



## NATIONAL COMMITTEE 2021 ANNUAL REPORTS

### National Committee Members:

Revd Canon Dr Emma Percy (Chair), Dr Felicity Cooke (Vice Chair), Dr Esther Elliott (Vice Chair), John Briggs (Treasurer), Claire Creese (Secretary), Revd Yvonne Clarke, Canon Jenny Humphreys, Revd Dr Mary Kells, Revd Michèle Kitto, Roger Neill<sup>1</sup>, Revd Rosalind Rutherford, Revd Canon Liz Shercliff<sup>1</sup>, Revd Michael Smith, Canon Lizzie Taylor, Cath Williamson, Revd Sally Wright<sup>1</sup>.

**Staff:** Eve West (Membership Administrator p/t), Claire Creese (Secretary p/t)

**Assistant to Treasurer:** Philippa J. Blackwell

<sup>1</sup>Co-opted 2020-2021

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## REPORTS

### **Accounts CIO to June 30, 2021 - separate document**

*John Briggs, Treasurer*

### **Membership Administrator**

*Eve West*

At time of writing (early September 2021), there are 618 paid-up members on the WATCH database. This compares with 682 this time last year, 774 at the end of July 2019 and 855 in 2018. Membership is a constantly fluctuating figure: people can join/leave/renew at any time during the year and there are always a number of 'lapsed' members being followed up, some of whom will eventually renew. Those who communicate their resignation generally cite retirement, reduced funds and bereavement, but some indicate they feel either WATCH's work is done or that WATCH isn't doing enough. These are perhaps related to communication issues, particularly for members who struggle online. On the positive side, there is a constant trickle of new members - 68 over the last 12 months - who become aware of the need to support WATCH's work, usually via the social media channels of Twitter and Facebook, and also through trustee presentations. The 'follower' numbers on both of these platforms are considerably higher than paid membership supporters - just over 2000 on Facebook and well over 6000 on Twitter.

WATCH began its partnership with the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) three years ago and 56% members now support WATCH via this account. Ideally, all members will move to paying via CAF (as invited each year!) This will not only reduce administration time and cost - running both new and legacy membership systems take time to manage and cross-reference - but more importantly make a significant difference to the funds available to WATCH for its on-going work. Three-quarters of subscriptions paid via CAF are tax-effective which allows WATCH to claim an additional 25p for every £1 donated. We cannot claim Gift Aid on existing standing orders and recurring PayPal instructions.

We are able to set up Direct Debits on behalf of members who don't wish to use the online interface with CAF themselves. These supporters, and a small number sending in a cheque, can request and return the 'offline' forms to me at: WATCH (Women and the Church), **PO Box 75, Upper Rissington, Cheltenham, GL54 2XR**. [This is a new 2021 updated PO Box address.]

Members who are in any doubt about what or how they give, how WATCH contacts them, or who have any further subscription questions, are encouraged to get in touch by email to [admin@womenandthechurch.org](mailto:admin@womenandthechurch.org) or by mail to the address above.

### **Secretary**

*Claire Creese*

This year I worked mostly with Vice Chairs, Felicity and Esther when Emma needed to step aside from charring meetings for personal reasons (November - June).

The national committee met five times online in November, January, April, June and July.

In addition, working-groups met to prepare WATCH's July statement on the Implementation and Dialogue Group's report on the House of Bishops' Declaration. (See reports on General Synod and IDG.)

Due to the pandemic the two-day June residential, which is when the committee usually assesses its strategic priorities and action plan, had to be cancelled for a second year running. The hope is to resume the residential, or a hybrid version thereof, in June 2022 at Hinsley Hall, Leeds.

*Comings and goings.* The Committee co-opted Revd Liz Shercliff, Roger Neill and Revd Sally Wright onto the committee. Roger and Sally are standing for election at the 2021 AGM. Liz decided not to run due to her other commitments but will remain involved in ongoing projects. Felicity Cooke and Esther Elliott, Vice Chairs, are stepping down from these roles. The committee will miss Esther's strategic and process-oriented insights. While Felicity is standing for re-election as a committee member/trustee, so the committee will continue to benefit from her wisdom and experience. Jenny Humphreys, long serving GS representative, plans to step down from the committee once the newly elected GS convenes in November.

