish in their ministry, and concluded by thanking the Trust for its invaluable work in alleviating some of the pressures they are under. In response to a question regarding the tension she raised between clergy's calling and the challenges they face, she replied that the situation was complex and would naturally depend on each person's circumstances, but that some clergy were certainly not feeling fulfilled in their vocation and had considered other work; however, she was cautiously optimistic that we had not reached a generalised "tipping point". In response to a question on the impact of VAT on church school fees, the chair clarified that as a charity, we no longer give grants in support of independent school fees, except under very exceptional circumstances. A brief discussion followed on the value of looking at the wellbeing of specific groups of clergy, such as Bishops, Deans and Archdeacons, and retired clergy. Governors also noted that the general drop in volunteering which has occurred since the pandemic was keenly felt by parish priests, who struggled to fill positions in their PCC as church wardens or treasurers, and often picked up the extra duties; it was hoped that current investment by the Church in lay ministry would perhaps alleviate the burden. The chair thanked Dr Graveling for her thought-provoking address and encouraged further discussion over lunch. the full transcript of her speech can be found on our website [here](#).

8. Elections:

The Chair began by clarifying that Mr Stephen Slack was voting by proxy for a number of Governors who had hoped to attend but unable to at short notice.

a) New Governors

The following were elected as Governors by a show of hands.
The Revd Stanley Albert

The Rt. Revd Christopher Chessun
Carline Deal
The Ven. Antony Macrow-Wood
Mrs Susan Woolf

b) Members of the Court of Assistants for the coming year

The Chair asked the Assembly to formally elect the Court, as listed below. The Court was unanimously elected for the coming year, including new trustee Antony MacRow-Wood:

The Reverend Canon Simon Butler	Ms Jackie Jordan
Mr Adam Chamberlain	Mrs Anna MacDonald
Mr Martin Cooper	The Venerable Antony MacRow-Wood
Ms Constance Chinhengo	Dr Oluwamayowa Marcus
Mr Richard Farmbrough	Mr Stephen Slack CBE
The Reverend Nancy Goodrich	The Most Reverend Patricia Storey
Mr Jeremy Hargreaves MBE	

c) Treasurers

The following were unanimously re-elected to serve as Treasurers of the charity:

- Mr Richard Farmbrough re-elected as Senior Treasurer.
- The Reverend Nancy Goodrich re-elected as a Treasurer.
- Mrs Constance Chinhengo re-elected as a Treasurer.

d) Auditors

Buzzacott LLP were re-appointed as auditors of the charity for the coming year.

9. Date of 2025 Annual Assembly

The Chair stated that the date for next year's Assembly would be 9 October 2025; he also invited Governors to attend the Trust's first Christmas Carol Service, to be held on Monday 2nd December 2024 at the King's Chapel of the Savoy, and next year's Festival scheduled on 13 May 2025.

11. Any other business

A point was raised concerning the issue of housing for retired clergy to which Ben explained that the Trust was currently in conversation with the Retired Clergy Association and the Pensions Board about conducting a piece of research on retired clergy, with a view to understanding the breadth and depth of the issue prior to potential advocacy work on encouraging preventative and supportive measures to prepare clergy for retirement much earlier than is currently the case.

There being no other business, the Senior Treasurer closed the meeting by inviting Governors to say Grace.

The meeting closed at 12.31pm.