AGM and Steering Group Meeting

9:30am, Tuesday 1 February 2022
Room N, Portcullis House & Online

M I N U T E S

Attendees: [In the room] Sir Gary Streeter MP (Chair), Caroline Ansell MP, Steve Baker MP, Fiona Bruce MP, Ruth Jones MP, Dame Andrea Leadsom MP, Andrew Selous MP, Stephen Timms MP, Claire Newman, Alison Hill. [Online] Lord Curry, Marsha de Cordova MP, Rachael Maskell MP, Ian Paisley MP, Baroness Sherlock, Pat Browne, Mark Harris. *(13 Voting Members present)*

1. **Prayers**

- Fiona Bruce MP opened the meeting in prayer.

2. **Apologies**

- Baroness Brinton, Miriam Cates MP, Lord Taylor of Warwick

3. **Minutes of January 2021 AGM & Steering Group Meeting**

- The minutes of the AGM and Steering Group Meeting on 27 January 2021 were approved.

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.

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

- Alison Hill talked through the Income and Expenditure Statement for the APPG from January 2021 until December 2021.
- Questions were asked about donors to the Parliamentary Christian Trust which supports the work of the APPG so that gratitude could be expressed. It was noted that the Parliamentary Christian Trust is a registered charity which reports to the Charity Commission. Some donors have expressly asked for their donations to remain private, so it was agreed that donors would be contacted to ask if they are happy for their details to be made known to those present at the AGM.
- The Income and Expenditure Statement was approved.

6. **Review of past year**

- The last year has been different due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- In February 2021, there was an online panel discussion on mental health and wellbeing during lockdown, hosted by Rachael Maskell MP, with speakers from the Mind and Soul Foundation and Biblical Counselling UK.
- Videos of Members reading Bible passages were released at Easter and Christmas and were well received, with good viewing figures. These were an encouragement to the wider church as well as those working in Parliament. There was agreement that these videos should be continued, and the suggestion was made that all Christian Members should be invited to take part.
- In the run up to COP26 in the autumn, the APPG published a briefing paper on the environment and Christian theology which was circulated to Members. This was followed by an event with Revd Dr Dave Bookless from A Rocha International who spoke and took questions on the theology of the environment.
- A regular programme of Bible studies and chapel services (initially online, but now back in person) has continued throughout the year, alongside pastoral support. Appreciation for the Tuesday lunchtime chapel services was expressed as they are a great opportunity for fellowship, worship and prayer. The music (led by Miriam Cates MP and Amy Dolley from Stephen Timms MP's office) was also praised.
- The 2021 National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast, chaired by Dame Andrea Leadsom MP, took place online again and was very well received. There were events across the country organised by churches so that they could meet their MP locally and watch the livestream together.

7. Looking ahead

- There isn't a comprehensive programme of events planned yet, as this is dependent on what happens as COVID-19 restrictions are relaxed. It is hoped that the termly afternoon teas will be able to be started again as these provide a wonderful opportunity for fellowship.
- In March, a monthly discussion group is starting on "What difference should our Christian faith make to how we engage in politics?", led by Dr Robert Song from Durham University. It will take place at 10am on a Wednesday morning on a monthly basis.
- The regular programme of services, Bible studies and pastoral support will continue. The APPG will continue to work closely alongside Revd Tricia Hillas and Canon Pat Browne with their services and programme as well.
- It was suggested that there could be another music event, as these have been enjoyed in the past.

8. National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast 2022

- The 2022 National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast is taking place on Tuesday 5 July. It is chaired by Andrew Selous MP and the keynote speaker will be Revd Les Isaac OBE, founder of Street Pastors and President of Ascension Trust, who will address the theme "Serving the Common Good".
- Fiona Bruce MP is leading a major international conference on religious freedom on 5 and 6 July, and the National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast will tie in with this. The conference will bring together government, Christian and civil leaders from all over the world to tackle the issue of religious freedom. It is hoped that representatives from these different countries will be able to attend the National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast.

9. AOB

- Thanks was expressed to Sir Gary Streeter MP for his leadership and to the Christians in Parliament team for all their work.