

WESTON-SUPER-MARE FIRST NATIONAL SPIRITUALISTS' CHURCH

MINUTES OF THE 21ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 6TH MARCH 2023 AT 7:30PM

WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER: Our President, Rachel Arnold welcomed everyone to the AGM and invited Vice President Diana Starling to remember our arisen friends with a minute's silence and to open the meeting in prayer.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: National Warden Tim Coombe, Huw Boyce, Jo Batey, Betty Hooper and Sharon Bird.

APPOINTMENT OF TELLER & SCRUTINEER: The President asked for two non-committee members to act as teller and scrutineer for the evening: Michael Clifton and Ann Gibbins volunteered to fulfil these roles.

CREDENTIAL REPORT: Mrs Bendall reported that there were 23 members and one visitor present at the Meeting.

MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM: The President asked for any corrections to the Minutes of the last AGM, held 7TH March 2022. It was agreed to correct the Healing Report to refer to Ann Gibbins, as Healer, rather than, Ann Peck. There being no other corrections, the President asked Members for a show of hands to confirm their agreement, which was unanimous. Adoption of the Minutes was proposed by Michael Clifton and seconded by Pat Bendall.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: None.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS: Rachel Arnold, the President gave thanks to the predecessors and pioneers of our Church, for turning this building into a place of love and harmony. It is not just a building, but a community. Our belief in Spiritualism and the Seven Principles binds us together. Spiritualism is not based on evangelism, but personal responsibility and living in accordance with the Seven Principles, that we can show others to connect to the Greater Spirit, which is Love. The Church is a beacon of love and the Committee is here to support our community to ensure that the Church continues to be that beacon and shine forever brighter in our small part of Weston Super Mare. She thanked all the Members of the Church and gave appreciation for their value and contribution. She went on to individually thank the Members of the Committee for the various ways in which they help – Pat Bendall (Former President and Senior Vice-President), Diana Starling (Vice President), Bill Tomlinson (Treasurer), Stephanie Collins (Secretary), Steve Satchwell (Ordinary member and Local Warden), Philippa Hooper (Ordinary member and Member Secretary), Ray Tallis (Ordinary member and Medium Secretary), Sharon Ledbrook (Ordinary Member). Rachel also thanked other Members of the Church for their support: Ann Gibbins, Michael Clifton, Huw Boyce and the Healing mediums and trainees, Ann Peck, Jenny Thomas, Andrew Cairns & all the mediums that serve the Guild and Divine Services and Mike Jennings for his music. She stated that everyone is valued and important and gave thanks to all for being part of the Church.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: The Secretary, Stephanie Collins, thanked Members for attending explaining that a certain number of Members were required to conduct the meeting. Since the last AGM, Diana Starling had agreed to become Vice President and Sharon Ledbrook an Ordinary Member. The Committee had met nine times since the last AGM. A Members' consultation was sent out immediately after the last AGM. As a result of this consultation the start time of the Divine Service was changed to 11am between October and March and 6.30pm from April to September, The service time was extended to one hour and ten minutes to allow more time for evidential mediumship, the finish time of the Guild was extended to 4pm to allow more time for evidential mediumship, the start time of the Healing Service was changed to 16.30pm to 17.30pm to allow more time for refreshments after the Guild. The Awareness Group start time was changed to 19.45pm

to 21.15pm. The changes were working well. Another Members' consultation would be sent out shortly after this AGM. Two new groups have been set up following the consultation: the Philosophy Circle, held monthly and run by Sharon Ledbrook. The Trance Circle, held weekly and run by Sue Chard. Both groups were well received and are progressing well. Demonstrations of mediumship have continued on a monthly basis and are well attended. Three afternoons of sittings have been held, two of them raising money for the South West Children's Hospice. The District Council held their half yearly meeting and evening of mediumship at the Church in October. Both were well attended. The District Council has also used the church for Healing Upgrades and Workshops. Ann & John Peck held a workshop in November, which was most enjoyable and well attended. The Christmas Party was a huge success, which will definitely be repeated and two Warm Afternoons have been held and will continue throughout the year. Drop down railings have been fitted outside the main entrance and holes have been drilled to secure the gates whilst the church is in use. A new outside security light has been installed. Steve has donated and fitted new microphones and an amplifier. The PAT testing has been done and the gas boiler serviced. The committee room has had a new clock, nets and curtains. A new step ladder has been purchased as the old one needed replacing. Ray and Rachel have been busy outside; tidying the shed, clearing the patio and rear access and planting fresh flowers in the tubs. The library has been updated and catalogued. Since the last AGM £990.75 has been raised for the following charities: Red Cross for Ukraine Appeal £82.80 from our Easter Raffle, South West Children's Hospice £340.00 from our afternoon of sittings in June, Weston Hospice Care £87.00 from our Harvest Raffle, Holly Hedge £180.95 from our Christmas Raffle, South West Children's Hospice £300.00 from our afternoon of sittings in February, Weston Food Bank had also collected a box before Christmas and another will be on it's way shortly. The number of followers on Facebook has risen to 493 and 49 on the Wordpress website. She advised that there were 45 Full Members of which 4 were Honorary Members. Six new applications for membership had been received since January.