I am grateful for our Vice Chairs' diligence, hard work, and care as we sought to connect the dots during Emma's absence. And my appreciation throughout the year to those working behind the scenes: Eve West (Administrator for membership), Graham Stacey (O&B) and Philippa Blackwell (Assistant to the Treasurer).

## **General Synod**

*Jenny Humphreys & Anne Stevens (Coordinator)*

This has been another unusual year for WATCH members on General Synod, due to the coronavirus pandemic. GS Meetings held in November, February, April and July all had to be held on Zoom. February was a one-day informal meeting, the others were formal sessions with legislative business, presentations and debates. WATCH members participated in a Fringe Meeting at the April meeting on the Crown Nominations Committee, and GSWATCH organised a Fringe Meeting in July to discuss the Bishops' Report on the work of the Implementation and Dialogue Group (IDG). Much disquiet was expressed about the report and members were encouraged to consider voting not to take note of it.

WATCH continued to support the work of Inclusive Church in raising awareness of the need for inclusive-minded candidates to stand for elections to the next Quinquennium of General Synod, which begins in November 2021.

Our annual report on the Developments in Women's ministry continues to be warmly received, although distribution of hard copies of it has been limited due to the pandemic. It is available on the WATCH website, as is a WATCH statement responding to the IDG Report.

WATCH members submitted a number of written questions about matters relating to women in the Church:

- What are the figures for the cohorts of ordinands who began training in September 2019, and September 2020, by gender and in 5-year age bands, when separated into the three different modes of ordination training: full time residential, mixed mode and part time?
- In response to a question at General Synod in July 2020, the Bishop of Rochester stated that bishops are clear about the importance of "Resolution" parishes providing unambiguous and easily accessible information about their theological position to anyone attending the church

or searching for a church on websites, including on A Church Near You. What actions have bishops and dioceses taken to ensure this information is provided?

- What number of parishes in each Diocese have passed a Resolution requesting extended episcopal ministry, and how would a churchgoer identify these within their own diocese?"



### **Transformations Steering Group (TSG) & TRIG (Transformations, Research and Implementation Group.)** *(Emma Percy & Cath Williamson)*

- **Transformations Steering Group (TSG) & TRIG (Transformations, Research and implementation Group)**

WATCH has two members on TSG, currently Emma Percy and Cath Williamson. TSG agenda focuses on ordained women in the Church of England and how they can be best supported. ([Brief introduction, pdf.](#))

There have been three TSG meetings over the past the year, with a fourth due to be held in September. The November 2020 meeting was a joint one with TRIG and was chaired by Bishop Ruth Worsley. Key agenda items were:

- the impact of Covid on women's ministry, both the difficulties and the opportunities it had brought
- strong anecdotal evidence that the furlough scheme had disproportionately affected women
- Record numbers of people emerging from training and curacy next year at a time when dioceses are initiating action on how they reduce their spend.
- A trend towards more specialist forms of ministry. Discussion about when thinking about ordained ministry: what are the core aspects that everyone needs to be trained in? What are the more specialised aspects?
- Bullying and harassment survey [by Cath W for WATCH] and that people feel frightened of speaking up because structures are not properly in place to address concerns.

Key points from the March meeting were:

- A paper on coaching for female clergy returning from maternity leave is to be shared with TRIG for comment and feedback on how the findings might be implemented.
- It has been requested that furlough statistics go to TRIG for discussion: the issue being whether female curates were disproportionately furloughed in comparison with male curates and, if so, why.
- It is hoped that an online gathering of female bishops might be facilitated as part of the Journey to Lambeth (pre-Lambeth Conference) in 2022.
- The three most pressing issues for TRIG were identified as a) clergy couples, b) bullying and harassment and c) flexible working. Other key issues are the leadership of larger churches and young vocations.
- The question was raised: how widely known is the existence of the new national Family Friendly Policies? Members of the TSG were encouraged to raise awareness among their constituencies.

