

WATCH AGM
SATURDAY 19th NOVEMBER 2016
ST JOHN'S WATERLOO LONDON SE1 8TY
DRAFT MINUTES

PRESENT: 51 members were recorded as being present including the following members of the Committee: Hilary Cotton (Chair), Anne Stevens, Mark Bennet, Sally Barnes, Emma Percy, Jody Stowell, Gill Gould, Hannah Elias (co-opted), Michelle Kitto, Rosalind Rutherford, April Alexander, Stephen France, Tracey Byrne .

WELCOME: Hilary welcomed all to the AGM. Anne Stevens briefly thanked Hilary for all her work. Hilary read greetings from Michael Perham, Bishop Anne Hollingshurst Bishop of Aston, and Mae Cymri [Welsh Watch].

Watch has functioned out of a cupboard under the stairs at St John's Waterloo since its inception. Giles Goddard the Rector of St John's was introduced and talked briefly about the development plans for the church. The cupboard will be moved and a lift put in for easier access. There are plans to reinstate the galleries, and to improve the acoustics and lighting. At the moment these plans are opposed by the 20th Century society.

Finally Hilary introduced Tracey Byrne, Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement. Tracey is now part of the WATCH Committee. Hilary said it has been a delight to work with her this year. LGBT have opened a Rainbow list for those not mentioned by GAFCON.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from 81 members plus Revd. Ian and Mrs Robins, Revd Angela Cooke, [Dr Nicola Slee](#), Lady Howe, Michael Smith [Committee], Rt Revd Anne Hollinghurst Bishop of Aston, Sally Muggeridge, Rachel Moriarty and Bob Callan

THE MINUTES for the AGM of 14 November 2015 had been circulated. These were taken as a true record and signed by Hilary Cotton.

ACCOUNTS: Mark Bennet presented the Accounts. We appear to have a healthy surplus but this is only because of one gift. We do need to review our income due to our changing circumstances. Having achieved our goal, to change the law enabling a female episcopacy we are tackling more subtle issues such as gender justice, the role of lay women and how women are received and work within the C of E. See Appendix 1 for more details.

The accounts were commended to the meeting. They were proposed by Mark Bennet, Seconded by Anne Stevens and unanimously accepted. The auditor Simon Witcomb was reappointed. Hilary Cotton thanked Mark for all his work.

CHARITY STATUS UPDATE: Report from Stephen France. At last year's AGM we voted to apply for Charitable Status. This was taken forward by Hilary, Mark and consultant Sarah Hayes.

Our initial application was rejected and so I have been working with Sarah Hayes to appeal the decision mainly because the Welsh version of WATCH were successful in their application from which ours was lifted more or less word for word.

We await the outcome of the review.

CAMPAIGNING TASK FORCE: Anne Stevens reported WATCH's Gender Justice Policy was launched at a well-attended fringe meeting at the July Synod. Speakers from Christian Aid, USPG, and the Mothers' Union described how the cause of gender justice has become a key part of their development work around the world. Terrie Robinson from the Anglican Consultative Office spoke about the 'Side by Side' initiative - 'a growing global movement of people of faith who want to see gender justice become a reality across the world.' The Anglican Communion was one of the first organisations to sign up to this initiative. Hilary Cotton then introduced the WATCH policy document, highlighting the need to implement the global challenge locally. 'Now is the time for the Church of England to embody and promote gender justice both in its internal structures and in its external engagement with the world.'

The next challenge is to get this on the Synod agenda. We will be asking the Church of England to make specific commitments to promote the full inclusion and equal participation of women and

men at every level of the church's life, and to begin this process by commissioning a Gender Audit that will (on a recurring basis) monitor and evaluate the church's progress towards achieving these aims.

The CTF will also be working on a Shadow Report for the end of the year reviewing the developments in women's ministry in the Church of England during 2016. Rosalind Rutherford and others are looking at the detailed statistical information that is now being produced by Ministry Division, and the Report will also contain the main points emerging from this analysis. All offers of help welcome!

Rosalind Rutherford pointed out that much of Ordained ministry is run by unpaid women. There are few young women so available resources all go to men.

It was also noted that there were no new women Diocesan Bishops in 2016.

Christina Rees said that as women tend to go into ministry later than men could WATCH connect with schools and universities to encourage younger women to engage?

