AGM and Steering Group Meeting

10.00am, Wednesday 27th January 2021
Online via videoconferencing

M I N U T E S

Attendees: Sir Gary Streeter MP (Chair), Stuart Anderson MP, Caroline Ansell MP, Ian Blackford MP, Sir Peter Bottomley MP, Baroness Brinton, Lisa Cameron MP, Lord Curry, Marsha de Cordova MP, Sir Jeffery Donaldson MP, Lord Farmer, Nick Fletcher MP, Paul Girvan MP, Ruth Jones MP, Andrea Leadsom MP, Robin Millar MP, Andrew Selous MP, Baroness Sherlock, Lord Stunell, Mark Harris, Claire Newman, Alison Hill *(19 Voting Members present)*

1. **Prayers**

- Maeve Sherlock opened the meeting in prayer.

2. **Apologies**

- Lord Bates, Tim Farron MP, Lord McColl, Ian Paisley MP, Stephen Timms MP, Tricia Hillas

3. **Minutes of July 2020 Steering Group Meeting and January 2020 AGM**

- The minutes of the AGM on 14th January 2020 and the Steering Group on 8th July 2020 were both approved unanimously.

4. **Election of APPG Officers**

- **Chair:** Sir Gary Streeter MP
- **Vice-Chairs:** Ian Blackford MP, Marsha de Cordova MP, Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP, Tim Farron MP, Baroness Brinton, Lord Curry, Lord Farmer, Baroness Sherlock
- All APPG officers were elected unanimously.

5. **Approval of Income/Expenditure Statement**

- Alison Hill explained the Income and Expenditure Statement for the APPG from January 2020 until December 2020.
- The Income and Expenditure Statement was approved unanimously.
- The group wished to record their thanks to Mark Harris, Claire Newman and Alison Hill for their hard work over the last year.

6. **Review of recent events**

- Tuesday lunchtime chapel services have continued online, with a range of Members and staff attending. These have been a great encouragement.

- The two Bible Study groups for MPs also continue to meet online, as does the lunchtime group led by Maeve Sherlock and Anthony Ball in the Lords.
- The Political Theology Discussion Group, led by Dr Anna Rowlands from Durham University, is meeting monthly online. There have been excellent discussions in recent meetings on the environment.
- Virtual Parliamentary Carol Service 2020
    - Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this had to take place online.
    - We organised this jointly with the Speaker's Chaplain, Revd Tricia Hillas, Mr Speaker, The Lord Speaker and Black Rod.
    - 52 MPs, 48 Peers, 369 parliamentary staff and over 2,000 members of the general public registered.
    - There were over 1,500 live views, and it has now been watched over 9,000 times on YouTube.
    - We have received very positive feedback, both from inside and outside Parliament.
- We have reduced the number of events as Members and staff are currently saturated with online work.

7. Forthcoming events

- **Covid on my mind: Helping others survive and thrive during a time of heightened anxiety and stress (Monday 8 February 2021, 1pm-2pm):** Rachael Maskell MP will chair a panel of experts who will reflect on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our mental wellbeing and provide practical tips on how to survive and thrive in this challenging season. The event is for Members and staff.
- We will mark Easter in some way, but we are still deciding what this will look like.
- There was a discussion on other ideas for future events:
    - We could do something with the Youth Parliament about young people's mental health and see if there are any Christians in the Youth Parliament we could connect with.
    - It is right not to overdo Zoom events. What people need is prayer and fellowship. Members can pass people they know who are looking for this onto Maeve Sherlock or Gary Streeter.
    - Poverty is increasingly a big issue due to the financial issues arising from the pandemic and how it is much harder to offer support to people due to lockdown. We could do something with Christians Against Poverty on this issue and helping people to be equipped to manage their finances.
    - If there are any other suggestions after the meeting, people can email the CiP team.

8. National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast 2021

- Due to the ongoing restrictions and uncertainty, the 2021 NPPB will be virtual.
- It will be chaired by Andrew Selous MP and we hope that Les Isaac (who was originally going to speak in 2020) will be able to speak. He heads the organisation responsible for Street Pastors and has a great story to tell. He will also be the first BAME NPPB keynote speaker.
- The provisional date is Friday 25th June 2021, but this is yet to be confirmed.
- It will be livestreamed from Westminster Hall. We hope that there can be constituent events where MPs, Peers and church leaders can meet and watch the livestream together, although this will of course be subject to any COVID-19 restrictions at the time.
- The virtual event in 2020 was widely appreciated and in particular, people appreciated the representation of each of the nations of the UK. It would be good to ensure this happens again.

9. AOB

- Gary Streeter closed the meeting in prayer.