

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF THE FRIENDS IN INDIA

HELD ON SATURDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2021

AT THE INDIAN YMCA, 41 FITZROY SQUARE, LONDON

The twenty-ninth Annual General Meeting of the Friends in India was held on Saturday 2nd October 2021. Those present were 29 FCI members eligible to vote in addition to 18 guests.

1. **Welcome** – The Chair welcomed those present.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

The Secretary informed members that apologies had been received from: Philip Wade, Julia Lipp Nathaniel, Leslie Nathaniel, Margaret Addicott, Martin and Gillian Heath, Daniel Jeyaraj, Betty Robinson, Owain Bell, Joseph Goodridge, Christopher Cutting, Arthur Beason, Sarah Hall, Sarah Miller, Alastair Cutting.

3. **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2020**

Samraj Jacob proposed and Anand Asir seconded that these Minutes be accepted and all members **Agreed**. These were signed by the Chair.

4. **The Report of the Secretary**

Margaret Marshall presented her Report for 2020/2021 which included an update from the Membership. During the past year the Management Committee meetings had been held by Zoom however, it is intended to consider a Vision for the future of the Committee and the FCI, when members meet physically on 18th and 19th November 2021.

A very successful Prayer Zoom was held on 5th May 2021, when many members and friends joined to pray for India and the Pandemic situation. This is an event that the Management Committee will be considering to again hold in the future.

It is hoped that if circumstances allow the Thanksgiving Services and St Thomas Unity Lectures will recommence.

Some slight wording within the Constitution will be considered at the FCI Annual General Meeting.

FCI members have recently two copies of 'Pilgrim'.

Various nominations are to be agreed by the Annual General Meeting – Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Editor, 2 FCI members nominated representatives.

The Report was accepted.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

Members had copies of the Treasurer's Report, the Audited Accounts and Independent Examiner's Report for 2020.

The Treasurer, Jessie Anand informed members that the Closing Balance as at 31st December 2020, was £17,683. The Income for the year had been £2,080 with the Expenditure being £1,968.

Andrew Wingate enquired if the Offertory at the Thanksgiving Service was Gift Aided. The Treasurer replied by stating 'Yes' it is Gift Aided.

The Treasurer expressed her thanks to the Chair and the Membership Secretary for their assistance and guidance.

Chellaian Lawrence proposed and Samraj Jacob seconded and members **Agreed** that the Financial Statement and Report be accepted.

6. Amendment to the Constitution

The Management proposes to the members that the following changes be made to the Constitution within Paragraph 2.

From: 'Encouraging Interest in the life, work and mission of the churches in India, with special reference to their experience of Christin Unity.'

To: 'Encouraging interest in the life, work and mission of the churches in India, with special reference to their experience of Organic Union'.

It was proposed by Eleanor Jackson and seconded by Samraj Jacob and members **Agreed to** this amendment.

7. Elections to the Management Committee

The Chair reported that the Officers were due to be re-elected: Chair – Adrian Watkins; Secretary – Margaret Marshall; Treasurer – Jessie Anand. All these Officers agreed to serve a further term and this was **Agreed by the Members.**

The role of Editor of 'Pilgrim' It was proposed by Chellaian Lawrence and seconded by Denita Anand **It was agreed by the Members** that Sumanth Bommarthi be Editor working alongside with a team – Eleanor Jackson, Premraj Jacob Chellaian Lawrence.

FCI Appointed Representatives – Anand Asir from Co-opted Member to full Member –
Proposer : Sumanth Bommarthi Seconder: Adrian Watkins. **This was agreed by the Members.**
It was agreed by the Members that Samraj Jacob serve a further term on the Management Committee.

8. Chairman's Remarks

Below is the abbreviated content of the remarks by Revd Adrian Watkins:

It is wonderful to be back at a physical FCI Day – even though the Zoom version last November was in its own way really enjoyable and meaningful, with new friends also joining in. Of course, the pandemic has not gone away completely – and so sadly there are some friends who have been unable to make it this year.

Like most other organisation we have faced constraints and limitations on what we could do in the past year. But we do hope things will move forward in a more active way in the next year – in ways indicated by Margaret (St Thomas Unity Lectures, Education Seminars, Thanksgiving Services for example).

At our Committee Vision retreat on 18th and 19th November we will be looking not just at planning, but on overall future and direction for FCI and we will appreciate your prayers for this. We will also need to balance vision for all the good things we could do and would like to do, with a realistic assessment of capacity and capability as a small organisation that does not have infinite resources. Though of course God will provide for whatever it is He calls us to do.

We will also be exploring further diversifying or membership and broadening our friendships in various ways. Possible examples are more effective engagement with and inclusion of the **Indian/South Asian diaspora, local ecumenical or partnerships, and younger generations.** We also need to reflect on the potential of stronger relationships with **other south Asian countries and churches** – and with **other organisations** relating to the churches in the region.

I always have in mind that CSI and CNI are not just united in an organic union, but also uniting churches having an **ecumenical vision**. As a result, ***ecumenism with a mission vision will remain at the heart of the FCI identity – but we do need to explore to how best in a changing context we should give this practical expression in our activity and actions.***

One aspect of future Vision will be to explore how to strengthen communications, engagement, and prayer within ourselves and with our friends in India and beyond. The Zoom prayer meeting attended by around 60 people from UK, Europe, and India, back in May was one example of how this could happen.

Pilgrim we expect will remain a core aspect of what we do. We welcome Sumanth as the new Editor and thank Chellaian for all his work as Editor over two terms of office – and in the face of health and other constraints. The committee have recognised finally the amount of work that has to go into preparing each issue of Pilgrim and felt the need for it to be a team effort. We are delighted that Eleanor Jackson and Revd Premraj have agreed to be part of the editorial team working with Sumanth and with continued support from Chellaian.

It will be a priority to try and prepare the ground for new and ideally younger persons to come onto the committee and to take up office-bearer roles before too long.

Finally, my **thanks to all the members of the Management Committee for their work and support, including the office bearers, Margaret, Jessie and, as already mentioned Chellaian**. Thanks also to **Anand Asir** who is our Education Secretary and to **Oswin** our webmaster. And Special thanks must go to **William Allberry** for his unstinting, diligent, detailed, and painstaking work as Membership Secretary, Database Secretary and Gift Aid coordinator.

Adrian Watkins

9. FCI Day and Annual General Meeting 2022

Arrangements including the date and venue for the 2022 **FCI Day** and AGM 2022 will be discussed at the Management Committee meeting.

10. Forthcoming Events

Anand Asir informed members that it is hoped that there will be lectures held during May/June at various venues – Cardiff, Edinburgh, Leicester, Birmingham, and Ely.

The Platinum Jubilee of the Churches of South India will be held on the last Saturday in September 2022.

The meeting was closed in prayer.