



DRAFT MINUTES

WATCH AGM 2019

Saturday 5th October 2019
St John's, Waterloo, London SE1 8TY

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from 47 members including from the following national committee members, Michèle Kitto, Anne Stevens, Miranda Threlfall-Holmes and Jody Stowell.

Attending: Fifty members were present (48 in person; 2 by proxy) including the following national committee members: Emma Percy (Chair), Felicity Cooke (Vice Chair), Esther Elliott (Vice Chair), Mark Bennet (Treasurer), Claire Creese (Secretary), Yvonne Clarke, Jenny Humphreys, Rosalind Rutherford, Michael Smith, Lizzie Taylor and Cath Williamson.

The business meeting was held in two parts: 11am – noon and 1.45pm – 2.30pm.
Loretta Minghella's talk was at noon followed by Q&A and a lunch break.
HC was celebrated at 3pm, with The Rt Revd Anne Hollinghurst, Bishop of Aston presiding (with address). Recordings of the talk and address are available on the website.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 11.03 am

Chair's WELCOME: Emma Percy welcomed everyone. She thanked London WATCH volunteers and Sally Barnes in particular for kindly providing lunch and refreshments.

NOMINATIONS: Esther Elliott, Election Officer, expressed her gratitude for Emma's service over the past three years and her willingness to stand as Chair for a second term; members had received advance notification of Emma's nomination and were invited to submit nominations ahead of the AGM. No other nominations had been received. Esther then invited nominations for the office of Chair from the floor, requesting these be submitted in writing at the registration desk (with seconds) by 11am.

MINUTES - 2018 AGM (17th November) The minutes had been circulated. Emma wished to acknowledge and add to her Chair report that, "The late +Michael Perham had thoughtfully donated the royalties to WATCH from his last book, amounting to £418 to date (from publisher, Hymns Ancient and Modern).

Motion. Proposed by Claire Creese (Secretary), seconded: That the 2018 AGM draft minutes *as amended* be approved as a true record. The motion was adopted by unanimous consent.

CIO ACCOUNTS to 30 June 2019. Mark Bennet (Treasurer) notified the members that ‘a rogue figure’ needed to be corrected in the circulated accounts. Under the line ‘Surplus (deficit) for period’ [column 2019], the figure £18,534.01 should be corrected to ‘£17,136.46’.

He commented that CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) manages the administration of Gift Aid [from members who have switched to CAF]. And confirmed that the reported figures reflect the receipt of CAF-related Gift Aid, but noted that Gift Aid had not yet been claimed on non-CAF related income [HSBC and PayPal].

For the first time in a number of years, WATCH income matches expenditure, leaving WATCH with a healthy level of reserves. It costs 25K a year to run WATCH and there is one year’s worth of reserves. Mark explained that the Rebecca Hodel-Jones legacy [not restricted] was intended as a research fund to benefit lay women.

Motion. Proposed by Mark Bennet, seconded: To receive the CIO Accounts to Year Ending 30 June 2019 as corrected. The motion was adopted by an overwhelming show of hands.

General Synod: Jenny Humphreys, GS representative, said that she and Anne Stevens (apologies) try to raise WATCH’s profile and goals at meetings. She invited members to be in touch with any questions for GS.

WATCH is partnering with Inclusive Church to encourage and support nominees supporting our goals to stand at next year’s election to local Deanery Synods and for GS. WATCH has contributed funds towards a paid coordinator, Nic Tall. She asked members to let us know when there are casual vacancies.

Mary Johnson, (London - GS representative), said that whilst daunting, there is a supportive and friendly atmosphere; she encouraged members to consider standing or encouraging others.

Jenny: the voting margins in GS can be very small, so it makes a significant difference who is present.

Emma: initiatives such as partnering with IC need to be properly resourced which is why WATCH as contributed [£1,500] to the costs involved [coordinator fees, flyers].