In the June 2021 meeting, TSG re-focused its priorities on three main issues:

- issues facing clergy couples
- bullying and harassment. This was recognised as an issue that disproportionately affects women, and young women in particular
- recruitment and HR processes

To date, maternity issues have been a major thread for the steering group. However, the focus is now on implementation and dissemination of the national maternity policy, which is considered a TRIG role. It was recommended that this be done through the Archdeacons' network.

- Unconscious bias training is now being rolled out for every clergy person, not just senior staff. Also group members had noted the use of the WATCH checklist when drawing up parish profiles. The WATCH checklist needs to be disseminated more intentionally in the Archdeacon's networks. The document on bullying and harassment, originally conducted by WATCH is under review by the RACS committee. The Sheldon Community is interested in adding a page to their website devoted to collecting information on this and would be keen to access TSG statistics.
- In September, there is to be a 'memory sharing' TSG meeting in recognition of some long-standing committee members stepping down and new people coming on board who may not be conversant with the sweep of the steering group's history.

## **Strategic Plan**

*Felicity Cooke*

In 2018 WATCH developed a new strategy which recognised the changed landscape in which WATCH operates both in the Church of England and wider society. The strategy takes into account developments in the Church in relation to gender equality since the 2014 Settlement and the limited resources of a relatively small-scale volunteer organisation. Below are reports on actions taken to implement the five strategies agreed for WATCH.

### ❖ **Strategy 1: Transparency & Accountability**

*To work for transparency and accountability in all areas of church life*

- **Statistics – Rosalind Rutherford**

We have published our annual analysis of the figures published by the C of E Research and Statistics department to coincide with the February meeting of General Synod and given copies of our report to all GS members.

The full report can be found on line at:

<https://womenandthechurch.org/resources/a-report-on-the-developments-in-womens-ministry-in-2020/>

Trends continue to be the same as in previous years: the proportion of incumbents who are women remains at around 30%; only 5 out of 41 diocesan bishops were women.

Ely remains the diocese with the highest proportion of incumbents who are women (43%). The mainland dioceses with the lowest proportion of women are Chichester (16%), Exeter (17%) and London (19%). Seven dioceses increased the proportion of women incumbents by 4% or more. The Channel Islands (CI), while not a separate diocese, continue to have a very low proportion of stipendiary clergy who are women (19%). Sheffield diocese is exceptional in that the proportion of

women among its stipendiary clergy has fallen yearly from 29% in 2013 to 26% in 2019, and the recent data shows this proportion was 22% in Dec 2020.

The legislation to enable the CI to (finally) accept bishops who are women was included as part of the package of legal changes when the CI moved diocesan oversight from Winchester to Salisbury.

One of WATCH's greatest concerns is the continuing gender imbalance in the age of ordinands. There are twice as many male ordinands under 35 as female and, despite this pattern continuing every year, the C of E does not acknowledge this, or its significance, in press releases and statements about numbers of ordinands. This imbalance is reflected in the proportion of women and men selected for stipendiary or SSM ministry, and also the numbers of women and men following the different modes of training.

This year (2021) no physical General Synod meeting took place in February, which was the date when we would normally publish this report and give all GS members a hard copy. Distributing hard copies in this way was impossible this year, so we published the report online and printed a smaller number of copies. All diocesan bishops were sent a copy with the numbers for their diocese highlighted. We notified GS members and Diocesan Deans/Advisers for Women's Ministry when the report was published and offered to send hard copies but only a few took up this offer. We still have spare copies we could send to anyone interested, but please be aware that most of the data is based on Dec 2019.