April Alexander voiced the opinion that the church believes that 'women are sorted' so there is no need to focus on them anymore.

Vicky Barlow asked do we have any links with universities?

Anne Foreman said there are Deans of Women's ministry.

Claire Turner said wives of ministers often have roles that are unpaid so they are used as a resource without financial implications; this has a negative result for young women's aspirations.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE: Written by Michael Smith, delivered by Jody Stowell.

There are a number of electronic methods WATCH use to communicate with our members and supporters:

- Website
- Social Media: Twitter and Facebook
- Email

Website: *womenandthechurch.org*

Since last year's AGM and the launch of the new look WATCH website in July 2015, work continues to ensure that the website is a source of current news, resources and events information. Through regular posting of news and events we are able to keep members and supporters in touch with what is going on but also to ensure that it is a useful reference point. The website enjoys high hit rates, with over 4,000 page views each month. We have worked with Orange and Blue to ensure that the site appears higher up on Google searches and continue to work on keeping WATCH awareness strong.

Social Media:

Facebook: [facebook.com/WomenAndTheChurch](https://www.facebook.com/WomenAndTheChurch)

Twitter: [@watch_act](https://twitter.com/watch_act)

Social media continues to grow in popularity and in particular, Facebook, where the page has over 1500 'likes' which continues to steadily grow. A number of WATCH committee members contribute to the page posts, ensuring that supporters and members are kept in touch with relevant events and news. Website posts, events and resources automatically post to Facebook and Twitter and we have recently ensured that the weekly news roundup email is available via social media. We need to improve on the number of Twitter posts made to ensure that we take advantage of this valuable social media tool. This is a work in progress.

Facebook has proven very successful with large numbers of page visits for important news items – with over 20,000 views on the post celebrating the anniversary of the first women priests in

the Church of England. On a regular basis news posts receive over 3,000 views. Facebook is an important part of our overall communications and will continue to be so.

Email:

We've had some challenges this year with our automated email system that has resulted in a number of members and supporters not receiving our weekly news email. The Committee and Orange and Blue have worked hard to ensure that the errors have been corrected and we believe we're now in a position where the automated system is working efficiently. We've also ensured that there's a link to the weekly email on our social media pages.

We recognize the importance of ongoing awareness and communication through the website and social media and it remains an essential part of the work of WATCH. We are grateful to all who send through relevant items of news and events for us to make members and supporters aware of. Please keep them coming!

There are a large number of people who contribute to the content and management of WATCH's various communications tools and thanks to all who do. In particular, Jody Stowell and the work she does as Media Officer and the work of Hannah Elias for all her work with the website; and in particular the huge amount of work that has gone into the resources section. And finally to Orange and Blue for **their** professional expertise, support and help.

GENERAL SYNOD AND PARLIAMENTARY TASK FORCE: Stephen France reported **that** since the last AGM the General Synod met on three occasions.

November 2015 – The Inauguration of the new Synod.

February 2016 - We held an evening event at which people were asked to consider:
If this synod was to put gender justice at the centre of its work what would you be proud to see achieved in this quinquennium?

These are the responses received: -

Ordained Ministry

- Greater proportion of women under 30 ordained
- Every shortlist to include at least one woman
- Lambeth 2020 to have equal numbers of men and women present as full participants (e.g. Where a male bishop brings a laywoman too) – no more all male meetings like the Primates!
- Consistent full stipend & 6 or 9 months maternity leave across all dioceses (if not the same then website page specifying the discrepancies)
- Issues about funding women ordinands – it seems to be out of balance
- Better thought-through flexibility on half-time posts e.g. 2x0.5 posts advertised as 2x0.5 or 1 etc.
- More men in half-time NSM posts as a measure of gender neutrality in such choices
- By 2020 40% under 30 being women
- Extra funding for women ordinands to entice dioceses to find them!
- Ordaining young women so CNC will have confidence in them
- Encourage non-evangelical young people
- What proportion of women attending BAPs are being guided towards NSM roles?
- Ensure that new training arrangements don't disadvantage women
- Look properly at the "do-ability" of stipendiary ministry and how to address that
- Diocesan based decisions about training mean it will be even longer to check the gender impact of the outcomes

