

Note of the CLAS meeting and AGM held on Wednesday 12 June 2019

The meeting was held at PWW Solicitors (70 St. George's Square, Pimlico, London SW1V 3RD)

1. Attendance

Rt Revd Mgr Nicholas Rotherham, CBCEW
Sophie Andreae, CBCEW Patrimony Committee
Diana Evans, Historic England
Dr David Knight, Cathedral & Church Buildings Council, Church of England
Father Olu Abiola, Council of African and Caribbean Churches
Br James Boner, Association of Provincial Bursars
Helen Byrne, Methodist Church
Laura Carnall, Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes
Richard Chapman, Church of England
Huw Davies, Quakers in Britain
Sheila Duncan, The United Reformed Church
Ashley Ellis, Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers (ACAT)
Alex Glanville, Church in Wales
Adelle Hartwell, The United Reformed Church
Trevor James, Association of Church Accountants and Treasurers
Gerald Kidd, PWW Solicitors
Sarah King, Association of English Cathedrals
Muna Levan-Harris, The United Reformed Church
Mary Macleod, Church of Scotland
Chris Miller, Christian Science Committee on Publication
Revd Archdeacon Meliton R Oakes, Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain
Pastor Simeon Oladokun, Christ Apostolic Church
Archbishop Fidelia Onyuku-Opukiri, Free Churches Group
Hugh Pearce, Stone King
Christopher Perkins, PWW Solicitors
Jonathan Redman, The United Reformed Church
Rev Paul Rochester, Free Churches Group
Tim Rutherford, Stone King
Caroline Sanderson, Baptist Union of Great Britain
Paul Spear, Association of Grace Baptist Churches
Mark Tucker, The Congregational Federation
Major Richard Walters, Salvation Army
Josephine Warren, CBCEW
Louise Wilkins, Methodist Church
Philip Wylie, Christian Science Committee on Publication

Frank Cranmer, Helen Donoghue and Chris Lane (CLAS Secretariat) were in attendance.

Apologies

The Rt Revd Christopher Lowson, Bishop of Lincoln; Sarah Bale, Elim Foursquare Gospel Alliance; Dominic Curran, Anthony Collins Solicitors; Eileen Head, Association of Provincial Bursars; Trevor Howard, CiC International; Rachel Lewis, Farrer & Co; Simon Lloyd, Church in Wales; Jo Ord, Farrer & Co; Hazel Patterson, Christian Science Committee on Publication; Revd Gethin Rhys Cytun; Brian Rowney, Independent Methodist Churches; Alan Ruston, General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches; John Stuart, Scottish Episcopal Church.

2. Presentations

In the absence of the Chairman, the Rt Revd Mgr Nicholas Rotherham took the Chair and thanked PWW Solicitors for hosting the meeting.

Presentations

David Knight (Church of England, Cathedral & Church Buildings Council) said that risk patterns for buildings change over time – so, for example, the Home Office had concentrated more in the last few years on hate crime and the C of E had been working with it on this. Anti-social behaviour was a particular problem, because excluding someone for anti-social behaviour, or making changes to the building to prevent it, was not something that a welcoming Church would want to do in missional terms.

He noted that metal theft and heritage crime generally were a continuing concern – as was flooding, which was symptomatic of the change in weather patterns and put a new type of stress on buildings. According to Ecclesiastical Insurance, one in six buildings in England and Wales was under threat of surface-water flooding.

Clearly, planning processes for a large building with thousands of visitors were very different from what was required for a small church with one or two services on a Sunday. But preparation was always helpful. For example, if there is a serious incident in the building, what is the plan for exiting it? If you need to call someone in an emergency, whom do you call? Are you able to prioritise what you would wish to save in a disaster? A disaster management plan was needed to cover these core questions and different eventualities.

He suggested that churches needed to be well-prepared for a possible incident, so

- If you have a community police officer, why not invite him or her to a coffee morning or otherwise befriend them?
- If you have a complex building, invite the local firefighters so that they know in advance their way around the interior.
- Take advice from your architect or surveyor and your insurance company.

He also said that making it clear that the building was used and cared-for had been shown to help discourage theft and damage.

