



Spiritual Directors in Europe

Annual General Meeting of the Spiritual Directors in Europe

Thursday 5 May 2022

14.00 local (Iceland) time; 15.00 British Summer Time.

Skálholt Centre, Iceland

Minutes - Draft

1. Opening by the Chair

The meeting was opened by the Chair, Lehel Lészai (LL) who welcomed the Members to the first face-to-face meeting since 2019.

2. Gathering Prayer for AGM

LL moved into a time of prayer during which deceased members, Clare Camilleri and Peter Ball were remembered with photos and lit candles.

3. Minutes of 2021 Meeting and appointment of two members to authorize the Minutes of the 2022 Meeting and to validate the vote for Treasurer

Paul Booth (PB) reminded those gathered of his role as Moderator for the business part of the AGM. He encouraged everyone to conduct the meeting in accordance with the ministry of spiritual direction in a spirit of listening – to the EC, to one another, to the Spirit of God.

He explained he is Fifth Director of the Spiritual Directors in Europe company which is based in England and governed under English law. PB is a non-executive Director and looks after company business behind the scenes.

PB reminded those gathered that last year's AGM had been conducted on Zoom and asked for comments and questions on the Minutes. The Minutes were accepted as correct and approved by members; they were then signed by LL.

PB asked for volunteers to authorise the Minutes and others to validate the voting for the role of Treasurer.

Minutes authorisers: Una Agnew and Wendela Vuylsteke-van Ravels

Vote validators – Natalie Baxter-Strange, Antoinette van Gurp, Gill Sewell.

4. Chair's Report – Appendix 1

LL thanked the previous EC for their great service and, especially for their preparatory work for the Annual Meetings in 2020 and 2021 in Iceland, and the creative response to managing the Meetings online.

He remembered those who were unable to be present.

LL spoke of the EC's use of Zoom and the number of emails he has received in just one year (approximately 1100). He encouraged members to make use of the website as a shared forum.

Una Agnew thanked Lehel for all the work during this difficult time; a sentiment echoed by PB.

The Membership accepted the Chair's report.

5. Treasurer's Report – Appendix 2

Teemu Salminen (TS) thanked everyone for their patience as EC trains itself in the new system and talked people through the accounts with a presentation.

He made available the Auditor's Comments.

It was noted that there was smaller profit now and the question was raised:

What is different? Why could it be in profit before and not now?

TS explained that Administration fee was collected in 2019 (in Romania) but had not been collected since because the Meetings had not taken place in person. It was realised that it is better to have at least 100 members paying €50 rather than those coming to Meetings having an additional €100 cost.

A question was also raised about language – administration fees/ annual subscription – are they the same thing?

TS said that SD-Europe used to collect administration fees from Life and Annual Members at Annual Meetings. An annual membership fee was collected from Annual Members. EC is now feeding in the concept of annual administration fees to generate a regular income paid by a wider share of members.

The annual administration fee for all Members is €50.

Annual Members pay an Annual Membership Subscription of €15.(Total annual payment €65)

A third question was regarding the new website – are we receiving new members? One member was present because they had found the website via the Retreats Association website.

It was pointed out that the better our website, the higher it comes through Google searches.

It also encourages the idea of levels of membership – joining (free) as a Friend to feed their interest with limited access to the website and occasional newsletters – then, moving to Candidate and, hopefully, on to full Membership.

Una Agnew (UA) commended the EC on the excellence of the SDE website and in particular its presentation of levels of membership – which her organisation, AISGA had now adapted for its use. She also mentioned that the Board of AISGA of which she is a member, is willing to share its Code of Ethics, with due acknowledgement of use.

How many members

We have 118 members.

UA asked whether the new administration fee has helped. She suggested that people might want to contribute even if they cannot come to the Annual Meeting.

LL pointed out that those able to attend the Annual Meetings were now paying less – but that SD-Europe needs more people to pay less. He said that, as things are changing, EC is proposing a new start: that people who have not paid for many years can forget about the debts, come back into membership and pay administration fees.

PB said that there is a changing culture, and that SD-Europe is in a transition stage – combining in-person meetings with an online presence.

Penny Warren proposed the accepting of the Report; this was seconded by Mary Penley.

