MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
CENTRAL READERS' COUNCIL HELD ON FRIDAY to SUNDAY
15th–17th MARCH 2013 at THE HAYES CONFERENCE CENTRE,
SWANWICK

Present: Rt Rev Robert Paterson - Chair (until Saturday afternoon)
Chrysogon Bamber (vice-Chair)
Jenny Macpherson
Carol Lidgett
Julie Batchelor (until Saturday afternoon)
Ven Julian Hubbard (from Saturday morning)
Ven John Reed
Nick Daunt
Rev Stephen Adams
Andy Lie
Sue Hart
Stephanie Ridge
Lynn Comer
John Marshall
Morgan Bunday
Mo Cheesman
Alan Wakely

Also Present: Dr Susanne Luther
Gertrud Sollars

Apologies: Marion Gray
Rev Heather Fenton
Jenny Williams
Rev Dr Christopher Bracegirdle

The meeting took place in the context of a residential weekend, including several worship sessions and an academic presentation by Dr Luther. The main business session opened with prayer led by the Bishop.

Welcomes

The Chair welcomed Dr Susanne Luther from the Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz. She was the author of the Biblical Paper presented at the Symposium on Lay Ministry held in Sussex in November 2011, and presented an amended version of this paper to the Executive during the weekend. Lynn Comer (National Consultant for CMD) was welcomed to her first meeting, and Gertrud Sollars on her second visit as an observer.

Minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2012

The minutes were approved and signed.

Editorial Committee

In the absence of both the Chair of the Editorial Committee and the magazine Editor, the vice-Chair and Secretary advised the meeting that the committee was seriously depleted following the resignations of both the Advertising Manager and the Reviews Editor, as well as two ordinary members. The ordinary members should be replaced
at the AGM in April, but there had been no progress in replacing the Advertising Manager since the previous Executive meeting. The Executive agreed that the question of using an agency for advertising (earlier rejected on grounds of both cost and the loss of control as to which advertisements are accepted) would have to be reconsidered if no-one could be found to take on the Advertising Manager role. The Executive thanked Heather Fenton for handling advertising during the present difficulties, but recognised that is unfair to expect her to continue with this work on top of her other responsibilities.

The vice-Chair reported that Marion Gray feels she may be able to find someone to take on the Reviews Editor job. If she proves unsuccessful, Andy Lie offered his services.

**Website**

Chrysogon Bamber reported that Morgan has been asked to consider a refreshing of the website – ideally one that would modernise the design of the homepage without altering the database provision. Morgan confirmed that the new logo would be incorporated on the webpage forthwith, ahead of the redesigning work, but he pointed out that a really good 3-D image of the badge might be difficult to obtain.

The secretary was instructed to include in the next circular to Wardens a request for pictures of Readers carrying out their different ministries (specifically not those requiring a surplice and scarf of which plenty of photographs are already to hand). It was stressed that written permission would be required from parents of any children under the age of 16 who might be depicted.

**Reports**

(i) **Editorial**

A written report from Marion Gray was accepted and approved for presentation at the AGM. It was reported that the response to the recent questionnaire included with the magazine at the end of 2012 has vastly exceeded expectations. Marion is dealing with analysis herself, and will report in due course. Other editorial business was dealt with above.

It was noted that the cover price of the magazine was shown incorrectly on issue 13.1 and should be altered for future issues. Marion also asked the Executive permission to announce to the AGM that a further price increase might be needed in 2014. The Executive refused this request, but said that the AGM should be told that an increase would be applied from 2015. By this decision the Executive accepted that they could be called upon to subsidise a loss in 2014, and this was agreed.

(ii) **Website**

John Marshall submitted a written report which was accepted and approved for presentation at the AGM. Other website business was dealt with above.

(iii) **Conferences**

Julie Batchelor reported that Fr Nicholas Kemp, a Jesuit at the University of Oxford, has accepted the invitation of the Conferences Committee to be the principal speaker at the 2014 combined Conference and Residential AGM. The venue is to be the Kents
Hill Conference Centre at Milton Keynes, and the Conferences Committee’s next meeting will be held there to allow them to see the venue.

Julie has negotiated a 43% reduction on the advertised prices at the venue, but one of the conditions of such a large discount is that a 50% deposit is required. The treasurer confirmed that this could only be raised by realising some long-term assets – although they could and would be replaced once payments for the weekend had been received from delegates. The meeting voted formally (proposed by Julie Batchelor and seconded by Stephanie Ridge) to sell the necessary CBF shares.

(iv) **RACS**

Stephanie Ridge reported that recent meetings of RACS have not had any business relating to Readers on their agenda. The Chairmanship of this committee has now passed to the Bishop of Dudley.

In response to a question, she explained that the Church’s occupational health scheme normally only applies to clergy – though exceptions might be made for Readers-in-Charge, or those in receipt of a full-time salary from the Church.

(v) **National Consultants**

Written reports from Sue Hart (Quality in Formation) and Lynn Comer (CMD) were accepted and approved for presentation at the AGM. Both these consultants stressed the importance of the Common Awards agreement on both Reader training and CMD, although it was reported that a few dioceses are unhappy with the arrangements and may petition the Ministry Council for some kind of opt-out.

