AGM Meeting

9:30am, Wednesday 20 March 2024
Room Q, Portcullis House

M I N U T E S

Attendees: Sir Gary Streeter MP (Chair), Ruth Jones MP, Rachael Maskell MP, Caroline Ansell MP, Ian Blackford MP, Nick Fletcher MP, Tim Farron MP, Baroness Sherlock, Martin Vickers MP, Andrew Selous MP, Marsha DeCordova MP, Derek Thomas MP, Jerome Mayhew MP, Lucy Williams, Mark Gilmore, Mark Harris, Claire Newman, *(13 Voting Members present)*

1. **Prayers**

- Revd Mark Harris opened the meeting in prayer.

2. **Apologies**

- Baroness Brinton, Lord Curry, Sir Stephen Timms MP, Sir Edward Leigh MP, Baroness Cox, Lord Taylor of Warwick and Lord Weir of Ballyholme

3. **Minutes of February 2023 AGM & Steering Group Meeting**

- The minutes of the AGM and Steering Group Meeting on 8 February 2023 were approved.

4. **Election of APPG Officers**

- **Chair:** Sir Gary Streeter MP
- **Co-Chair:** Baroness Sherlock, Marsha de Cordova MP, Tim Farron MP
- The Chair put it on record that Rachael Maskell MP was encouraged to put her name forward for election as an officer after the general election.
- All APPG Officers were elected.

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

- Claire Newman talked through the Income and Expenditure Statement for the APPG from January 2023 until December 2023.
- Andrew Selous asked who the trustees are of the Parliamentary Christian Trust (PCT). The Chair confirmed that the current trustees are: Baroness Morgan, Sir Gary Streeter MP, Baroness Sherlock, Sir Stephen Timms MP, Tim Farron MP, Sir Jeffrey Donaldson MP and Eve Burt.
- Andrew Selous MP and Jerome Mayhew MP asked for confirmation that all funding rules are being followed, including that no funds for the APPG come from foreign governments. The Chair confirmed that this was so and that PCT receives donations from individuals as well as UK registered Christian charitable trusts.
- Mark Harris reported that a letter is being prepared to send to Members to invite them to contribute towards the running costs of the APPG.

- The Income and Expenditure Statement was approved.

6. New APPG Rules

- The Chair reported that the APPG is compliant with the new APPG rules.
- The new rules require that APPGs have a list of members. There are currently 93 members. There are some regular members that have not signed up yet, so the APPG hopes to increase the membership to over 100.

7. Review of past year

- Our **regular weekly activities** have continued including 3 fellowship groups in the Commons and 1 in the Lords, a weekly Tuesday chapel service, attended by 30-40 people each week, a weekly staff prayer meeting and a weekly psalm reflection.

2023 events:

- In March, we hosted the historian Tom Holland for a lecture on *'What Has Christianity Ever Done for Us?'*
- In March, we also did a Great Sacred Music event: JS Bach's St John Passion, with music led by St Martin's in the Field and a reflection from Mark Harris.
- At Easter, we held a Celebration service, when Tim Farron preached on the resurrection of Jesus.
- In April, we had an engaging evening with the journalist Dan Walker titled '*Journalism, Football and Faith*.' Baroness Morgan of Cotes interviewed Dan about his life and faith.
- In June, we held the 2023 National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast, which was chaired by Lord Curry of Kirkharle with Dr Amy-Orr Ewing as the keynote speaker. She spoke on the theme 'The Power of Forgiveness in Public Life.'
- In December, we held two carol services, with the chapel almost filled to capacity on each occasion.
- Throughout the year, we also hosted several discussion evenings with Professor Robert Song, from Durham University on '*What difference does Christian faith make to politics?*'
- We also held 3 Afternoon Teas: 1 each term which were a great opportunity for cross-party fellowship.
- In February 2024, we held a briefing and discussion event: Artificial Intelligence and the future of humanity: implications for policymakers with Jeremy Peckham, a Christian who is a specialist in this area. We also produced a written briefing paper & circulated to Members.
- Andrew Selous highlighted the importance of the APPG working closely with the other Christian ministries on the estate, such as the Speaker's Chaplain and Catholic Duty Priest and the Chair confirmed that we work in close partnership with them in advertising all weekly services in our weekly information email and in other shared ministries.
- Marsha De Cordova congratulated the APPG on its events and meetings programme and emphasised the need for chapel services and other events to be designed for all people on the parliamentary estate, regardless of faith background and the importance of inviting colleagues. In the light of there being no NPPB this year, she also asked whether it may be possible to organise a smaller prayer event for Members.

8. Looking ahead

- Mark Harris echoed Marsha De Cordova's comments and suggested that our upcoming Easter Service would be a good opportunity to invite colleagues and staff, as with any of our chapel services
- We have an event with Tom Wright on 20 May in Speaker's House titled: 'How to be a Christian in politics.'
- We have our Termly Parliamentary Tea on 11 June.
- The economist Andrew Dilnot will give a briefing and take part in a Q&A on 'What is a Christian approach to economics' at 7:30-9pm on 17 June.
- There are currently no events planned for Autumn due to the upcoming general election.

9. AOB

- There will be no National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast this year due to the general election. This also provides the opportunity to overhaul our data processing systems for the breakfast.