

MINUTES OF THE 2020 AGM (ON ZOOM) OF SEA OF FAITH IN AOTEAROA (Sat. 31st Oct.)

Meeting opened 2.30 pm . Initially 24 members participated , through the meeting this increased to 27 members.

A MEMORIAL to Norm Ely , who died earlier this year, detailing his service over many years, at committee level , to the SOF (now SOFiA) community. Including many years as Chair , Treasurer , organiser of annual conferences and committee member. His personality and his dedication to SOF and willingness to take on organisational responsibilities year after year.

Ian Crumpton moved that Pete's address be accepted , Gretchen Kivell seconded the motion . Acceptance was unanimous.

APOLOGIES : Carmen Goldsmith , Alison Eng , Michael Templer.

MINUTES OF 2019 AGM : Previously circulated to all SOFiA e-mail addresses , accepted as read. Andrew Calvert noted that those minutes showed that in the 2019 AGM the minutes of the 2018 AGM had not been properly presented . It was determined to find and present the 2018 AGM minutes to the Committee , to try to catch up with formal procedure as best as possible at this stage. Ian moved that the 2019 minute be accepted. Steve Collard seconded , unanimous acceptance , with Andrew's comments and remedial action.

OFFICERS' REPORTS :

Each of the officers' reports had been circulated to all extant members' e-mail addresses some time before the AGM , and each was initially accepted as read by the participants. Although each was briefly summarised by the officer or a deputy , and commented on by participants :

Chair : Ian emphasised that with the shortage of committee members , and the Covid lockdowns , 2020 had been an extraordinary and difficult year . Ian moved that his report be accepted , Lynne Tasker seconded the motion , unanimous approval.

Treasurer : Philip summarised that SOFiA's finances were healthy , largely owing to the 2019 conference having been so well conceived and run . Additionally 2020 having had so few expenses beyond ordinary running costs , as costly activities , like the usual annual conference and AGM had not been incurred. Philip Grimmett moved acceptance of the report , Pete Cowley seconded. Acceptance unanimous. In remarks , Philip gave some of the details of his and his wife's work on the accounts. Andrew Calvert pressed for some of the details of the figures as presented , Philip said that this would be the responsibility of the incoming Treasurer. He noted that it was the shedding of SOFiA taking on the accommodation costs , and to a lesser extent meals and entertainment costs in the 2019 conference and AGM , which had led to the turnaround in SOFiA's financial situation . Doug Sellman noted that the use of a church as a conference venue had been a great saver and a very appropriate venue and proposed that churches be used for future conference venues. There were positive comments on this , the matter was referred to the incoming committee.

Newsletter : Laurie's previously circulated report was taken as read . Laurie had an extra comment on the controversial exclusion from the newsletter of an article supporting the idea that climate change was not human -caused. His reasoning and follow-up that the article could be presented on the organisation's website was widely accepted . Laurie moved that his report be accepted , Jan Calvert seconded the motion. Unanimous acceptance. Jan asked for details of the split between printed and e-mailed versions to members (currently 70 printed and 163 e-mailed). In discussion Pete Cowley said that printed versions' costs were completely covered by the extra charge for that. Maria Cash asked if adding the newsletter as a Facebook publication on the UK's SOF Facebook site wouldn't encourage wider readership , Laurie said that it would be a members- only circulation , Philip asked if this wouldn't encourage more correspondence , Laurie replied that he didn't know , but that he was already sometimes constrained on how much he could publish because of page size and the 12 page format he worked with. Marion Hines asked if Laurie could not request more 200 word articles . Pete seconded that idea.

Local groups : Steve Collard's summary was taken as read. Steve moved acceptance , Jan Calvert seconded that. Doug Sellman asked why he was not getting SOFiA communications , since he regarded his Christchurch Rethinking Religion group as that city's local SOFiA group , Ian said that he would be included in the future.

Archivist : Alison Eng's report was taken as read. Yvonne Curtis moved it be accepted and Philip Grimmett seconded , unanimously accepted. It was discussed as Alison had asked , what to do with future archivable material , Maria Cash suggested Victoria University , Ian suggested Knox College in Dunedin , and Pete suggested the National Archives as possible repositories. Gretchen Kivell reminded us of Alison's message that this was the final year in which Canterbury university archives would take any material and asked if any material from the local groups was being archived , Marion Hines said that she sent Auckland material to Alison. Ian said the matter would have to be taken in hand by the incoming committee.

Membership: Pete Cowley apologised for sending out the 2019 statistics and charts instead of the 2020 versions in the previously circulated documents , then did a screen share of the correct tables. Total membership has gone down by one to 223 , as of June , showing in general a slow decline , which was unlikely to change unless we advertised and otherwise actively recruited new members. In answer to Maria Cash noticing a steep decline over 5 years , he stated that this apparent state was not real but due to a change in categories as between household and individual memberships . Various possibilities for advertising and advertising venues were discussed. Pete moved that his report be accepted, Philip seconded . Unanimously accepted.

Resource Centre : Pete listed the current state of book, CD and DVD resources . No books have been borrowed in two years , and these have now been sent on a sales process . SOFiA 's stock of taped material has disappeared . Pete still has the CD s and DVD s which are still being sometimes requested. But posting costs are now very high and Pete would like to transfer all of them to on-line formats and make them available through the SOFiA website ,

where they are already listed. Pete moved acceptance of the report
Gretchen Kivell seconded that. Unanimously accepted.

Website : Pete Cowley has rebuilt the website from Noel Cheer's version at sofia.org.nz . Noel left a huge goldmine of material hidden behind list headings which Pete keeps discovering and transferring to the new format . The site had 204 visits in September , some of which were international. Pete moved acceptance of his report , seconded by John Thornley.
Unanimously accepted.

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Philip noted SOFiA's increased and satisfactory use of Zoom as a medium of communication and proposed that more use be made of it within SOFiA , and internationally between likeminded national groups. Ian noted that it had been a good and cheap means of communication . The recent e-mail extension and inclusion to us from Australian (Victorian ?) SOFiA to lectures, videos and Q and A sessions, was positively noted. Pete said that we also could use our " Pro " Zoom facility to share with other groups.

RE-ELECTION OF COMMITTEE :

Ron Spanton moved that the current committee be re-elected ,
Trish Crumpton seconded the motion. Unanimously accepted.

New members were canvassed . Pete Cowley stated his willingness to move from being an ex-officio member , to being an elected member . John Thornley stated his willingness to continue as a member. Three women present were asked to join , all declined . Pete was unanimously elected .

CONCLUSION :

The date for the next meeting , by Zoom was suggested for Nov 11th .

Marion Hines requested that SOFiA send Sir Lloyd Geering an official greeting .

The meeting closed at 3.45pm

