

**Minutes of the 347th Annual Assembly of Clergy Support Trust,
held at the offices of CCLA, One Angel Lane, London, on
Thursday 9 October 2025 at 11.30am**

Agenda

1. Opening prayer

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence received will be recorded in the minutes.

3. Minutes of the 346th annual general meeting

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

4. Governors deceased

5. Treasurers' report

including the presentation of the Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2024, and bidding farewell to Adam Chamberlain, who has resigned his Trusteeship.

6. Chief Executive's report

Including reflections on the Trust's work during 2025 and a brief overview of our next strategy.

7. Keynote talk: The Reverend Canon Thomas Woodhouse, Chaplain to the King's Chapel of the Savoy.

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
- e) Administrative change to our governance: resolution on voting by proxy

9. Discussion: reforming our Royal Charter

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:

The Ven Christine Allsopp, The Very Revd T Barker, Ms G A Bassey, Mr Michael Beaman, Mr Michael Bithel, Mr John Briggs, Mr Stephen Brooker, Mrs Sue Brooker, Ms Alex Brougham, The Revd Canon Simon Butler, Mrs Constance Chinhengo, Dr BMG Corley, Canon Carline Deal, Miss Beryl Dowsett, The Revd Canon Roxanne Eversley, Mr Richard Frambrough, Mr Michael Gilham, Mr William Haly, Mr Andrew Hamilton, Mr Jeremy Hargeaves, Mr Paul Herbage, Mr Lester Hillman, Mr Christopher Hurron, Mrs Jackie Jordan, Mr Jonathan Lewin, The Ven Antony MacRow-Wood, Mrs Anna MacDonald, Mr Luke March, Mr Peter Miall, The Revd Jeremy Moodey, Mr Jonathan Prichard, Mr David Roberts, Dr Wendy Scott, Dr Paul Simmons, Mr Stephen Slack, Miss Lynette Stone, Mr Roy Sully, Ms Patience Thody, Mr Peter Warren, Mr Timothy Watts, Mrs Susan P Webb, Mrs Christine White, Mr Inigo Woolf and Mrs Susan Woolf.

IN ATTENDANCE: Members of the staff of the charity.

Mr Richard Frambrough, the Senior Treasurer, welcomed everyone to the 347th Annual Assembly of Clergy Support Trust.

1. Opening Prayer

Prayers were led by The Venerable Antony MacRow-Wood.

2. Apologies for absence

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

Mr W Aldwinckle, Mr J Asbury-Bailey, Mr Bartlett, Ms Bazalgette, Dr R Bethel, Mr P Bewers, 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 Christopher Clarke, His Honour P Clyne, Mr N Cocking, Mr D Cole-Adams, The Revd Canon C Davies, Prof J de la Fuente, Mr S Doble, Mr J de Sausmarez, The Revd Canon D Eaton, Mr L Evander, His Honour R Foster, The Revd Cortland Fransella, Dr P Gazard, Mr T Gazard, Mr A Godfrey, The Revd Preb J Good, Ms A Gowman, The Hon Mrs L Green, Mr G Greenhous, The Revd D Hart, The Rev Canon N Harvey, Mr P Heckingbottom, Mr M Hockney, Mr T Hoffman, Mr Rowland Hughes, 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, Lady A Mawer, Mr C Menzies, The Revd M Mookerji, The Ven J Morrison, Mr Mundy, Mr A Platt, 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, Mr J Stace, The Revd J Staples, Mr K Stern, Ms L Stone, Mr J Strange, Sir J and Lady Stuttard, Dr J Thomson, The Revd A J Turner, Mr A Underwood, The Revd J Vasey, Lady Z Verney, Mr J Vickers, Mr David Wakefield Mr C Weller, Mr R Westbrook, Dr David Wright and Mr S Wright.

3. Minutes of the 346th Annual Assembly of Clergy Support Trust

a) Approval of the minutes

The minutes of the Annual Assembly held in October 2024 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 stand as they were able, as he read the names of those Governors whose death had been reported during the past year, and to remember them in a moment of silent prayer. They are as follows:

Mr Robin Arculus, Mr Andrew Gordon Clark, Mr Ian Grundy, Mr Christopher Hooper, The Revd Kenneth Jamieson, The Revd Anthony Lattimore, Mr H K M Lugg, The Revd Dr Peter Newing, The Rt Revd Anthony Russell, Mr Kenneth Stern, Mr Brian Thompson, Mr Peter Worlidge.

b. Governors retired

The Chair drew Governors' attention to the list of retired Governors, as presented on the slide:

The Revd Canon R J Brunswick, Sir John Chadwick, The Revd P J Gregson, Mr Colin Hart, The Revd Canon Norman Harvey, Mrs Mirian Irvine, The Rt Revd Graeme Knowles, Mr A W-Lintern Ball, The Ven John Morrison, Dr Roy Palmer, Mr Nigel Pullman, Mr John Read, Mr C T Redman, Ms Jill Sandham, Mr M W G Skinner, Mr Stephen Wright.