Transformations & TRIG - Transformations Research Implementation Group. Emma Percy said that the committee meets four times a year and commented on the following projects: a coherent national policy on maternity leave may emerge, but is still a work in progress; statistics indicate there are relatively too few young women ordinands; 60 or 70 attendees are expected to attend the Transformations Day held at Lambeth in November, when questions, such as why deans of women’s ministry are still needed, can be aired.

WATCH is funding research [questionnaire, interviews] by a student, Susy Brouard, doing her master’s thesis on the role of deans of women’s ministry; the project is an example of what WATCH can offer back to the church.

Emma thanked Cath Williamson for her presence and efforts representing WATCH at Transformations meetings.

There was a comment from the floor that the member knows of women ordinands who have refused to “sign up” to the 5GPs.

Chair's reflections – Emma Percy

“It has been a hard year personally, but a good year for WATCH.

In the Spring we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the ordination of women as priests in the CofE. A service held at Lambeth Palace, broadcast on BBC Radio 4's Sunday Service, featured two WATCH activists, Christina Rees and Emma Percy.

One frustration, however, is that the ABC thinks of women's issues in terms of a minority issue. In all sorts of areas in the church we are offered minority-type representation. But we are not a minority. Women have been excluded from power and marginalised, but there is no shortage of women in the church. Moreover, to the world outside of the church, we are seen as pioneers.

A highlight of the year was attending a tea party hosted by Bishop Viv, Bishop of Bristol, at the House of Lords. Some of the original MOW committee and previous chairs of WATCH were invited. We gathered by the statue of Emily Pankhurst. One of the parties was wearing an MOW apron with the same design as the Tea Towel (A Women's place is in the House...of Bishops). There she was actually standing next to a woman bishop in the House of Lords. It is important we think seriously about how we remember and commemorate pioneers.

On that point it is interesting to note that some research is happening. I have been in conversation with two academic researchers. Grace Heaton, a PhD candidate (Oxford), is writing her thesis on the history of the struggle for women's ordination from 1969 – 1994. And Dvora Liberman is collecting oral histories that will be archived at the Women's Library housed at LSE.

<http://www.dvoraliberman.com/oral-history.html>

Within the church we are seen as 'a problem'. But for the outside world we are a force for good.

I represent WATCH on the 5GPs-related Implementation and Dialogue Group. Although it took six months, I was able to get one more lay woman onto the committee. The two other lay members are both women who do not accept the ordination of women. This committee operates like an alternate world with those who do not accept the ministry of ordained women as priests or preachers, seeing themselves as the minority who must be protected. It is difficult to know long I should stay 'in the room' before feeling one is colluding in an unhealthy process. As chair of WATCH I am prepared to exit. But WATCH does have a seat at the table.

As Chair of WATCH I was asked to meet the appointment secretaries to give our view on what we hope for in the appointment of the next ABY. I said the ABY should joyfully ordain women, the settled position within the CofE, and thereby affirm the 1stGP. If a candidate comes from a diocese low down on our statistic table for women incumbents, they should not be ABY.

Generating and analysing statistics makes a big difference in how WATCH is moving from a campaigning to a challenging the organisation. Evidence-based information is needed for our questions and challenges to be taken seriously.

An example is the recently published book, *“She Preached the Word: Women's Ordination in Modern America”*, Benjamin R Knoll and Cammie Jo Bolin (2018 OUP), that includes a lot of statistical analysis. It offers a fascinating study about ordination and attitudes towards women's leadership in the USA. A central question posed by the authors is, “where are women leaders happy?”; it turns out that the strongest opposition to women leaders comes from older women. There is an analysis of both liberal and conservative values (with specific examples) and how these impact on attitudes towards women leaders in closing the self-esteem gap. Bottom line - women need to see women leaders in order to themselves become more engaged. When girls have experience of a significant

woman religious leader as part of their developmental years it makes a difference. It is equivalent to their having one more year of college education. A critical question we must ask is, “what church do young women want to come to?”

We work collaboratively in WATCH, and I would like to pay tribute to committee members and to really thank them for all their support and efforts. “

Elections.

Trustee rotation and re-election. Esther Elliott, Election Officer, drew attention to the Constitution provision (I. a) that 1/3 of trustees [not including chair or two vice chairs] retire annually.

