

**Minutes of Annual General Meeting of
Association of Christian Counsellors
On-Line Zoom Meeting
Saturday 16th July 2022**

Members: 52 Members attended

Minutes of previous AGM held on 10 July 2021

- The minutes were accepted as a true record of the previous meeting. 21 attendees (who attended in 2021) approved the minutes and NIL votes not to approve
- There were no matters arising.

Annual Report for 2021

Sue Monckton-Rickett thanked Peter Roberts and Keith Payne for all of their work in managing ACC's finances and preparing the Annual Report.

Peter Roberts thanked everyone, who contribute to ACC financially; those who make donations, members and those involved in fundraising

He then highlighted some of the key messages in the 2021 Annual Report and the significant financial variances from the previous year.

2021 started as a year of potential great challenge with Covid-19 restrictions still in place and uncertainty about how the pandemic would progress. In this context ACC Board decided to support members by not increasing fees. The pandemic had also caused ACC to move to remote working and it was decided that this would become a permanent way of working with the HO in Coventry closing June 2021, which brought about financial savings.

2021 also saw significant staff appointments with Kathy Spooner appointed as CEO, Gillian Stuart as Head of Membership Services and Yineng Hart as Head of Training and Marketing. These appointments increased ACC's costs, but meant that a team is being built to grow and improve the work of ACC.

There had also been some changes in the Board with Marlene Forsythe-Gidharry and Helen Vipan stepping down and Gathoni Hamilton-Foster joining the Board. Peter thanked Marlene and Helen for all of their work and contributions as Board members.

Throughout 2021 ACC continued to provide counselling for NHS staff, which from February 2021 had been funded by the NHS.

Association of Christians in Counselling and Linked Professions

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ACC continued to provide support for members in many ways including significant on-line training, forums and membership groups such as Ethnic Tapestry and CYP.

The Net Income for 2021 was £19,500, which was less than 2021, but after a transfer from Restricted Funds, General Funds increased to £181,082 at the end of the year

Income in 2021 increased by £49,44 with increases in training fees and membership.

Expenditure increased by £66,044 due to increased staff, more training course costs, the payment to the PSA increasing by £6,124 and £5,830 increase in Accord printing costs.

At the end of 2021 Total Funds had increased from £153,734 to £197,065.

ACC's Reserve policy was to keep approximately 3 months of income, £62,500. At the end of 2021 General Funds were well in excess of this, but the extra funds would be needed in 2022 with significant investment needed to build a new website and data base.

Peter confirmed that the Independent Examiners signed off the accounts on 12 July 2022 and he expressed his thanks to Stewardship, who are our Independent Examiners.

Peter then invited any questions and answered one received about the increase in training costs in 2021, which had been due to more on-line training events and also a decision to pay a fairer level of fees to the trainers.

The following votes were taken

- The Annual Report was accepted and the Accounts approved for the year ending 31st December 2021 with 46 votes in favour and none against.
- Stewardship were approved as Independent Examiners for period to 31 December 2022 with 46 votes in favour and none against.
- The Board were authorised to fix the remuneration of the Independent Examiners with 46 votes in favour and none against

Appointment and Election of Trustees to the Board of ACC

Sue Monckton-Rickett explained that ACC had a minimum of trustees (4), but no maximum and since 2019 each Board member could stand for 3 terms with a maximum of 9 years. This AGM there were 5 existing Board members who had stated that they wished to stand for re-election and 5 members had been nominated as new Board members. If all 10 candidates were elected the Board would be 14 people in total. The Board believed that this a workable size and so the decision had been made to accept all of the nominations, unless at the AGM the membership votes AGAINST exceed votes FOR.

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The Board had also considered that with the election of 10 members this year, there could be the risk of 10 members standing down in 2024. The Board will consider staggering the re-election with some members standing for only two years and then a longer term.

Sue Monckton-Rickett explained that for each nominee, members would be asked to vote YES to confirm their election and NO if they oppose their election. She also explained that the on-line voting was anonymous and proxy votes submitted are only shared with her, as Chair.

The voting for the 10 candidates was as follows:

- Peter Barraclough: 39 for - none against - 4 proxy for
- Sean Charlesworth: 41 for -1 against - 2 proxy for
- Wien Fung: 39 for - none against - 5 proxy for
- Sharon Hastings: 39 for - 1 against - 2 proxy for
- Phil Martin: 38 for - 1 against - 3 proxy for
- Janet McNish: 38 for - none against -5 proxy for
- Jim MacRae:-34 for - 3 against - 2 proxy for
- Christine Pinder: 38 for - 3 against - 2 proxy for
- Peter Roberts: 40 for - none against - 3 proxy for
- Chris Williams: 42 for - none against -4 proxy for

Sue Monckton-Rickett announced therefore that all of the nominees had been duly elected and she looked forward to working with all of the Board.