General Synod

- Every policy decision scrutinised for gender impact (eg.RME proposals)

- Synod should be more family friendly
- Gender inclusive language for God on the big screen
- Gender justice would mean equal numbers of men and women as Synod members, and as those who ask questions, speak in debates and stand for committees. What would help would be good monitoring by experienced Synod member
- Issues in Synod – confidence building, mutual encouragement, culture change
- Write to Matthew Frost to inform Renewal and Reform (Lay Leadership) as well as critique
- CNC election (2017) preparation

Gender Justice

- Gender justice – consensual, collaborative opportunities missed
- Gender justice audit – gender impact
- Gender neutral language – Expansive language in liturgy, hymnody etc.
- Should gender justice be an automatic consideration for everything coming to synod – like Christian Aid?

General

- Greater understanding and awareness of transgender in the church
- Why would women want to join the church?
- Maude Royden preached 100 years ago (2017). Celebration of young lay women “come to be a preacher for a day” celebrating women preaching
- Active participation in all kinds of diversity debates e.g. Human sexuality
- Be very organised now for the future
- Try getting rid of gamma male leadership
- Supporting women in leadership positions to be themselves
- Are we asking the women bishops what support they need?
- Challenge non-Anglican theology – raise women up to levels of authority
- Gender balance in Dioceses
- More women as lay leaders under 40
- Worried that a few dioceses might be sacrificed as places with “traditional” bishops – Chichester, Blackburn, London...
- It’s OK to be a strong woman in the church
- Strong capable women are criticised
- Women preventing women
- Having to “man up”
- People know we have a place at the table

July 2016 - This synod was dominated by the Shared Conversations. WATCH hosted an event on Gender Justice and launched its appeal that a gender audit be carried out by the Church of England on its structures and procedures. This will be reported more fully by the Gender Justice Task Force.

Going Forward:

- We shall continue to host an event at each Synod and have a WATCH stand
- Develop our connections to Synod by encouraging new members to join us
- Find new ways of influencing outcomes
- Extend our membership of WATCH GS Plus Committee with new GS members to provide briefing on the subjects under consideration and draft possible questions to raise

In Summary

Given the passing of the legislation on Women in the Episcopate the Parliamentary Task Force kept a watching brief, including:

- Creating a database of the emails of all 650 new/returning MPs
- Attending the official welcome to Bishop Rachel and Christine in the Lords
- Providing questions to asked of the Church Commissioners

Going forward

- We continue to be concerned about the lack of further appointments of women to Diocesan Bishop level posts and therefore to the House of Lords – we shall raise these concerns at an opportune time.
- With Rosalind’s help we will continue to monitor statistics on the Church of England appointments at all levels from incumbent through to Diocesan Bishop as and when the Church of England releases the figures. [see Appendix 2]
- We shall undertake to ensure that the appointment of the new Bishop of London is someone who will ordain both women and men.

April Alexander [Synod Task Force] and a member of the Crown Nominations Commission [CNC] who appoint Diocesan Bishops gave a brief report. She noted that no women had been appointed as diocesan bishops during 2016, notwithstanding the fact that there were undoubtedly women who would make wonderful diocesan bishops.

Furthermore, no dean had been appointed to a diocesan see since the current Archbishop of Canterbury was appointed to Durham in 2012.

Two women were appointed as Diocesans during 2015 and both of them were now members of the House of Lords. She had been to both of their Introductions to the House of Lords and also to their maiden speeches. Both had been quite wonderful and had had a very fulsome and touching welcome from their lordships.

Now, however, a vacancy on the Bench of Bishops was about to open up owing to the translation of the Bishop of Sheffield to Oxford. There would be no woman diocesan bishop to take the seat despite the efforts of the Government and the Lords themselves to ensure that women could leapfrog over their male colleagues and take each available seat. The Church should feel quite ashamed that this could occur.

Mutual flourishing was seriously at risk unless there were further appointments of women to diocesan sees very soon.

Suffragan and area bishops are appointed by the relevant diocesan and are nothing to do with the CNC. There have been many consecrations of women to suffragan bishops although they only represent about a third of such appointments since the end of 2014 when the Measure was passed. The press still take more note of female consecrations and this could give the impression that the proportion of female appointments was higher than was actually the case. "

LAITY TASK FORCE REPORT: [Gill Gould] This relatively new task force focuses on reaffirming and restoring the place of Laity in their calling, their work in the world, in particular the Church of England; their leadership of parishes and church life.