- **Call for Clarity/Honesty re 2014 Settlement – Lizzie Taylor**

*The 2014 Settlement.* Last year I reported in some detail on the extensive national problem with transparency over the failure by the relevant PCCs to disclose to their congregations, parishes and wider communities the existence and purpose of their resolutions excluding women from ministry and other leadership opportunities. It is time to call this what it is – a tendency to secretiveness which ends up operating as deception - about the existence and application in church life of PCC resolutions for male headship and male priesthood.

During the year there has been no visible progress on the part of the conservative evangelical or traditional catholic constituencies. Nothing of substance has been done by the national church. There is still widespread lack of transparency, perhaps still at the level of 90%. Here are the main concerns:

- As a result of lack of transparency male headship and male priesthood ministry is being imposed on congregations and parishes without their knowledge or consent, because resolutions persist and new joiners are not informed about them.
- The primary reason for the lack of transparency appears to be that clergy frequently do not have their congregation's or wider parish's support for their personal theological conviction that women's ministry should be limited, or are afraid that they would not have it if they asked for it.
- The 2014 Settlement made exploitable inadequate provision for the review of PCC resolutions, and when the existence of the resolution is not well known, inadequate provision for review becomes an even more serious issue.
- Third parties have quietly produced and published their own guidance documents which contradict the House of Bishops' Declaration and Guidance in important ways. These include 'Guidance' documents published on the Bishop of Maidstone's website, and Forward in

Faith's 'Advice' and associated documents. These are published on their constituency/society websites and commended for use to the constituency PCCs, but not made easily accessible to the wider church, particularly congregations.

As a result:

- resolutions have been passed on grounds that are not in accordance with the Declaration, and so the wishes of parishes<sup>1</sup> have not been accurately signalled to bishops.
- resolutions have stayed 'on the books' longer than they would otherwise, and so women have been excluded from lay and priestly ministry for longer than is allowable.
- congregations and wider parishes have not been properly consulted on review.
- women's vocations to priestly and lay ministry have been deflected, redirected or even denied.

Male headship and male priesthood espousing clergy have had ample opportunity to address and correct the practices, but they have ignored requests to do so. A number of bishops are aware of this. By failing to adhere to the House of Bishops' Declaration and Guidance, and by failing to act transparently, clergy are bringing their office and the Church of England into disrepute. Laity are losing trust and respect for clergy, and losing confidence in episcopal oversight.

In resolution parishes which do not make their theological position known, women's priestly and lay vocations are being covertly impeded. In practical terms, all orders of ministry are not equally open to women in those parishes, and this is contravening the first principle of the 2014 Settlement.

The House of Bishops' Declaration made specific provision for future adjustments, and remedial action in relation to the issues outlined above now needs to be considered and actioned.

<sup>1</sup>Note that under paragraph 18 of the House of Bishops' Declaration the PCC's resolution and the resulting letter of request are to signal the wishes *of the parish*, not that of the PCC or the minister.

## ❖ **Strategy 2: Critique Five Guiding Principles**

*To critique the 5GPs to understand how they do and don't work*

- **Implementation & Dialogue Group** – *Emma Percy*  
*[See report on General Synod and 5GPs]*
- **5GPs Working Group** – *Felicity Cooke, Rosalind Rutherford*

Last year, WATCH reported to the AGM the rationale behind the publication of a Guide to the 5 Guiding Principles: when and why they were created, how they linked to the 2014 House of Bishops' Declaration (which is the basis for decisions in parishes when non-ordainers request to be able to appoint a man to a parish) with questions and points to consider when attempting to apply the Declaration, to acknowledge and affirm the full ministry of women, as well as the requirements of those who do not fully accept all the implications of GP1.

The three linked publications:

- Five Guiding Principles: An Introduction and Guide
- Applying the Five Guiding Principles: questions and suggestions for best practice
- A Code of Behaviour in Support of Mutual Flourishing

were all published on the WATCH website in October 2020, shortly before the AGM, with downloadable pdfs to print. Our hope was and is, that they can be used to open up discussion and awareness of the 5GPs, particularly in contexts where this is required or in a parish when linked issues arise.