5. Senior Treasurer's report, including the presentation of the Trustees' Annual Report (TAR) for the year ended 31 December 2024

The Senior Treasurer presented his report, including the Trustees' Annual Report for 2024, and drew the Governors' attention to the following key highlights:

- In 2024, the charity once again supported an extraordinary number of clergy: 22%, or nearly one in four, Church of England Clergy, alongside others in Scotland, Wales and Ireland.
- While the rate of growth has slowed significantly, we helped record numbers of applicants with their financial, mental and physical health
- Applications were received from every all of the sixty-six dioceses we cover.
- A total of 2,781 households were supported, 35% of whom came to us for the first time in 2024.
- The charity's total funds were £115.6m in 2024, compared with £116.1m in 2023.
- The consistently high rate of annual total spend which went towards fulfilling our charitable objects (93.2% in 2024, compared with 93.4% in 2023).
- Agreement of a £2m grant from the Church of England, in recognition of the Trust's vital work and as transitional arrangement towards stipend rises (i.e. enabling the Trust to continue covering areas of spend which, once the higher stipend for which the Trust strongly advocated takes effect, would ideally see decreasing levels of application).
- Growth in our donor base, with thanks to the ongoing generosity of existing and new supporters, and better and more frequent supporter communications.
- Continued strong performance against 2022-25 objectives, including expansion of the Visiting Caseworker team; the introduction of a new clergy coaching offer; a review of safeguarding policies and procedures; the launch of new grants portal (January 2024); refinements to criteria to ensure

maximum fairness for applicants; and the first ever Christmas Carol Service, as a new way of thanking and welcoming supporters.

The Chair concluded his report by paying tribute to staff and Trustees for another year of sustained hard work and dedication, by thanking Adam Chamberlain (outgoing Trustee) for his commitment and service to the Trust during his tenure, and by welcoming Patience Thody and Peter Warren, who will be joining the Board, subject to election later in the meeting.

Brief discussion covered the growing number and significance of retired clergy, and clarification concerning our investment portfolio allocation and performance, after which the Assembly duly received the Trustees' Annual Report.

6. Chief Executive's Report

The Revd Ben Cahill-Nicholls began his presentation by summarising key achievements of the Trust over the last year, including building on the shift in focus initiated in 2024 to advocacy, and building a coalition of key stakeholders within the Church of England which has resulted in significant success in 2025: namely an increase in the basic stipend from 2026, and for it to be linked to inflation; better support in retirement, both in terms of pensions and retirement planning and central funding to be made available to support this; and, as noted above, a Church of England grant of £2m in 2025, in recognition that many clergy cannot fund basic needs without our support. He then drew the Governors' attention to the key elements of the Trust's new 2026-2028 strategy, which will be launched in December at our annual carol service. Key highlights of the new strategy include:

- Continued focus on supporting those households in greatest need;
- Development of our online self-service portal offering a range of services and resources;
- Further training and research work;
- Continued advocacy on the issues we identify as the priority; and
- Ongoing improvements to professionalise our systems and processes.

Ben concluded his presentation by thanking Governors for their attention, and introduced the Keynote Speaker, The Revd Canon Thomas Woodhouse.

7. Keynote Speech: The Revd Canon Thomas Woodhouse, Chaplain of the King's Chapel of the Savoy and of the Royal Victorian Order.

The Revd Canon Thomas Woodhouse gave a delightful potted history of the King's Chapel of the Savoy and entertained Governors with personal anecdotes from his ministry as its Chaplain. The full transcript of the speech can be access [here](#).

8. Elections:

a) New Governors

The following were elected as Governors by a show of hands:

The Revd. Cortland Fransella
Mr Meng Wu

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

The Chair asked the Assembly to elect members of the Court, as listed below. He thanked Adam Chamberlain (in absentia) for his outstanding contribution as Chair of the Investment Committee. The following were then unanimously elected:

- as new Trustees (and as Governors) Patience Thody and Peter Warren; and
- for a second three-year term as Trustees, Martin Cooper and the Revd Nancy Goodrich.

It was reported that the Court of Assistants accordingly now comprised:

The Reverend Canon Simon Butler	Mrs Anna MacDonald
Mr Martin Cooper	The Ven Antony MacRow-Wood
Ms Constance Chinhengo	Dr Oluwamayowa Marcus
Mr Richard Farmbrough	Mr Stephen Slack
The Reverend Nancy Goodrich	The Most Reverend Patricia Storey
Mr Jeremy Hargreaves	Ms Patience Thody
Ms Jackie Jordan	Mr Peter Warren.

c) Treasurers

The following Trustees were unanimously 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 approved unanimously as auditors of the charity for the coming year.

e) Administrative changes to our Royal Charter: resolutions on voting by proxy

Stephen Slack introduced two proposed resolutions, to approve resolutions that the Court of Assistants had passed, in exercise of the power conferred by Article 18.1 of the Trust's Royal Charter, to amend it in two administrative and uncontroversial respects. He explained that the rationale behind them was essentially to put our governance on a better footing by filling what could be seen as something of a lacuna in the terms of the Charter.