It has been another busy year for the Laity Task Force during which we have met several times to explore what lay women may need in order to enable their full participation in the Church and to resource our wider ‘ministry’ in the world.

DAY CONFERENCES FOR LAY WOMEN: Building on the successful Day Conference for Lay Women ‘Lay Women ... How is it for you?’ which we held in 2015 in Birmingham, we have held two more this year. The first in May in Christ Church, Brondesbury, London and the second in October in Exeter Cathedral. The programme for both days included – Shared stories with a

panel of women sharing their different experiences of church and living out their faith. Julie Leger Dunstan, Director of Encounter, the London Course in Spiritual Direction facilitated the panel in London and Dr Susannah Cornwall, Advanced Research Fellow in Theology and Religion at Exeter University facilitated the panel in Exeter. There was time for everyone to share their stories in small groups and then after lunch we had Creative Space – imagining the future for the church and what this might look like. We ended both days with worship. All three days have been inspiring and encouraging and have offered a place where women have felt able to share their stories, celebrate what is happening that is good and positive and lament what is less good, and spend time together imagining what the church could look like in the future.

We have prepared a 'How To' guide that is available for any one who would like to run a similar day in their area. The members of the Task Force would be delighted to hear from anyone who is interested.

Current members of the Task Force: Gill Gould (Convenor), Sally Barnes, Sarah Bennet, Hilary Cotton, Lillalou Hughes, Karen West. We need more members and if you are at all interested and would like to know more about taking forward this new and important work of WATCH then do please do get in contact with us.

THE DREAMING PROJECT: Michele (Kitto) gave this part of the report

The dreaming project was launched at Greenbelt this year. We focused on longings in the church while recognising that we must not forget there is much we can also treasure. So creativity we got people to record their longings (on clouds we hung in the tent) what they would ditch (adding to our large dustbin) and what they would treasure (on silver coins in a treasure chest). We recorded information for each of the 150 people about then so we could use this info as a research paper, book or resources. It is currently being written up and we loom forwards to sharing this info with watch and the church.

Gill Gould thanked all members of the Task Force for their work and contributions to our work this year, a particular thank you to Sally for taking the lead in organising the Laity Day in London in May and to Michele for her work on The Dreaming Project at Greenbelt and for taking the lead in the organising of the Laity Day in Exeter.

NOTICES AND QUESTIONS: Christopher Hill from Li Tim Oi an organisation working for Gender Justice in the World reported that Lucy Thirtle and Libby Lane are now trustees. He also reported the need for a new treasurer and would be grateful of any contacts in this regard.

Sally Barnes reminded everyone about the book stall provided by Church House.

Chris Polhill remarked that the New bishop of London could be a woman if she is fast tracked as Justin Welby was to Canterbury.

Deborah Snowball asked who makes the decision re who becomes a Bishop and who is Caroline Boddington? We need clarity about how appointments are made.

Mark Bennet reflected on the question 'how do we let young women be themselves within the church.' And 'Do younger people on the whole find cultural connections? What are the barriers to young women's ministry?'

Tracey Byrne reminded us to be careful not to focus too much on the 'young' - Cof E is held together by middle aged women.

David Hawtin said if is very important we don't down grade campaigning. He said another important word is 'longing.'

OUTGOING CHAIR'S REFLECTIONS: Hilary Cotton. I have been sifting memories this week, thinking about what to say as I step down as Chair of WATCH after a long time of campaigning, writing, lobbying, plotting, praying, organising and leading.

Three years ago, we were still in shock: from the body-blow of November 2012, when Synod voted not to have women bishops, followed so swiftly by new legislation that had just passed its first reading at General Synod. The realisation that most of the nation wanted women to be bishops in their established church, and were outraged that the church was holding out against them, was the real motivator to the bishops for getting on with it - so please do remember that well-spring of support.

On 14th July 2014 General Synod passed the necessary legislation. A year ago, we rejoiced at the appointment of eight female bishops within the first year. We have two more this year, along with three men. Please God may the numbers not dwindle further.