We did not print hard copies because of the difficulty of distribution, but informed Deans and Adviser for Women's Ministry, supportive General Synod members and members of WATCH that these existed. We don't have information on the extent to which the publications have been used.

One intention was to have resources ready for when the report of the Implementation and Dialogue Group was published, which we were expecting to be in autumn 2020. (This was a group set up after the Independent Reviewer's Report on the appointment and resignation of Philip North as Bishop of Sheffield). This report was in fact only published in late June 2021. It does call for good quality resources to inform and educate members of the C of E about the 5 GPs, and so we hope that these publications will be used.

There was an opportunity to use these guides as a basis for a training session for ordained and licensed women in Chester Diocese. The session ran twice at the request of a number of people (lead by Liz Shercliff and Esther Elliott), and in total almost 30 women attended. At the moment Lichfield Diocese are also interested in a session, and we are running an IME2 day in October in Chester. Liz Shercliff contacted every TEI and college, plus a number of dioceses to find out how the 5GPs are introduced. There was little response, with some dioceses saying they leave this to the TEIs and some TEIs saying they leave it to the dioceses. We were asked to run a session in another diocese in the north west, but the invitation was cancelled after the contact person was appointed to another post. Our impression is that offering training without personal contact to the diocese or TEI is not productive, and that we should look out for dioceses where groups of women ministers already meet, or where the Dean of Women's Ministry is proactive.

One important point made in the debate in General Synod on the IDG report (July 2021) is that Canon law of the C of E is very clear that women can and are the "legal and truthful" holders of the orders to which they are ordained, and this is what GP1 states. The Bishop of Newcastle warned during GS debate that this Principle is at risk of being overlooked.

❖ **Strategy 3: Broaden membership engagement and resources**

*To broaden our membership, both lay and ordained, through engagement and providing resource.*

❖ **Strategy 4: Develop Liturgy, Theology, Language – Mary Kells**

*To promote and encourage liturgy, theology and general language of the church which recognizes and affirms that women are made in the image of God.*

WATCH's fourth aim concerns language and recognizes that how we speak about ourselves and about God has power. Language moulds our sense of our own identity, frames how we behave in community, and directs how we relate to and conceive of the divine. If women's embodied experiences are excluded, this represents a diminishing of the sacred for us all.

We are thus committed to making women's lives visible in our churches through the language we use. We have two specific objectives to this end. The first is to produce a guide to gender inclusive language.

Our first step has been to change our original aim of gender-*neutral* language to that of gender *inclusive* language. Christian worship is characteristically personal. What has distorted it is the committed use of male metaphors and images for God. Rather than neutralize the androcentric nature of much current worship, we seek to inclusivize it, by including female as well as male models for God. This recognizes that women are made in the image of God and therefore their lives and experiences are valid sources for ways of relating to God. Drafting this guide is in process.

Our second objective is to develop simple liturgies using explicitly female language and imagery.

To this end, we held a Liturgy Writing Day on 7 November 2020, on Zoom, which 16 people attended. The theme was Advent. We began the day with worship, followed by the first address on the watching and waiting of Mary. The image of a pregnant woman was developed as a way of easing us into waiting for the coming God. We then left Zoom to explore this in our writing, each in their own space, before coming back to share what we had created. Lunch offered the possibility of more space, or else a chance to eat with others. The second address was on another characteristically Advent theme, Sin and Judgement, revaluing these from the perspective of women. Again, this was followed by offline space to write, then sharing together the fruits of our labour. The day ended with a blessing.

This was a rich day, producing some excellent pieces of work as well as highly enjoyable periods of discussion and sharing. It was noted that holding the day on Zoom enabled more people to attend, from a wider range of geographical locations, including the United States, Canada and Belgium. Adapting the worship to the space, so that it was "visual, musical and liturgical", as one of those attending described it, was also appreciated, bringing, she suggested, "an extra quality of richness to the space". Other feedback included "I'm so delighted and grateful to have met you...I feel hopeful and inspired"; "how much I enjoyed yesterday's Liturgy writing day - a great approach to encouraging people to be creative and understand the value of exploring feminism for fresh words and ideas for liturgy".

