

Annual General Meeting of the Sheffield Diocesan Readers' Association

Tuesday 18 June 2024 at St Albans Wickersley S66 1ES

MINUTES

- 1.** The Bishop of Doncaster, Rt Revd Sophie Jelly welcomed everyone to the AGM, who were also welcomed by Tina Powell-Wiffen, Chair of Readers' Executive Committee.
- 2. The Act of Worship** was led by Jonathan Foster with an address by Revd Canon Toby Hole, Director of Mission and Ministry.
- 3.** Bishop Sophie led the **Renewal of Commitment to Ministry**. She specifically addressed those whose licences were being renewed and those over 70 whose Permission to Officiate was beginning or was being renewed. Our baptismal calling was reaffirmed.
- 4. Apologies** were received from: Jonathan Williamson, David Clark, Lesley Combe, Kate Moore, Tony Smith, Stephen Moyise, John Tomlinson, Catherine Burchell, Patrick White, John Goodacre, Kath Boyd, Judith Roberts, Malcolm Drew, George Ward, Margaret Hollingsworth, Sally Wilson, Noreen Sweed.
- 5. Approval of Minutes of the AGM 19 June 2023**
These were accepted as a true record.
- 6. Matters arising**
There were none.
- 7. Reader reviews** – Assistant warden, Peter Rainford, updated the meeting on the revised current situation. He commented that to have a review every five years was too long a time but an annual review was too short. Reviews are now to be every three years.

Relicensing is still every five years and Readers are now sent an application form for renewal of their licence. The form is similar to that already in use for Permission to Officiate, countersigned by the parish Safeguarding Officer, PCC Secretary (on behalf of the PCC) and the Oversight

Minister/incumbent/priest-in-charge. This has the advantage that now the parish is involved in reaffirming the ministry of a reader.

Peter publicly recognised the contribution Dominique Horsfield has given to this process and the role Suzanna Schofield has also played in administration, including the OMD programme.

8. Safeguarding – Revd Canon Toby Hole, Director of Mission and Ministry updated the meeting on progress made. He reminded readers that it is their responsibility to know when their safeguarding training is due. On occasions, a conversation about safeguarding needs to take place with a Safeguarding Officer from another parish to allow Readers to raise any issues they had not felt it appropriate to raise within their parish.

9. Report on wardens' team roles and changes to the constitution – Assistant Warden, Peter Rainford, updated the meeting on both these issues as was agreed informally at the 2023 AGM.

Since in 2022 Toby Hole ceased to be acting warden of readers, the three assistant wardens had taken on more responsibility. The work is now shared between them and Toby which has worked well over the last year.

Peter drew attention to the following proposed changes to the Constitution:

- a) Assistant wardens used to take it in turns to chair the executive committee but now the executive committee would choose their own chairperson from among themselves.
- b) A member of the executive committee could now serve for more than two terms to ensure continuity.
- c) The word 'honorary' secretary and 'honorary' treasurer would be deleted as no longer applicable to the role.

Peter proposed that these changes be approved. Ian Watson seconded this. They were approved unanimously.

10. Chair's report – Tina Powell-Wiffen (Chair) thanked the readers for their faithful service to God in their parishes, their workplaces and the many places where they exercise their God-given calling, during the previous year. She thanked the Assistant Wardens for their commitment to their

roles and Toby Hole for his involvement. She thanked the Executive for their commitment and contribution to readership ministry in the diocese.

11. Wardens' team report – The report had already been circulated to readers. Assistant warden, Peter Rainford, noted that following last year's AGM, readers' details held on the diocesan database had been checked and now only one email address is recorded. The Movement Form (which exists for clergy to notify the diocese of any relevant personal changes which enable the database at Church House to be updated) is now available for readers.

12. Treasurer's report – Jeremy Johnson, Treasurer, presented his report. Bank charges referred to at the 2023 AGM no longer apply. A new bank account has been set up.

He answered questions from the floor. It was suggested an additional gift from the funds could go towards lay ministry in Argentina. This will be discussed at the next exec meeting. Jeremy proposed the report be accepted, seconded by Beryl Adamson. The report was approved with two abstentions.

13. OMD report – Tina Powell-Wiffen (Chair) with Ro Willoughby (Secretary) meet with Bill Goodman (Director of Ongoing Ministerial Development) to plan the OMD programme. Sessions have been a blend of Zoom meetings and face to face ones. Topics have included 'Handling our differences', 'Ministry of the Cathedral with reference to the Threads of Creation Exhibition' and 'Theological Reflection'.

The Quiet Day took place in April at Todwick Parish Church Hall. Rev Canon Ian Smith led our reflections on 'Between Warmth and Word', inspired by the Apostle Paul's desire for Timothy to bring to him in prison his cloak and his parchments. We reflected on our physical and emotional needs along with intellectual and spiritual ones. It was a very valuable day.

Suggestions of topics for inclusion in the programme are always welcome.

14. Argentina link – Peter Rainford, Assistant warden, reported on our linked partnership ministry exercised by lay ministers in Argentina. Argentina is a large country and this year a training event for lay ministers is taking place in the Mendoza wine-growing province in the western central part of the

country, at the foot of the Andes instead of the usual Buenos Aires. So a different set of lay ministers will need to travel hundreds of miles to get there, including many from Buenos Aires. Inflation in Argentina is very high. A retiring collection to make a contribution for travel for the training was taken at the end of the meeting.

Bishop Brian of Argentina had visited the diocese at the end of April and Peter recommended the Words of Grace podcast in which Bishop Brian and Sarah Maughan were interviewed (see episode 43 at <https://www.sheffield.anglican.org/our-diocese/whats-on/podcast/>).

15. Election of executive members

There were no additional nominations for the four vacant positions on the executive committee, so the following current members were re-elected: Jonathan Foster, Jeremy Johnson, Patrick White, and Ro Willoughby.

16. Any other business

Toby Hole reported:

- a) Four readers are in their second year of training, expecting to be licensed next year. Two are beginning their training this autumn.
- b) He encouraged readers to take part in a new training programme on preparing for and taking funerals. This is open to all readers as well as a few other selected people who have opportunities to exercise this ministry.
- c) On 21st September in Doncaster Minster there is the Celebration of Lay Ministry. Readers were encouraged to be there.

Bishop Sophie spoke of the importance of lay ministry. She added that as part of the Celebration of Lay Ministry, a vocations fair will be exhibited, which might begin conversations about readership ministry.

17. Closing prayer

The Chair closed the meeting in prayer.