As to flood protection, security measures could be as simple as a well-maintained perimeter wall with a flood-proof gate. In the context of fire damage, St Nicholas Church in Peper Harrow was a good example of a beautiful restoration. The approach was to restore what was salvageable and only

replace what would serve a useful function. The Cathedral & Church Buildings Council has not expected like for like replacements of something simply because it was there previously.

Lastly, he noted that there were useful [resources on disaster management plans](#) on the Churchcare website. For C of E churches there were helpful buildings plans in the Lambeth Palace Library.

Sophie Andrae (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Patrimony Committee) said that the Catholic Church in England and Wales had about 800 listed churches, but that its heritage was to a large extent relatively unknown: most churches were 19th or 20th century and often not in the town or village centre. However, Victorian churches often included mediaeval articles from continental Europe: see *A Glimpse of Heaven: Catholic Churches of England and Wales* (2006), published by English Heritage, for more information. The Patrimony Committee had worked closely with English Heritage/Historic England on the [Taking Stock](#) project assessing the architectural and historic importance of all Catholic churches and this had resulted in a significant number of new listings and upgradings; however, the recent annual Patrimony Conference (held in Cardiff this year) had recognised that there was a gap in recording/inventing church artefacts – which, in terms of disaster planning, was critical.

She noted that each Catholic diocese had a property adviser(s) whose role was to advise on buildings – schools as well as churches. However, there remained a question about how to communicate best practice. A further minor, but still important, issue was congregational knowledge of and custody of a church's contents. Knowing what you have so it can be properly looked after was extremely important, so up-to-date inventories were a must.

She concluded by noting that disaster planning also needed to include, for example, planning for supervision of restoration and repair work and for supervision of contractors – the fire at Windsor Castle had been caused by a curtain ignited by the heat of a restorer's arc-lamp. Ideally, volunteers also needed to have some knowledge of emergency plans. **Trevor James (ACAT)** noted that at Chichester Cathedral all the hot work had to be concluded by noon and was monitored for at least two hours afterwards, until it had cooled. **Diana Evans** noted that Historic England provided [guidance on hot works](#).

Diana Evans (Historic England) said that she could not emphasise strongly enough the point made by David Knight on the need to talk to local police and firefighters. Most would never have been inside the building before: some would never have been inside a church.

She confirmed that Historic England had published all sorts of relevant advice and guidance (and an electronic copy of the handout distribute at the meeting has been circulated):

- emergency planning
- templates for conducting an assessment in a systematic way: one for houses and one for churches and grab-sheets that could be given to the first policeman or firefighter to arrive on site. Get it, fill it in and laminate it.
- first-aid instructions for objects and salvage (including how to separate wet material from dry: for example, if an item is wet you can freeze it).

Emergency training and preparedness were very important. Historic England had been working with firefighters on providing emergency training four times a year. The [guidance on lightning protection](#)

had been updated very recently and training courses were available on 12 September in London and 19 September in York.

She shared a [video outlining Historic England's Salvage & Disaster Recovery Course](#), which taught participants ways to mitigate loss and damage to heritage assets. Participants get hands-on experience of removing objects from an incident location, assessing the condition of those objects, and following appropriate first-aid treatment and documentation procedures.

Questions and Answers

Hugh Pearce (Stone King) asked whether churches operated a preferred contractors' list, particularly for specialist requirements such as hot works. **David Knight** said that the C of E does not: instead, encouraging dioceses to assess their options and to seek recommendations from local surveyors and architects.

Frank Cranmer (CLAS) asked what steps churches should be taking to make sure that important church contents were not removed and sold or not replaced. **Sophie Andreae** said that there was a responsibility on churches to educate staff, volunteers and contractors about the significance of the church's contents.

Alex Glanville (Church in Wales) noted that the Notre Dame fire was not terrorism-related as some had initially expected, but was instead the result of an accident caused by a contractor. He questioned how best to disseminate the information on good practice, particularly given the reliance by many churches on volunteers. The speakers agreed that this was a fundamental challenge facing churches. **Diana Evans** suggested that good, enthused volunteers who were prepared to engage others and tell them about the importance of emergency planning were the key to involving people more widely.