We will be publishing some of the writing from this day on our website in time for Advent preparation. (<https://womenandthechurch.org/resources/> in the 'Resources' under 'Prayer and Liturgy'.)

Following this day, we were requested to lead another liturgy writing day sponsored by members of the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC); the SEC are currently revising their liturgy. Specifically, the steering group was tasked with putting together an online conference to support this review. *Responding to the Sacred: Gender and Liturgy in Conversation*, held in April 2021, asked for our help in preparing inclusive liturgy to conclude the event.

We duly held an event in February 2021, also on Zoom, focusing on what the writing the group themselves wished to write, a Confession and Collect, but broadening out to explore wider ideas

about inclusive liturgy and how the group could explore this through art, the use of diverse voices, as well as liturgy, and through wide-ranging discussions about who God is (including how our understanding of the Coronavirus impacts our understanding of God), and our understanding of sin and what it is we wish to repent of. You can find out more about the conference, and view the act of worship the group produced at <https://www.facebook.com/genandlit>. As it was well received, the steering group continues to meet, seeking to commission fresh work to include in the SEC body of liturgy.

If you would like to know which parts of the CofE liturgy it is permissible to change, have any liturgical writings you would like us to publish online, or if interested in contributing to the Scottish Episcopal Church's liturgy, please get in touch, in the first instance, with Claire Creese, at [secretary@womenandthechurch.org](mailto:secretary@womenandthechurch.org).

❖ **Strategy 5: Communications** – *Michael Smith (Rosalind Rutherford & Lizzie Taylor)*  
*To devise and implement a communications strategy that includes all media*

Whilst we have been relatively quiet on the communications side of things – not, of course, helped by the pandemic, we have kept up a steady and active Facebook and Twitter presence. We have continued with our annual report on the Development in Women's Ministry. A note of gratitude must go to Rosalind Rutherford who pulls the report together from the pages of statistics from Ministry Division, highlighting some key points that aren't always apparent from Church of England press releases. We know that around the country the statistics are used and of great help in the format presented. Copies go to the House of Bishops and General Synod members in printed form, and are available electronically via our website and social media pages.

We have, over the course of the last year, commented and issued press releases on the following:

- Publication of an introduction, guide and code of behaviour to the Five Guiding Principles
- Collaboration with other inclusive groups to promote a more inclusive General Synod
- Publication of the annual Report on the Development in Women's Ministry
- Statement on the Implementation and Dialogue Group's report on the House of Bishops' Declaration

In terms of Facebook interaction, it is used mainly for linking to other articles and posts of potential interest to supporters of WATCH or to highlight events. The WATCH page is occasionally used to publish a more personal post or information of current interest to WATCH supporters.

Slightly over 2000 people follow the WATCH page. The posts receiving the highest engagement in the past year are:

- A personal response by an ordained ME woman in response to the BBC programme about racism in the Church of England (1.162 views).
- The announcement of the new Dean of Sheffield (1K) and the follow up announcement of the new Dean of Hereford (817 views).
- A request for prayer for GS members during the debate on the report from the IDG group about the 5 principles and the House of bishops' Declaration. (3K)

Individuals have sometimes used the Facebook page or Messenger to contact WATCH and we try to respond quickly, though this does depend on picking up notification of the new message.

WATCH is committed through its various communication channels to continue to affirm, challenge and transform the Church of England for both lay and ordained women.

- **Greenbelt**

WATCH normally has a presence at GB, but the in person 2020 and 2021 Greenbelt Festivals were cancelled due to the pandemic. We very much look forward to future gatherings.