All voted to adopt treasurer's report.

A discussion followed on the appointment of auditors for the year-ending 2022. It is difficult to find Treasurer and even harder to find auditor to check accounts of multi-national company based in UK for free. The question was raised, could this be done by two qualified/ experienced Members?

PB responded that, because of the size and nature of company, we do not need an Auditor but do need an Examiner of accounts. This could be one person but, ideally, would be two working together.

The current auditor is willing to audit the accounts for 2022. TS proposed using same auditor – seconded by Ulla Lumijärvi. On a show of hands, all members were in favour. Looking ahead to next year's Meeting, SD-Europe will move towards the Examination of Accounts from 31 Dec 2023 and will find two members to do this.

The role is not accounting but checking the figures and asking questions.

The question was raised as to how much an Auditor would cost? The current Auditor is free, but a professional would potentially cost hundreds, if not thousands of euros.

Break

6. Election for the role of Treasurer

PB distributed voting papers to members.

7. Explanation of election procedures.

PB explained the way the voting would be done.

8. Formal Nominations of candidates for Treasurer, with opportunity for questions.

There was one candidate for the election – Teemu Salminen (Proposed for second term by Teemu Salminen; seconded by Araham Odalanyil.

9. Elections – Voting by secret ballot papers in person and by proxy.

During this time, we invited all participants to pray for the process.

The votes were counted and verified by the 3 people agreed earlier (see item 3 above).

10. Results of Election

38 votes Yes – 38 No – 0 Abstain – 0

Teemu Salminen was elected for a second three-year term.

11. (Thanks to outgoing Treasurer)

As the same Treasurer will continue in office, the thanks expressed earlier were reiterated.

12. Installation and welcome to Treasurer

13. Blessing of the new EC.

One of the longer-standing Members, Valda Sadzeviciute blessed the new EC.

14. Conclusion of the formal, business part of the Annual General Meeting.

Agenda for Part 2 (meeting of Members, Associates, Candidates and Friends)

1. Venue of the Annual Meeting 2024

The Annual Meeting, 2023 is scheduled to be in Estonia. LL raised the question of where SD-Europe should go in 2024.

Suggestions included

- Norfolk, England (a retreat centre that holds 122)

- Moldova – Paula Malciuc, a former EC member is there. This would be an opportunity to promote spiritual direction there.
- Finland
- Hungary – Elemér Vizi had been consulted and said that, due to refurbishment work, it may be better to consider 2025.

2. Website

Members were taken through the new website and the behind-the-scenes membership and events management that had supported the preparation for this Meeting. Members were invited to contribute to the development of the website by offering resources and information about spiritual direction and different spiritual traditions.

The issue was raised about sending bulk emails. The new system is based on compliance with GDPR and means that people only see their own email and address, but Members expressed the preference to reply to everyone and to read everyone's responses. EC have been exploring this and propose the use of a Forum for Christmas/ Easter and other occasions.

3. How to become a Member?

Last year, because of the pandemic, people became Members online. The question was raised as to whether we should continue with the requirement for people to come to a meeting in order to complete the joining process or could it be done online?

Various comments were put forward.

The Members like to see and meet the people – and it is nice for prospective members to meet us.

It was agreed that we would not want people to be excluded because they cannot come for time away. If people are working or have other commitments, they cannot always make the time.

For younger people, it needs to be easy to make a commitment – so working through the proposed levels of membership offers a gradually-increasing commitment.

The experience of people attending online services and meetings during lockdowns led others – people with mixed abilities to say “welcome to our world”. There are people engaged in ministry who are, for example, wheelchair users who cannot travel. There is the issue of inclusivity.

4. Meeting the new members.

The new candidates were invited to introduce themselves.

- i. Deborah Hamilton-Grey – Great Britain
- ii. Gunnthor Ingason – Iceland
- iii. Susanna Erätuli – Finland
- iv. Stiiv Knowers – Estonia
- v. Petra Galama – Netherlands
- vi. Margrét Eggertsdóttir – Iceland

5. Blessing of new members and those from last year

Fabio Muniz, Julie Burnett-Kirk, Natalie Baxter-Strange, Liz Hoare.

The Meeting ended with this blessing and welcome of new members.