Nicholas Rethon (CBCEW) noted that his church had good photographic records of stained glass and stocks ready for maintenance and replacement if needed. He was less sure in respect of other records asked whether churches were maintaining sufficient records. **Sarah King (Association of English Cathedrals)** said that, under the Cathedrals Measure, each cathedral was required to have an inventory – though some were better than others. **David Knight** said that similar considerations applied to C of E churches – but the quality of inventories was very variable

Nicholas Rethon (CBCEW) also asked about the extent to which records about the fabric of church buildings were being recorded. **Sophie Andreae** said that the churches that she visited were very short on good measured drawings and she was always encouraging parishes to have their buildings properly surveyed and accurate drawings, plans and sections made. **Diana Evans** said that every building should have a plan showing where the mains water was and how to access it and where the stopcocks were. The Fire Service might know but, equally, it might not. Additionally, churches should never overlook the importance of providing a high-powered torch by every exit.

Archbishop Fidelia Onyuku-Opukiri (Free Churches Group) asked about the fire risks relating to old wiring in church buildings and how often this should be reviewed. **Diana Evans** said that wiring should be tested at least quinquennially but probably more often than that. It was often not just about how old the wiring was, but what had been done to it since it was originally installed: for example, had spurs been subsequently taken off the main circuit? Regular annual PAT testing of items such as kettles should also not be overlooked.

3. Annual General Meeting of the Charity

- i. **Minutes of the 2018 AGM:** The minutes of the 2018 Annual General Meeting were approved.
- ii. **Report and Accounts:** The meeting noted that the Accounts had been approved by the CLAS Governors and, following the approval of the Independent Examiner, would be filed with the Charity Commission, together with the Trustees' Annual Report.
- iii. **Election of Governors:** There was one vacancy for an elected Governor because **Caroline Sanderson (Baptist Union GB)** had completed her first term as a Governor. Caroline Sanderson was nominated and elected for a second three-year term.
- iv. **Co-opted Governors:** The meeting was told that **Sheila Duncan (United Reformed Church)** was due to retire shortly and consequently would be stepping down as a co-opted Governor of CLAS. On behalf of the CLAS members, Mgr Rothon thanked Sheila for her contribution as a CLAS trustee over the previous nine years. He announced that **Mary Macleod (Church of Scotland)** had been co-opted as a Governor.
- v. **Provision of Secretariat Services:** Mgr Rothon confirmed that Central Lobby Consultants Ltd had been reappointed to provide secretariat services to CLAS for a further three years.

4. Updates on current policy matters

The Secretary gave a brief oral presentation, highlighting the following issues:

- **Law Commission project on wedding law:** the terms of reference for the wedding law project had still not been published: it was suggested that one area that might usefully be raised was the central registration of civil divorces.
- **Law Commission for England & Wales and Scottish Law Commission: consultation on surrogacy:** it was agreed that CLAS should not make a submission to the consultation– though individual member Churches might wish to do so.
- **Employer-provided living accommodation:** there was still no news of any consultation.
- **VAT:** there had been a useful meeting with HMRC, jointly with Sarah King of the Association of English Cathedrals, on the issue of the VAT treatment of cathedrals and major churches: HMRC had made a positive response to our representations and Sarah had drafted new guidance – on which we were awaiting a response from HMRC.
- **Electoral law:** the Quakers and CLAS had made brief responses to the House of Commons Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee's inquiry into Electoral Law – specifically on the general confusion around the operation of the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 in relation specifically to hustings and the possible need to register as a non-party campaigner.
- **Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration etc.) Act 2019 and associated registration requirements:** the Act had received Royal Assent and the first opposite-sex civil partnerships should be registered in December, once the necessary Regulations were in place.
- **The future of civil partnership in Scotland:** the Scottish Government had still not published its response to its consultation.
- **Transposition of the Fifth Money Laundering Directive:** the Baptist Union, especially, was very concerned that the proposal that every express trust should have to register with HMRC's Trust Registration Service would create an immense amount of work for no obvious benefit: CLAS responded to the consultation suggesting that to require every tiny charity to register would be "disproportionate to the object pursued".

- **Employment law:** CLAS had made a submission to the Taylor Review on employment law suggesting that the current distinctions between office-holders, employees and workers for the purpose of employment rights were unclear and unhelpful: the Secretary was to have a meeting with the official from BEIS who was coordinating the Government's response to the review

CLAS Secretariat

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