- **Outlook Magazine # 38, 2021** (24 pages, colour, A4)  
*Michèle Kitto, Editor*

## **Chair and Vice Chairs' Reflections**

### ***Chair - Emma Percy.***

WATCH is a volunteer organisation and we rely on the time and energy of our committee members. When one of us cannot participate it places a burden on others. This has been true for this year when personal circumstances meant I had to step aside from the role of Chair from November until June. The two vice-chairs, Felicity and Esther, had to take over. I want to pay tribute to them both. They have written their own report about the year's activities. Suffice to say WATCH was able to function well and continue its important role because of their dedication. They are both standing down as Vice Chair and I will miss their support. Felicity has kindly agreed to continue as a trustee.

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to Esther Elliot at this AGM. We have been so grateful for her wisdom, hard work and friendship. Her theological acumen and her skills as an educator have added to our collective wisdom. Esther now lives in Edinburgh. The Episcopal church does not discriminate against women clergy in appointments. It joyfully marries those who wish to marry, regardless of the gender of the couple. It can point us to where we could be and we wish her joy.

We also say goodbye to Jenny Humphreys. Like Esther, Jenny has brought the perspective of a lay minister to our committee. She has been an important link to General Synod and to Inclusive Church. Her understanding of how the C of E does and doesn't work has been valuable, as has her eye for detail.

I am conscious that we need to be thinking about succession. By next year I will have served six years as Chair and I encourage you all to think about who might be the right person to take on the role.

With all of the different travails of this year I am aware that even when we are not able to do as much as we would like, to further gender justice in our church, our existence witnesses to the reality that there is work to do. By keeping WATCH going we signal clearly that the 'women issue' is not sorted. We challenge the Church of England to do better.

### ***Vice Chairs - Felicity Cooke and Esther Elliott.***

The year Nov 2020-Oct 21 has been an unusual one in many ways. This includes an unplanned period of time where the two Vice-chairs of WATCH took over leadership of the organisation. We would both like to put on record our thanks to Claire, Eve and the rest of the committee for their support and encouragement during this time. We have both found the task extremely enjoyable whilst recognising that there is a large workload in leading an organisation with such a wide reach. Some of the highlights of the year are as follows:

1. Exploring various potential partnerships and with organisations with similar interests. The new Church of England network Mosaic, the renewed committee of One Body, One Faith, the lead for gender justice in the Baptist Union and MAECymru (Welsh organisation for women and the church) have all approached us looking to relate to us in some way. Having

had initial conversations, we took information back to the Committee for discussion. In all cases we have felt that formal partnerships take energy away from our specific focus on gender justice in the Church of England, but we have been happy to maintain informal relationships and enjoyed the sharing of ideas and strategies with likeminded folk.

2. Being the public face of WATCH for a number of speaking engagements. This included a presentation at the national NADAWM conference, some work with ordained and licensed ministers in Chester Diocese and an inclusive liturgy conference planning group in the Scottish Episcopal Church.
3. Focusing on delivering a co-ordinated approach to all the outward communications of WATCH. This has included the publicity for our two flagship pieces of literature – the report on ministry statistics and Outlook magazine, as well as the day-to-day communications on the website and social media.
4. Co-opting three new committee members; Liz Shercliff, Roger Neill and Sally Wright and welcoming them as very willing, able volunteers onto the committee.
5. Responding to a variety of requests from individuals for help and support from WATCH. Some of these requests were pastoral in nature, some requests for resources – information or money.
6. Designed and piloted a new system for the flow of information and decision making among committee members.
7. Facilitated committee meetings and, because we have spent all year meeting on zoom, also hosting committee zoom social events.
8. Started a whole new long-term piece of work exploring the terminology WATCH uses and where WATCH might or might not be part of the debate around trans right in the church.
9. Provision of care for individual members of WATCH with queries, experiencing life-events and hardships.
10. Given oversight to ensuring that WATCH remains a “good” charity, complying with all regulations for good governance as well as taking a lead in safeguarding the reputation of the organisation.
11. Guided the committee through an initial response to the report from the Implementation and Dialogue Group presented to GS (July.)
12. Developed *Guidelines for Applications for Support from the Rebecca Hodel Jones Legacy Fund*. The fund supports lay women, through grants or study support.

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