

WESTON-SUPER-MARE FIRST NATIONAL SPIRITUALIST CHURCH

MINUTES OF THE 23RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 7TH APRIL 2025 AT 7:30PM

WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER: Our President, Rachel Arnold welcomed everyone to the AGM and invited Micheal Clifton to remember our Arisen Friends with a minute's silence and to open the meeting in prayer. Arisen Friends: Minister Shirley Chubb, Jill Harrison, Glenys Gregory, Frances Pegler, Sharon Marshall, Jonathan Brown.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: National Warden Tim Coombe, Huw Boyce, Senior Vice President Diana Starling, Ann Gibbins, Jenny Thomas, Daniel James, Angie Day, Marie Saunders, Huw Boyce, and June Score.

APPOINTMENT OF TELLER & SCRUTINEER: The President asked for two non-committee members to act as teller and scrutineer for the evening: Andrew Cairns and Mandy Davies volunteered to fulfil these roles.

CREDENTIAL REPORT: There were 18 Full Members and 2 Honorary Members present at the Meeting.

MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM: The President asked for any corrections to the Minutes of the last AGM, held on 8th April 2024. There being no corrections, the President asked Members for a show of hands to confirm their agreement, which was unanimous. Adoption of the Minutes was proposed by Pat Bendall and seconded by Ray Tallis.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES: None.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS: Rachel Arnold, the President said that over the past year, the Church had gone from strength to strength. In these troubled times, many people were searching for answers and seeking a spiritual connection. More people were coming through the doors and the membership numbers were increasing. So many people said how much they appreciated the warm welcome they received when they visited the Church. Rachel said the Church was welcoming them back to the Spiritual knowledge of who they really were and offering the loving warmth of Spirit to everyone in recognition that they were all part of the Brotherhood of Man, all on their own unique journeys, but all a part of Spirit. The love for each other and everyone who came through the doors was a deep Spiritual love based on the understanding of the Seven Principles and commitment to Spiritualism. Rachel recognised that it was not always easy to open our hearts to all, but the benefits were infinite. Love would not just grow it multiplied exponentially. The Church was a beacon for that love, a sanctuary for anyone who chose to enter its doorway. Rachel said that the Church Members must keep it that way, and build on the strong foundations they had created, shining their light brightly to all. Rachel recognised that in the coming year, the Church would celebrate eighty years of Spiritualism and encouraged everyone to make it a year of which to be proud, to opening their arms widely to everyone and sharing the love that was in their hearts.

Rachel thanked all the Members of the Church and gave appreciation for their valuable contributions. She went on to individually thank the Members of the Committee for the various ways in which they helped – Diana Starling (Senior Vice-President), Philippa Hooper (Vice President), Alejandra Parres (Treasurer), Laura Chalmers (Secretary), Steve Satchwell (Ordinary member and Local Warden), Ray Tallis (Ordinary member and Medium Secretary), Sharon Ledbrook (Ordinary Member), Micheal Clifton (Ordinary Member) and Andi Rose (Ordinary Member). Rachel also thanked other Members of the Church for their support: Ann Gibbins, Huw Boyce and the Healing mediums and trainees, Andrew Cairns & all the mediums that served the Guild and Divine Services. She stated that everyone was valued and important and gave thanks to all for being part of the Church.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: The Secretary Laura Chalmers, thanked Members for attending explaining that a certain number of Members were required to conduct the meeting. The Committee had been hard at work

over the last year with nine meetings since the last AGM. Diana Starling, the Senior Vice President and Philippa Hooper, the Vice President were both stepping down at the AGM along with the Treasurer, Alejandra Parres. Laura gave thanks to Ale, Diana and Philippa for all their contributions and hard work supporting the Church.

Laura reported that it had been a busy year with monthly Demonstrations, weekly Open Circle, Awareness Group and closed Trance Circles, five workshops, two Saturday Sittings, a Church Sunday lunch, two Fledgling Services and a Christmas party. Alongside the regular meetings, seven workshops would take place in 2025 plus a special Healing Demonstration planned for May and two or three Saturday Sittings. Laura asked if Members were interested in a trip to that National Arboretum for the annual SNU Peace Walk. Members indicated that a number were interested.

Laura reported that in 2024 there were 43 Full Members, 17 Associate Members and 6 Honorary Members increasing our total membership by four from 2023. The Church's online presence was growing with an increase from 685 in 2023 to 814 followers. The website was regularly updated. The Church was continuing to sell the Psychic News, which was very popular amongst Members.

All the chairs in the main hall had been replaced with the old chairs going to a school in Sierra Leone. The rear door had been lowered in preparation to make the outside area accessible in the future. The skylight had been replaced and updated. The old fridge had been replaced with an additional fridge to support events. Plans for the coming year included looking into an accessible toilet, repair to the front wall, repainting the front wall, painting the flood damage in the kitchen and adding a new church plaque. Consideration would also be given to purchasing a defibrillator for the Church. The memorial plaques would also be updated and any additional suggestions for names to be added was welcomed. It was recognised that the Council's Resident Parking Zone might come into effect within the year.