With advance notification, and as part of this annual rotation the following were re-elected to a three-year term by an overwhelming show of hands in favour:

- Yvonne Clarke (2017). *Nominated by Rosalind Rutherford. Second, Lizzie Taylor.*
- Jenny Humphreys (2016). *Nominated by Jody Stowell. Second, Lizzie Taylor*
- Michèle Kitto (2017). *Nominated by Rosalind Rutherford. Second, Lizzie Taylor*
- Cath Williamson (2016). *Nominated by Jenny Humphreys. Second, Yvonne Clarke*

Treasurer. Esther then invited nominations to fill the Treasurer vacancy as none had been received ahead of the meeting. Emma Percy proposed John Briggs, seconded by Claire Creese.

Emma said that John is the registrar for Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford and she read out his CV commenting how grateful she was that he was willing to put his name forward.

John Briggs was then elected Treasurer by an overwhelming show of hands.

[Secretary note: at the time of this nomination, it was not known that John was not a member. The Constitution, however, does not require the Treasurer to be a member. Hence, while John was elected Treasurer, he was not elected as a trustee because this requires membership. John desires to serve as trustee. It is anticipated that his election as a trustee will take place at the 2020 AGM.]

Other vacancies. Esther Elliott said that there are two vacancies on the national committee. She invited nominations from the floor. There were no nominations.

Having earlier invited nominations from the floor for the Chair vacancy and there being no nominations, Esther invited members to submit their ballots for the election of Chair in the box located at the registration desk. [Election result p7.]

Updates - partner organisations

Li Tim-Oi Foundation. Lucy Thirtle (Oxford) briefed members on the Foundation’s history and purpose, and provided an update on trustee changes. Christopher Hall has stepped down. Margaret Sentamu is Chair and a new treasurer is in place. There is a new website with refreshed information on grants, partners and resources. They seek volunteers to attend their stand at the 2020 Lambeth conference.

St Mark’s Centre for Radical Christianity (Broomhill, Sheffield), John Schofield referred to the Good God! study Day (July 2019) and asked if WATCH would partner again with in a colloquium in 2020 focused on generating a robust liberal theology of guiding principles for an open inclusive church.

London WATCH. Mary Johnston reported that London WATCH is changing since +Sarah had become the bishop; they are holding fewer events and focusing more on being a welcoming and supportive presence.

*The meeting adjourned at 11.55am for the Talk followed by a lunch break.
The meeting resumed at 1.45pm*

Emma Percy welcomed Bishop Anne Hollinghurst (Aston). She then introduced members of the national committee.

Strategic Plan.

In 2018 WATCH developed a new strategy which takes into account developments in the Church in relation to gender equality since the 2014. The minutes relate to the working sub-groups as reported in the 2019 Annual Report.

Felicity Cooke (Vice Chair) highlighted the valuable work on statistics and on transparency (5GPs) noting what a relatively small committee of volunteers with limited resource can achieve when there is energy and commitment.

Statistics: Rosalind Rutherford (cttee member) said that she would meet with Bernard Silverman to analyse statistical data; that there is a time lag in reporting some ministry statistics (recent appointments); there are limits to what statistics can be requested from Church House based on what data is recorded, for example 'house for duty priest' is not a formally recognised category, hence the data on these appointments is not recorded.

In answer to a question from Lizzie Taylor (cttee member) regarding the Church of England's statistics on the number of resolutions passed by PCCs [that only male clergy can be the incumbent], Rosalind said that stats for the previous year are published. These currently amount to 4% of parishes, with no significant change in percentage from prior years. But it is difficult to assess what may be going on 'around the edges' apart from these formally adopted resolutions.

Call for Clarity: Lizzie Taylor said she has approached diocese requesting they adopt a policy for parishes whereby they make be publicly clear when their theological position favours a male-only priesthood. She reported that her efforts had been confidently ignored. The Bishop of Maidstone's list of evangelical resolution parishes is difficult to find on the website; there is no list available for conservative parishes. She concluded that women cannot flourish where a parish's theological bias against women is hidden.