Lynn also informed the Executive that Tim Ling of the Ministry Division has been in contact with Reader representatives in dioceses to enable the presentation of a review of CMD for the House of bishops. She was advised that it would be inappropriate for the CRC Executive to express an independent opinion because although elected, no opinion it expressed could fairly give the views of all those it represents.

Nick Daunt told the Executive that his paper on best practice in Reader Selection is now with the dioceses. He is gauging reaction, and making visits to several dioceses to elaborate on the details.

**Financial Report**

Carol Lidgett presented the accounts for the calendar year 2012, along with the budget for 2014 (and that for 2013 for comparative purposes). The accounts were approved, subject to a couple of minor corrections, for presentation to the AGM. It was pointed out that the budget shown for 2013 did not take account of the alterations agreed at the 2012 AGM, providing both income and expenditure provision for the Website Committee. There is a deficit on the Website committee accounts for 2012, and the Executive agreed that this should be shown as a charge on the Special fund because it will not recur provided the committee is allocated a budget as agreed.

It was pointed out that it is now anachronistic for the Adams and Myland funds to remain separate. The purposes for which they were set up have always been very similar, but in practice the Adams fund was used normally to fund attendance by newcomers at the annual Selwyn Courses which ceased in 2010. Accordingly, the Executive agreed to recommend to the AGM (proposed Secretary, seconded Mo
Cheesman) that the funds should henceforth be combined under the joint title “The Adams Myland Fund”.

The Executive asked that the alterations to the 2013 budget should be shown on the comparative sheet for the 2013 AGM. The budget for 2014 was approved, incorporating the salary increases for staff proposed by the Treasurer.

Two applications for grants from the Adams/Myland were considered and payments approved.

**Re-imagining Ministry**

The Executive listened to Dr Luther present an amended version of her paper on the biblical and patristic precedents for lay ministry, which had originally been presented at the Lay Ministry Symposium held in Sussex in November 2011. The paper demonstrated that the early church evolved ministries that were related specifically to the environment of each congregation, and which also gave cognition to the charisms of the individuals presenting themselves for ministry. This position seems to agree with the view of College of Bishops, expressed at their meeting in the autumn of 2012, to the effect that lay ministries are best developed locally, and hence may differ from one area to another. The Executive noted that this stance runs counter to the widespread feeling among Readers that greater uniformity between one diocese and another is desirable. One route to “square the circle” might be the position advocated by the Chair, that an Episcopal licence might be granted after lay ministry training to a given academic level in a relevant discipline, whilst leaving the nature of such ministries to be determined by the diocese.

These thoughts were developed later by Julian Hubbard in leading a discussion on the present position of the Ministry Council. The Council is actively seeking input from Readers in order to help in the creation of a theologically validated strategy for ministry. They recognise the need to develop a medium for the shaping of ideas across diocesan boundaries, recognising the changing face of ministry, including things like the expansion of chaplaincies. The Executive welcomed this, and offered its services in providing the core of such a “think-tank”, along with representatives of other relevant departments (education, mission etc) and bodies (Church Army, Conference of Anglican Religious etc). Julian indicated that the new Archbishop of Canterbury has placed mission at the head of the church’s list of priorities, and hence mission should be similarly at the head of ministry aims.

Changes to Reader and other lay ministries may not happen as quickly as might be considered desirable. Consequently, it was felt that *Bishops Regulations for Reader Ministry 2000*, which is already out-of-date, should be revised forthwith, and the Executive asked that the matter should be placed on the agenda for its next meeting.

**Logo and Badges**

Chrysogon reported to the meeting that the production delays associated with the new badges were quite serious. Supplies of the large size had recently become available, but those of the two smaller sizes were still awaited, even though a good many orders have been received at the London office in response to the advertisement in the magazine.

The Secretary was instructed to inform Wardens of the production delays. It was still hoped that supplies would be available ahead of the AGM, and that consequently it
will be possible for badges to be on sale at the event. It was generally agreed that the version of the new badge published in edition 13.1 of the magazine gave only a poor idea of what the badge itself is like. The designers have since produced a new version for printing purposes, which was shown to then meeting and received general approval. This will now be adapted for use on the website and in paper publications, including notepaper and compliment slips.

**Professional Standards and Safeguarding**

Chrysogon commended the document on the above topic that has been produced by the Diocese of Lincoln. She was aware that many diocese already have a fully developed safeguarding policy – but where such a document does not already exist, that from Lincoln provides an excellent template.

**Annual Report and Arrangements for the 2013 AGM**

The Secretary produced the Annual Report for the calendar year 2012, which is intended to be sent to the Charity Commission. The year was a relatively uneventful one, and the report was approved for presentation to the AGM subject to the addition of a sentence commenting on the role of volunteers in the work of the Council.

It was noted that the AGM itself is to be held at St Mary’s, Primrose Hill, London on April 20th. Travel details are to be circulated shortly to Wardens and Secretaries.

**Date of Future Meetings**

Future meetings were notified as follows:

**April 20th 2013 – AGM at St Mary’s Primrose Hill London**
**May 9th 2013 – Standing Committee meeting at Church House Westminster**
**September 7th 2013 – Executive meeting in London (probably St Matthews)**
**November 8th 2013 – Standing Committee meeting at Church House Westminster**

**The 2014 AGM is to be residential, held at the Kents Hill Park Conference Centre, Milton Keynes, from 4th to 6th April 2014**

**It has become apparent since the start of April that both the date and venue of this meeting are likely to be changed.**