Laura highlighted that 2025 marked the 80th Anniversary of the first service held in December 1945 and said that plans were underway to celebrate that milestone for the Church. Laura reported that £ 992.83 had been raised for charities. South West Children's Hospice - £ 451.10; Guide Dogs for the Blind £108.00; Somewhere to Go £292.32; Weston Hospicecare £141.41. New charities would be chosen later in the meeting. Thanks went to all the Members for supporting the fundraising.

OPEN CIRCLE REPORT: Michael Clifton, who led the Open Circle on Monday evenings, thanked Sharon Ledbrook for her continued support, as she was always willing to lead the Open Circle if he was unable to attend. The Open Circle met every Monday at 7.30pm, even on Bank Holiday Mondays. There were about 18 people attending regularly. Micheal also expressed his thanks to Rachel and Ray for their support.

GUILD REPORT: Ann Gibbins, who organised the Guild, reported the Guild met every week at 3pm and averaged about 16 to 20 people attending. The mediums that took the Guild gave their services free of charge, for which Ann expressed her gratitude. Ann also thanked everyone who made cakes and served the teas.

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 practice platform their platform skills. Special guests at the Awareness Group had included Diana Starling (twice), Micheal Clifton, Daniel James, Steve Satchwell, and Andi Rose. The aim of the Group was for attendees to learn about the Seven Principles, to practice meditation and to explore their spiritual development. Pat gave thanks to Sharon Ledbrook for covering during the holidays.

HEALING REPORT: Read by the President in Huw Boyce's absence. The future of healing in the church was looking positive. New people were coming into the church for healing. Ian Palmer and Amanda Sansum had started their training and would be healing shortly. Andi Rose and Stephanie Collins had completed their first year as certified SNU healers. There was therefore a full team in place. Huw gave thanks to all the

healers, trainee healers and to Diana for helping with healing reception. 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 Andi Rose and seconded by Sharon Bird.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The Treasurer, Alejandra Parres, referred to the Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2024 which had been approved by the auditor Ian Hyde, copies of which had been sent to all delegates. Alejandra advised that the Church income for 2024 was higher than 2023 with a total income received of £12,759. Our expenditure was also higher in 2024 than 2023 as the Committee had invested in the new chairs and other improvements to the building. Despite this the Church still had a surplus of £2,475. Due to the investment in the building and assets the overall capital and reserves had increased. The Church's finances remained in a healthy state with sufficient reserves to manage any foreseeable issues.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Stephanie Collins and seconded by Sharon Ledbrook.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS & COMMITTEE: The nominations for election were as follows: The President – Rachel Arnold; Senior Vice President – Micheal Clifton; Vice President Sharon Ledbrook; Treasurer – no valid nominations; five ordinary committee members: Steve Satchwell, Ray Tallis, Sharon Ledbrook, Andi Rose and Amanda Sansum; Church Representative – Laura Chalmers; 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 Amanda Sansum, elected to the remaining post. Dispensation had been obtained from the SNU for Rachel Arnold to act as the Treasurer for six months to allow time to find a replacement Treasurer.

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. Mr Hyde's fee would be donated at his request to Secret World.

SIMPLE MAJORITY MOTIONS WITH NOTICE

The following motion proposed by the Committee was approved unanimously:

In recognition of her length of service and commitment to the Church, Ann Gibbins is made an Honorary Member of the Church

The following motion was proposed by Rachel Arnold and seconded by Pat Bendall. It was approved by the majority of Members:

Subject to funds available, a bursary is provided for one Full Member each year to attend a District/Church Members week at the Arthur Findlay College. The Full Member will be selected via a draw and, to be eligible, the Full Member may not have attended the Arthur Findlay College in the previous two calendar years. The bursary will fund the basic course costs. Single room/en-suite supplements, upgrades to other public courses and any travel expenses will need to be covered by the Full Member.

CHARITIES FOR THE YEAR: The Committee had provided a short list of local charities for consideration by the Members. The President asked the Meeting for suggestions on any other charities to be included. Following a vote, the following charities were selected for the coming year: Birnbeck Regeneration Trust; Somewhere to Go; Weston Hospicecare.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Honorary Vice-President Elsie Poynton DSNU raised a number of concerns about the church including the quality of mediumship and the change of the name in the past from the Weston-super-Mare First National Spiritualist Church to Weston-super-Mare National Spiritualist Church. Elsie highlighted the historical importance of the inclusion of "First" in the Church name. The President suggested that a good way to commemorate the Church's 80th Anniversary would be to reinstate its original name. A vote was taken with the majority supporting the reinstatement of the original Church name.

Janet Taylor asked if the raffle could be changed from £1 a ticket back to £1 a strip. A vote was taken and the majority supported the continued use of £1 per ticket.

The President made presentations of thanks to Andrew Cairns for four years voluntarily cleaning the Church, Alejandra Parres for taking on the Treasurer role for the year, and to Philippa Hooper for her hard work and dedication.

DATE OF NEXT AGM Monday 30th March 2026

There being no further business, the President asked Vice President Philippa Hooper to close in prayer and the meeting finished at 8:43pm.