Presentation by Leroy Harley on behalf of Ethnic Tapestry Group

The group is for Global Majority people and was formed in 2020. The group meets monthly usually with 6 or 7 people. It aims to ensure that global majority people are not forgotten and participate fully in ACC. A representative of the group regularly attend ACC Board meetings, the group also help in providing advice to ACC.

Leroy said that his passion was to see an increase in black men involved in counselling both as counsellors and people needing counselling.

There had been a forum in March – “Why Black Men Don’t Do Counselling?” and another “Looking at Racism” and it was hoped to do series of forums topics on racism. The group were also interested in research on racism and the impact of spirituality, which is not a subject often talked about in church.

It is hoped that others will join the group and that it’s work can be promoted more.

Chris Williams who attends the group meetings on behalf of ACC Board thanked Leroy for starting the group and his passion and enthusiasm to support ACC.

Gathoni Hamilton Foster thanked Leroy for having the initiative to start the group and ACC taking up the mantle. She felt that we had together come a long way.

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Sue Monckton-Rickett thanked Leroy and Ethnic Tapestry for their work and for being open with ACC Board about change needed and working with them to achieve it.

Presentation by Vicky Bell on behalf of Children and Young People's (CYP) Group

The group started about a year ago for counsellors working with CYP in a variety of settings. It meets about once every two months. It provides the counsellors with a space to discuss issues that they are seeing and working with and it is also a resource for ACC and more widely to advise and speak into CYP related issues. Members of the group have written articles for Accord and were planning to run a work stream at ACC's National Conference in 2022.

Sue Monckton-Rickett thanked the group for providing support to counsellors working with people CYP and encouraged others to join. She also said that ACC were keen to support and encourage members to take the initiative and if they work in a specific areas to consider whether a similar group would be beneficial to start and to contact ACC.

Kathy Spooner also reported that a new group for counsellors who work with couples had just started as an initiative from Helen Wightwick and encouraged others to join.

ACC 2021 Achievements and Plans for 2022

Gillian Stuart reported on:

- The replacement of the Audit Process for registered counsellors with the Practice Review Process during 2021. It was a requirement of the PSA that ACC carry out such a process and it was ethically good practice for ACC to monitor membership criteria. The purpose of the new process was to make the process more of an opportunity to review practice holistically with the members' supervisor. It involved reflecting on areas of growth, areas where practice was going well, CPD needs, contracts, recording keeping, etc. There has been one group of members have completed the new process with positive feedback and needed changes identified and a second group are now in the process. We welcome feedback from everyone.
- Terms and Conditions of Membership has been published, which is the first time that we have had information about all ACC memberships in one document and we would encourage everyone to read the document.
- The HO team has been developed with the arrival of Sarah Meredith and Sarah Palmer in 2022, both of whom, are counsellors and experienced in administration services. Our intention is to increase the strength of the team so that we can improve the services that we provide.
- Newly Qualified Registered Counsellor Membership has been launched as a new membership group. We recognised that starting out in practice can be a daunting and costly process. So to try to encourage and support new counsellors, the membership fees for this

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group are discounted and ACC will be providing additional support through forums (about 4 per year) looking at various aspects of practice.

- Other regular forums for all members on varying issues that we have observed people raise, both practical and ethical dilemmas.
- Work had started on the new website and membership database, which we believed would greatly improve services to members, members of the public, potential clients
- The development of new membership streams is still in the plan for the future probably to include coaches /mentors and spiritual directors.

The message that the HO team want to convey is that they are hear to support members and encourage members to contact the office and to provide feedback on ACC's services. Gillian then shared some positive feedback from members.