Hugh Lee commented that some resolutions do not meet legislative standards, but that the Bishop or registrar still accepts these - something to be reviewed.

There was a comment that there are parishes with no resolution, but where the incumbent does not favour women and so never invites a woman to preach. In this way, the issue stays under the radar which could be an even worse situation than where there are resolutions in place.

Emma noted the concern around some university churches and in commuter towns; the issue of the parish's theological position doesn't surface until a woman is drawn into the community, only to discover late in the day that doors are closed to her ministry.

A member reported talking with a church in Peterborough for months with many instances of malpractice in relation to the 2nd Guiding Principle. There is a need to develop best practice guidance to address these situations.

Five Guiding Principles:

- **Implementation & Dialogue Group.**

Emma said that she hopes the report on the 5GPs (currently confidential) that will go to the House of Bishops (H of B), will air the complexities, resulting hopefully in a rethink. It has been a difficult process.

She noted that the H of B had commissioned much good work on diversity and minorities in diocese. And that it's important to have personal on-the-ground stories; this is where WATCH has a role to play in supporting research.

Rosalind Rutherford commented that women clergy who have been hurt are reticent and fearful of sharing their feelings, suppressing their first response to the 5GPs.

Yvonne Clarke (cttee member) agreed, saying this was particularly so for minority women and that the H of B should consider commissioning an independent report.

Emma concluded she has hopes for the upcoming Lambeth Transformations day (November 2020); the celebrations for the 25-year anniversary of women's ordination in the CofE were great, but problems persist with bullying, harassment and a lack of understanding about the continued need to have Deans of Women's Ministry; and it's important for bishops to hear about these systemic issues.

- **5 GPs**

Felicity Cooke (Vice Chair) said that under Strategic Plan 2 (critique of 5GPs), it was decided to produce and publish a guide. In the five years of living with the 5GPs, their inherent instability has not been sufficiently recognised and that as such their longevity is limited. She described some challenges: misconceptions and errors of interpretation made by Forward in Faith and by the Church Society; the meaning of 'mutual flourishing' when much effort goes into supporting those who disagree [about all orders being open to women], over those who agree [to this settled position]; the need for a related Code of Behaviour. She invited those with both positive and negative experiences to share their stories with the sub-group, offering an assurance of anonymity.

- **Communications**

Emma thanked Cath Williamson for editing a great edition of Outlook 2019. There was a request from the floor about setting up a way for members to pay to receive extra copies. Emma said she would follow up.

Liturgy, Theology, Language

Emma said that she intends to hold a writing workshop soon. She asked that members send in examples of good liturgy with permission to circulate these. Send to Emma and copy Claire (secretary)

End of Strategic Plan

Election Result - Chair (ballot). Esther Elliott reported that tellers had counted and verified the ballots. She declared that Emma Percy (the sole nominee) had been re-elected Chair to serve a three-year term.

Emma thanked members for their trust, remarking that "vocation takes you where you don't expect".

Date of 2020 AGM

Emma announced that the date of next year's AGM is Saturday 17th October.

Timing of AGM. She explained the reasons for the earlier October date of this AGM. For many a date later in October clashes with Diocesan Synod Meetings; a late October date also means that the committee can't easily meet until the following January, so there is a lag in processing member input offered at the AGM. This year the committee will meet in November.

+Roy Williamson, RIP. Emma acknowledged the recent death of Cath Williamson's (cttee member) father-in-law.

"We must remember those men allies who stuck their head over the parapet in support."

The meeting ended at 2.30pm.

Minute Items

- ❖ Welcome
- ❖ Election Officer: Nominations
- ❖ Minutes 2019 AGM
- ❖ Accounts CIO 2019
- ❖ General Synod
- ❖ Transformations & TRIG
- ❖ Chair's Reflections
- ❖ Elections - *show of hands*
- ❖ Updates: partner organisations
- ❖ Strategic Plan
- ❖ Election result for Chair - *ballot*
- ❖ Date of 2020 AGM
- ❖ Remarks: +Roy Williamson RIP