



Sea of Faith

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Silverstream Retreat Centre Friday October 7, 2016

Opening Laurie Chisholm (chair) opened the meeting at 7.30pm and welcomed members of the Steering Committee and conference attendees.

Apologies: Alison Eng (Archivist), Anna Norrish, Natalie Allan, George Dodd.

ACCEPTED

Noel Cheer/ Bruce Tasker

CARRIED

Minutes of 2015 AGM MOVED that the Minutes be accepted as a true and correct record

Peter Cowley/Bruce Tasker

CARRIED

Matters arising None

Reports

Full reports had been circulated. Highlights from these included:

CHAIRPERSON: In his report Laurie Chisholm emphasised that the Sea of Faith is indeed a 'talkfest', not a group of political activists. As the retiring chairperson he was pleased at the way Conferences had focussed on important and fundamental themes e.g. brain science (2014), climate change and our plundering of the planet (2015) and now God-talk itself: With or without God – Community in a post-theistic age (2016). Identifying a theme has often been a time-consuming process for which he had tried to introduce a more structured process which he hoped would survive a change in chairperson.

A fundamental change in the running and venue of future conferences is now being advocated and discussed. There is much to commend having a central venue and an on-going conference committee.

Unusually, four of the steering committee are due to retire this year so numerous replacements are required and the transition from this year to next will be more marked than usual.

FINANCE: In moving the financial report as circulated be adopted, Norm Ely drew attention to the need to future proof against some issues. The 2015 Conference had run at a loss of \$828.46 and the current conference will operate

at a reasonable significant loss due to two international speakers contributing. Testing of a new way of recorded presentation also involved some additional expense.

BACKGROUND TO NOTICE OF MOTION: The costs of producing six excellent newsletters annually to members was included in the subscription {sole source of oncome]to the national Sea of Faith. These costs had increased – printing and postage – to the point where some action was now required. **He was therefore moving a remit to the Sea of Faith that:**

The annual subscription of SoF (NZ) membership - which includes 6 Newsletters - be altered as follows:

- **For Newsletters delivered by email to be increased to \$20 p.a.**
- **For Newsletters printed on paper and mailed to be increased to \$25 p.a.**
- **Newsletters printed and mailed and with optional extra of the email version to be increased to \$25 p.a.**

Seconded by Noel Cheer

CARRIED

ARCHIVES: Alison Eng (apology) had been out of the country and had had a some exceptional issues. There had been no archival work done since the deposit of a lot of material in 2015. She would be attending to recent and other material sent her from early 2017 onwards, Jock Crawford reported on her behalf. Documents were acceptable in either paper or electronic form.

LOCAL GROUPS CO-ORDINATOR: Gretchen Kivell has continued to be in contact with the facilitators of fifteen groups throughout the country. She encouraged members of these groups to subscribe to the national SoF and receive the excellent Newsletter if they do not already do so.

A meeting with facilitators and others interested was to be held over lunch during the conference to exchange ideas for programmes and activities.

RESOURCE CENTRE: Suzi Thirlwall reported a quiet year with slightly more activity than previously. There are a number of books and DVDs available for loan to members and groups to help with their programmes.

NEWSLETTER/WEBSITE: Noel Cheer reported that it was very much business as usual and both were going well. The newsletter is published every second month with the assistance of Shirley Dixon and Yvonne Curtis. Some half of the SOF membership receive it by post, the remainder by email at reduced cost. It would greatly assist the Steering Committee in its planning for overseas speakers if more people subscribed to SoF New Zealand. Submissions were most welcome.

The website sof.org.nz was the repository for a lot of archival information including papers presented at past conferences, back numbers etc. Some background reading relating to upcoming conferences had recently been introduced.

MOVED that the reports be received

Bruce Tasker/Bernadette Krassoi

CARRIED

Steering Committee

As four members are due to retire it was moved that

- Laurie Chisholm (chairperson), Peter Cowley. Bernadette Krassoi and Jock Crawford (secretary) be thanked for their services

- The remaining members Gretchen Kivell, Norm Ely, Adrian Skelton and Bruce Tasker be reappointed
Peter Cowley/Noel Cheer

CARRIED

It was moved that the nominations of Ian Crumpton, Daniel Phillips and Doug Sellman having been properly received, they be appointed to the SoF Steering Committee for 2017.

Noel Cheer/Glenda Tabateau

Discussion

A discussion on the pros and cons of holding Annual Conferences year on year at the same venue then ensued. The reasons for the mooted change had been well covered in Newsletter 126 and a detailed analysis in N/L 125.

Points raised at the AGM included:

- The numbers attending from the South Island
- The issue of travel rebates for those travelling from far afield, particularly away from main air routes
- Members gained when conferences held in smaller centres
- Costs and demand of using school facilities in holiday time have increased a lot
- Airfares are more expensive in school holiday time
- Speakers from overseas need centralised facilities.

A show of hands showed a very significant preference for the mooted change in venue and conference committee arrangements to be based in the Wellington area.

IT WAS MOVED that the incoming Steering Committee be asked to consult the financial membership as to the future location of conferences.

Adrian Skelton/Noel Cheer

CARRIED

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.45pm.