OPEN CIRCLE REPORT: Michael Clifton, who takes Open Circle on Monday evenings, thanked Sharon Ledbrook for her continued support, as she is always willing to lead the Open Circle if he is unable to attend. The Open Circle meets every Monday at 7.30pm, even Bank Holiday Mondays. There are 7 to 10 people attending regularly. He feels that the Open Circle is many people's first port of call as they come in to the church.

GUILD REPORT: Ann Gibbins, who organises the Guild, reported the Guild meets every week at 3pm and averages about 17 people attending. The mediums that took the Guild gave their services free of charge, for which Ann expressed her gratitude. Ann concluded her report by saying that everyone enjoys the Guild afternoons and the cup of tea and a chat afterwards. She also thanked Jenny Thomas for the lovely music she plays at the Guild.

AWARENESS GROUP REPORT: Pat Bendall reported that the numbers of the Awareness Group have fluctuated this year. Everyone that attends seems very keen. There is always a meditation and every 3 weeks a Mini-Service is held, giving people a chance to test their mediumship and giving an address from the platform. She feels that they are really gaining confidence. Michael Clifton will soon be giving a talk on astrology and June Score a demonstration of Trance mediumship. Pat advised that she teaches about our spiritual beliefs and the Seven Principles, different forms of mediumship, Energy and the aura and the difference between working psychically and spiritually. The Awareness Group works in conjunction with the Open Circle and both promote mediums when ready at the Guild and the Divine Service. Pat stated that we have always considered this to be a teaching church and a place for everyone that comes to fully develop their spiritual gifts, should they wish.

HEALING REPORT: Read by President Rachel Arnold in Hugh Boyce's absence. One year on and things are looking good for the future of healing in our church. We continue to see new faces of people coming into the church for healing. Bill Tomlinson has completed his upgrade training this year. There are three trainee

healers in total, so there are enough now for the new people attending. Huw gave his apologies for being unable to attend.

The President asked for a show of hands to accept all reports, which was unanimous. Adoption of the reports was proposed by Mandy Davies and seconded by Philippa Hooper.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The Treasurer, Bill Tomlinson, referred to the Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2022 which had recently been approved by the auditor Ian Hyde, copies of which were given to all delegates on their arrival at the Meeting and explained the key variances and the calculation of the value of the property. June Score queried if the books in the library were taken into account as assets and if anyone had actually listed them. Rachel advised that Bill, Sharon and herself had gone through all of the books and had found some that were not in keeping with the church, but had a small value and the Committee would hope to the more valuable ones online. They hoped this year to assess the value of the remaining books, now that the cataloguing had been completed.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Sharon Ledbrook and seconded by Michael Clifton.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS & COMMITTEE : The nominations for election were as follows: The President – Rachel Arnold; Senior Vice President – Pat Bendall; Vice President Diana Starling; Treasurer – William Tomlinson; five ordinary committee members: Philippa Hooper, Steve Satchwell, Ray Tallis, Sharon Ledbrook and Ann Peck; Class A Church Representative – Rachel Arnold; SNU Trust representative – Steve Satchwell. A vote was not required as there were the right number of people for the right posts, who were either returned unopposed, or in the case of Ann Peck, elected to the remaining post.

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS: The President informed the Meeting that Ian Hyde, a qualified accountant, who had audited the Church accounts in previous years, was willing to continue as the Auditor. A show of hands unanimously agreed the re-appointment of Mr Hyde.

SIMPLE MAJORITY MOTIONS WITH NOTICE

The following motion proposed by the Committee was approved by the majority of Members:
With effect from the date of the AGM, the number of ordinary members for the Committee is increased from four to five.

The following motion proposed by the Committee was approved by the majority of Members: the date of the AGM is moved to the first Monday in April to allow for the audited accounts to be distributed 21 days before the AGM in accordance with the new Church Rules.

It was noted that the next AGM would therefore be on Monday 1st April 2024.

CHARITIES FOR THE YEAR: The President asked the Meeting for suggestions on which charities the Church should support in the coming year and various local charities were put forward by those present. Following a vote, the following charities were selected for the coming year: Somewhere to Go; Secret World; Weston Hospice; Mind.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

June Score queried if there had been any comeback about the parking restrictions. Rachel advised that the results of the consultation in January had not been published. Rachel had been in touch with the Council throughout and they had written to her recently to say that they have not come to any conclusions as yet but if and when they had come to any decision that they would contact to advise.

Rachel made a presentation with thanks to Andrew for cleaning the church and the lovely flower arrangement.

Rachel made a presentation with thanks to Steph for her help and support as Secretary.

Rachel made a presentation with thanks to Jenny to recognise her 25 years of membership and dedication to Spiritualism.

There being no further business, the President asked Senior Vice President Pat Bendall to close in prayer and the meeting finished at 8:30pm.