Speaking of that - the next Bishop of London will be appointed in 2017. London needs to be a great place for women, not alien or questionable territory. However pleasant, courteous and supportive men who oppose the ordination of women are (and particularly bishops), their very presence undermines the priestly calling and ministry of ordained women in a systemic way, and this must not continue in London.

And since July 2014 ?

Mary Grey-Reeves, Bishop of Camino Real in California, and a speaker at the Transformations Conference in 2011, has written this year in Vashti's Banquet about 'After the transaction'.

Yes, the transaction has been done and women can be, and are now, bishops. Our task now is to coax the deep systemic change that will birth a church that is collaborative and equitable. We are in the unexciting middle - somewhere between the first female bishops and the second coming of Christ. "Women and men alike must be devoted to a process of transformation that has no end in sight. We could be resentful of the work that is before us at this time in history, but instead, should we not encourage and empower each other for this kind of work?"

We are in a very exciting part, somewhere between women bishops and the Second Coming. And so WATCH is still just getting started - and we have new cards to spread the word

It is not for me to speak of the future - tempting though it is for me! That is for Emma and the new Committee.

For now, thank you for a momentous three years in the life of WATCH and indeed in my life. It has been an honour and a joy to be your Chair - as well as hard graft at times. The support and wisdom of my (and your) Vice Chairs and Committee have kept me going through the tough times.

Knowing that, however often the national Church and its spokespeople may say stupid or ignorant or sexist or unhelpful things, or appear unconcerned about gender bias, or think that it's ok to pray to Father God every single time, or find non-binary thinking about gender too difficult - every time any of those things happen, I have remembered you: the ones who have signed up to WATCH, and for whom that sort of behaviour is not ok, not now, not ever. Thank you for keeping the flame of Christian feminism alight and alive, and I wish you well in your walk with the God who sustains all of creation, including each one of us, with her grace and love.

VICE CHAIR ANNE STEVENS: Anne thanked those leaving the Committee Yvonne Cameron [Secretary], Pamela Lawson and Gill Gould for her work as previous Secretary and the Laity Task Force.

Anne gave a special thank you to Sally Barnes a long serving member of the WATCH committee who has focused on, Comms and Media and Parliamentary task forces. Sally has the power to get people to do things, she can 'charm the birds from the trees'.

Anne also thanks to April Alexander who has the patience to sit on Committees and has an excellent background knowledge that has enabled us to fight the cause.

Anne then went on to thank Hilary Cotton who stepped down from being Chair after 3 very memorable; she piloted us from the time when the whole nation was reeling from the rejection of

the legislation to create women bishops to the admittance of women to the Episcopacy. Hilary has an ability to involve all, she kept us united and provided resources. She has led by example, writing letters to the press and to bishops not to mention working incredibly hard. Some criticism during this period was directed at WATCH and personally at Hilary but she remained steadfast and determined. There have been tears but also joy and laughter. Hilary has amazing leadership skills. Anne thanked her from the bottom of her heart for her leadership and inspiration. The meeting showed their agreement by clapping and cheering.

Hilary was given gifts including 'Meditations for Women who do too much', irises, champagne and an original Print by Tess Cooling on Julian of Norwich 'All shall be well'

In return Hilary thanked everyone and wished everyone well for the future.

CHAIR AND COMMITTEE ELECTIONS:

Anne Stevens and Stephen France are to continue for 2 years as Vice Chairs as allowed by the Constitution .

Emma Percy Nominated as Chair by Anne Stevens and Seconded by Stephen France. Unanimously elected.

The following were elected unanimously.

Name	Proposed	Seconded
Mark Bennet	Rosie Harper	Sue Booy
Cath Williamson	Sue Hammersley	Tracey Byrne
Jenny Humphries	Hilary Cotton	Mark Bennet
Esther Elliott	Hilary Cotton	Nicola Slee
Michael Smith	Rosalind Rutherford	Jody Stowell
Michelle Kitto	Anne Foreman	Andrew Godsall
Jody Stowell	Anne Stevens	Sally Barnes
Rosalind Rutherford	Rachel Hartland	Rachel Noel
Yvonne Clarke	Hannah Elias	Mark Bennet
Hannah Elias	Mary Johnson	Sally Barnes

The Formal Meeting closed at 13.05