The principal point was that Article 14. 6 of the Charter refers to Governors being able to attend an Assembly by proxy as well as in person, which would imply the possibility of Governors being able to vote by proxy if not able to be present in person; however, the Charter makes no further provision for this. As a result, Farrer & Co, our external solicitors, had advised the Trust that it was doubtful whether it was legally able to use proxy voting at Assemblies. However, we might wish to do so, since the Charter alluded to it and because in principle Governors who are unable to be present in person at an Assembly should have the right to have their views taken into account when it comes to voting.

Therefore, Stephen introduced the first resolution, as quoted below, to amend the Charter so as to allow for the provision of proxy voting at Assemblies:

1. ‘This Assembly APPROVES the resolution passed by the Court of Assistants at its meeting on 11th September 2025, pursuant to Article 18.1 of the charity’s Royal Charter, that for Article 16.1 of the Charter there be SUBSTITUTED: “Every Governor shall have one vote. If a Governor is unable to attend and vote at an Assembly duly convened in person, that Governor may instead appoint a proxy to attend and vote in their place, in such form and to such effect as may be further prescribed in Regulations.”’

Stephen then introduced the second resolution. It was consequential on the first, providing that Governors who choose to vote by proxy at an Assembly should be considered to be present at it and therefore be taken into account in calculating the quorum. It was arguable that Article 15 of the Charter on quoracy already permitted that, but the amendment proposed by the Court would put the matter beyond doubt. The resolution took the following form:

2. ‘This Assembly APPROVES the resolution passed by the Court of Assistants at its meeting on 11th September 2025, pursuant to Article 18.1 of the charity’s Royal Charter, that for Article 15.2 of the Charter there be SUBSTITUTED: “A quorum is Twenty-five Governors (including at least fifteen Governors who are not also Assistants) present in person or by proxy.”’

In answer to several questions from Governors on the practicalities of proxy voting, Stephen replied that further work would be done on this, in the form of regulations drawn up by the Court, in exercise of the power to make regulations vested in it by the Charter: Farrers had advised that that was preferable to putting the detailed provisions required into the Charter itself.

On both motions being put to the Assembly on a show of hands, the Chairman declared both to have been passed, with no Governor indicating dissent.

9. Reforming our Royal Charter

Ben introduced the topic by firstly thanking those Governors who had engaged with him on this question prior to the Assembly, either in person or by correspondence. He observed that the Trust sought to achieve a delicate balance between continuity and change, both respectful of tradition but also relevant to current and future beneficiaries and supporters. Ben also echoed the concerns previously voiced by some Governors around accountability, and the potential risks associated with a board of Trustees becoming “too powerful”; he reassured the Assembly of the continued and varied ways in which the Trust sought to be more accountable, including through applicant impact surveys, donor and other stakeholder engagement events, diocesan visits, newsletters, etc. He emphasised that the Trust was open to further suggestions.

Stephen then presented the case for further amendments to the Royal Charter, namely to the following articles:

Articles 13-20

- Removal of Articles 13-16 relating to existing functions of Governors and Assemblies [the latter of which will cease to exist in their present form]; some renumbering and consequential changes to art. 20.

Articles 8, 9 and 11

- Alternative provision for appointment of Assistants by the Court.

Article 12

- Provision for continued membership of the Corporation: Assistants to function as Governors and Members of the Corporation [but with retention of “Governor” title for supporters] and to cease being Governors on stepping down as Assistants. Governors who are not Assistants would cease to have a formal role in the administration of the charity, but would retain an informal role in terms of scrutiny and support.

Stephen clarified that the set of proposed amendments above relied on the statutory power of the amendment on chartered charities by Section 280C of the Charities Act 2011, which involved obtaining the formal approval of the Privy Council. We had begun the process of consulting the Privy Council Office, and through them, the Charity Commission, about the proposals, and would be in touch to convene an Extraordinary Assembly to approve the changes once we had obtained the PCO’s agreement in principle and in detail.

A discussion followed, during which Governors broadly expressed their support for these changes for reasons of better governance, but also expressed a desire for the continued opportunity to come together as a group to hear presentations and updates on the charity’s activities. Ben clarified that there was no requirement in the Royal Charter for the Assembly to approve the accounts, nor was there any perceived incompatibility with Trustees approving them. Trustees are, of course, answerable to the Charity Commission, which fulfils the role of formal scrutiny. The discussion closed with was a general consensus for more thought on how current Governors could continue to support, and remain involved in, the work of the charity, and what they might be called, once they cease to be Governors.

The Chair concluded that the next steps would be communicated in due course, and would involve convening Governors to an Extraordinary Assembly, possibly in Spring 2026.

He invited Governors to note the date of the forthcoming Christmas Carol Service, to be held on Monday 1 December 2025 at the King’s Chapel of the Savoy, and next year’s Festival scheduled on 12 May 2026.

11. Any other business

There being no other business, the Senior Treasurer closed the meeting by inviting Governors to say Grace. The meeting closed at 1. 24pm.