Yineng Hart reported on:

- The development of the new website gave ACC an opportunity consider new logo and branding and name. . The new name is intended to better reflect the work of our members and to incorporate potential new membership streams, but the acronym ACC will remain. The Board had approved a new logo and name and submitted the changes to Companies House and once this has been approved we will be able to share publically.
- Improvements in communication with members with the intention of fostering a real sense of community. There are now fortnightly e-mails with professional content and news but we also try to make it personable and approachable. We want to help members to be connected more with ACC and with each other and welcome any suggestions of how we can do this.
- We regularly send marketing e-mails to our contacts and have improved our social media presence and how we connect with other professional membership bodies and Christian organisations.
- We have established pastoral support groups to provide a safe space for support and exploring issues with peers and we are exploring starting similar groups for counsellors
- Training events -a lot were held in 2021, including our first on-line conference, with less in 2022 as we concentrate on the in-person National Conference in October. Members are encouraged to book for the conference - there is a wide variety of excellent training and a chance to connect and share fellowship with fellow members and others.
- We have held members open forums during the year on various topics. We welcome suggestions for future forums and training events.
- There are lots of developments underway in Pastoral Care training. The "Resourcing Pastoral Care Course" has continued to be delivered on line with a few in-person training events. The RPCC is being re-written and should be ready for early 2023. In addition a 4-session "Caring for Ourselves" Course has been developed, the "Developing Quality Relationship" course has

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been reviewed and refreshed, Pastoral Support Groups have been established and there are plans to develop a suite of pastoral care workshops on specific topics. We will be sending out a questionnaire to see what topics would be helpful to support the work of pastoral care in churches and we would welcome any ideas.

Kathy Spooner reported on:

- Kathy expressed her thank Gillian and Yineng for the passion and commitment they have brought to the team and to all of the team for their hard work to achieve so many things that we have wanted to do.
- Kathy explored what makes us unique it is that we are both a professional body, which meets the expectations and requirements that brings, but alongside that we are a Christian ministry seeking to support others in their Christian ministry and journey.
- This sense of ministry means that we try to work beyond our own self-interest, but for the good of the profession and those who are members support and care for and the wider public. This approach seems to make us valued by other organisations in the professional world and it means that we are proactive in being part of wider issues i.e. the Diversity and Inclusion Group, the MoU, etc.
- ACC membership has been increasing but we still need to grow in order to sustain the work. We try to promote ACC whenever and wherever was can but also ask that as members if you value ACC please encourage others to join.
- We want to grow the other membership streams the “linked professions” because we believe that we have something to offer to those involved in professions like coaching /mentoring and spiritual direction to support them in be the best they can be in their practice and also for those looking for support to have a ‘one stop shop” of Christian professionals would be a great advantage.
- ACC also faces challenges in getting employers to equally recognise ACC membership, but we will always fight and being part of SCoPEd is a great asset. If you see adverts or practices, which exclude ACC counsellors please do let us know, but also we encourage you to challenge them.
- We deliver much more than a small team could be expected, but we know that there are things that are still outstanding that we have hoped to do for a long time, so please be patient.
- We have work to promote ACC within in the Christian world, raising awareness and also our value as a professional body and ask members to do this with your Christian contacts.
- Why do we do all of this, because we really believe in the value of the work of our members – it can change lives and we believe that we are better together – supporting each other in our work, our ministry and our faith.

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Sue Monckton-Rickett reported:

- The NHS Counselling Service that started at beginning of the pandemic and was then for NHS staff, residential care home staff and the bereaved has provided counselling to about 380 clients and something like 3,000 sessions. The NHS valued the service and agreed at the start of 2021 to fully fund it, which means that counsellors can be paid and ACC can cover administration costs. We want to encourage members to join the service as counsellors and
- to promote the service. The service is now available to a much wider group of NHS staff not just those who have worked with Covid patients and the NHS have appreciated the importance of staff having a safe space to in which to talk about their spirituality as well as their mental health.
- We are delighted to have received a grant from the Benefact Trust under their "Brighter Lives" project, which will enable us to renew and develop new pastoral care training.
- When we applied for the Brighter Lives grant, we very much felt God prompting us to call the project "Building on the Rock" . ACC celebrates its 30th birthday on 2022 and we are here because of the solid rock foundations laid down by others over the years.. We see our role as maintaining that foundational rock on which all of our current and future members can build their ministry. Our ministry and calling is to support and enable your ministry. How do we build the rock? By all contributing, all belonging and all supporting.
- Finally, we want to thank all of our members for their support and for the many people who contribute to the work of ACC. We thank God for everyone of you. Thank you to the team and everyone involved in the work of ACC
- We thank you for your prayers for ACC and ask that you continue to do that just as each week we pray as a team and for our members

The meeting was open for comments with two members thanking staff for everything that they have done in making today happen and but beyond that the immense commitment over the year.

The meeting closed with prayer - St Patrick's Breastplate.

Approved at ACC AGM held on Saturday 15th July 2023



S. Monckton-Rickett

Chair of ACC

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