

# **MINUTES OF SOFIA 2021 AGM**

## **6TH NOVEMBER via Zoom**

Meeting opened 10.30 am. Members joined from 10.30, eventually nineteen members or more were able to join in. At least one member was unable to join through lack of connection and two members were unable to connect both video and audio at the same time until later in the meeting.

We had a minute of silence in remembrance of valued members and associates who had died through the year:

Lady Shirley Geering, Cornelia Leeman, Eliane Cowie, Elaine Ellison-Smith, Andrew Meek, Freda Plummer, retired bishop John Shelby Spong.

The minutes of the 2020 AGM were read. To Doug Sellman's question about declining numbers Pete replied: yes, a slow decline is inevitable given the ages of our members. Doug responded that it was his hope that his new initiative in rejuvenating the Christchurch group as Rethinking Religion and creating regional hub events/conferences would introduce new members to the national group as well as being an active response to the carbon outlay of face to face national conferences. Michael Templer noted that the working day daytime timing of Hamilton's meetings prevented all but retired people from participating. Philip Grimmatt asked that the incoming steering group commit to a program to retain and increase membership. Lynne Tasker noted that the Auckland group had managed to attract new local attendees but had difficulty getting them to also take up national membership and take the Newsletter. Alaine Tasker mentioned that Marion Hines' invitations sent to Auckland churches had brought in some interest. Michael Templer noted Jock Crawford's comment that SOF had succeeded by stimulating changes in theological approach among several local

churches. Doug confirmed this with a Christchurch example. Pete mentioned that St Andrew's in Wellington had now closed down its "missionary" role in spreading SOFiA-type thinking, since so many new organisations were now moving into that space, but thought that SOFiA needed to continue. Graham Hill mentioned some local advertising being done by his group. Pete moved that the reading of the minutes, and commentary be accepted, Doug Sellman seconded the motion. It was carried.

The 2021 Officers' reports were offered as read as previously published. Pete moved that they be accepted, Laurie Chisholm seconded - carried. In matters pertaining, Pete moved that the remit recommending the folding in of the Archivist's role into that of Web-master be accepted, now that our archives will in future be stored on the SOFiA website. Lynne Tasker seconded, carried. Lynne moved that Alison Eng be officially accorded the gratitude of SOFiA members for her years of quiet work in charge of the archives, Pete seconded - carried.

Election of new committee and officers for 2022. Pete outlined the current situation with the standing down of Ian Crumpton, Brian Ellis and Steve Collard. He welcomed Mary Ellen Warren to a committee place, and asked for more volunteers. There were none. Pete confirmed himself, Philip Grimmett, John Thornley and Mary Ellen as committee members, unopposed. John Thornley offered to take the Secretary's role, and Mary Ellen as Local Groups Contact. Pete would continue as Chair, Web-master, Treasurer and Membership officer. Doug Sellman said that he was due to retire in 2023 and was willing to take a committee role after that time. Pete again asked general SOFiA members to offer themselves for committee membership.

Final comments: Apropos of the article offered to the Newsletter by a SOFiA member opposing the idea of human-induced climate change, which after consultation with the committee, was refused

by Laurie Chisholm, Graham Hill asked what the policy would be towards an article by anti-vaxxers, for example. Pete referred to Laurie, Laurie said such an article running counter to the mainstream of opinion, he would publish if he could get balancing piece of informed critical writing on the subject, to publish alongside it. Ian Harris recorded his thanks to Laurie for the quality of his work with the Newsletter. Laurie mentioned that the December edition was already filled out. Philip asked if Laurie would accept creative pieces - poetry for example. Laurie said yes, Pete and Doug encouraged Philip to continue his poems.

Pete confirmed that the postponed conference was set for March. John Thornley suggested that the live March conference would appeal to both young and old and newcomers to the group might choose to become involved. Doug suggest that a consciously “ carbon free ” conference would be a draw-card for the young. Maria Cash agreed.

Yvonne Curtis and Carmen Goldsmith asked for a better information flow from the committee to those members who were not internet connected, or not otherwise receiving committee communications, Pete mentioned the high cost of mail-outs. Carmen said SOFiA should take on that cost, and send out all the AGM documents to those who hadn't received them. In discussion it was suggested that in the next Newsletter members who had not received the earlier e-mailed AGM documents should be invited to e-mail Pete who could e-mail or post the documents to them. Carmen said that the committee needed to keep current members informed and active participants rather than being lost to gaps in the dissemination of information.

The meeting closed at 11.30 am.