

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF  
THE ARCHCONFRATERNITY OF ST. STEPHEN,  
HELD ON SATURDAY 4<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2022,  
AT ST ALOYISUS CHURCH, SOMERS TOWN AND VIRTUALLY ON MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**PRESENT:**

Paul Briers (Honorary President) in the Chair, Fr. Keith Stoakes (Westminster Director), Canon PJ Smith (Portsmouth Director) Deacon Wayne O Reilly (Fulham) and Deacon Tony Barter (Radlett) and 40 members entitled to vote.

**APOLOGIES:**

Fr Dennis Touw (National Director), Canon Chris Matthews (Shrewsbury Director), Nicholas Tilbury (Westminster), Quoc Anh-Tran (Hon Treasurer), Michael Chute KSG (Brook Green), Patrick Taylor (St George's Cathedral, Southwark) John McCormack (Ingatestone)

**WELCOME:**

The Honorary President opened the meeting by welcoming all delegates present and those joining online.

**MINUTES:**

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2021 had been made available for members to download and read before the meeting began.

Michael O Leary requested the minutes to be corrected; Mr Ian Mulholland who seconded the Annual Report is from Preston not Chelmsford.

Their acceptance as a true record was proposed by Mr Jon Woodford (Ware) and seconded by Mr Michael O Leary (Immediate Past President) and signed by the Chairman.

**MATTERS ARISING:**

**ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS:**

The Central Council's Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 30th June 2022 had also been made available before the meeting began. The Chairman gave members a few minutes to re-read them and then asked members to approve the accounts for 2021-2022.

Vincent Shalvey (Clerkenwell) gave a short explanation of the accounts

Acceptance of the Annual Report and Accounts were then proposed by Mr Paul Briers (Honorary President) and seconded by William. All present voted in favour.

**NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S ADDRESS:**

Deacon Wayne O Reilly (Parish Deacon at Fulham) gave Fr Dennis Touw's address in his absence due to his role as President of Association Lourdes Pilgrimage Directors.

Fr Dennis spoke of the recently concluded St Bernadettes Relic Tour and commented on the vital role the Altar Servers played at the different tour venues and endeavoured to speak with them all when visiting the respective places. He offered thanks for their invaluable service.

Fr Dennis talked of the effects of the Covid Pandemic which are still felt. There are signs of renewal and growth however many of our Altar Servers are not yet returning. We need to engage with our parishes once again and present serving as a real option as young people are keen to serve.

Fr. Dennis thanked Fr. Keith Stoakes for all the work he does for the Guild in Westminster and beyond and that we are truly blessed to have the benefit of his enthusiasm, care and attention.

Fr Dennis also thanked members of the Central Council for their efforts to maintain the ongoing witness of the Guild in these trying days. He thanked those who have made it possible to have online meetings such as today and welcomed and thanked those for joining the meeting from afar. Online is an opportunity for more

people to be able to take an active part in the life of the Guild and those who may have been affected by the rail strikes.

On behalf of His Eminence and all Bishops and Priests and Deacons from all dioceses he congratulated and thanked all those in spite of the present and ongoing difficulties who have received medals of special recognition and they are so richly deserved.

Finally, Fr. Dennis thanked all parish servers for their loyal service in this country and abroad and it is from them that many vocations to the priesthood and religious life come forth.

### **ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL:**

Nominations were received for three elected places on the Central Council. Each nominee gave a short account of themselves before voting. The on-line votes were sent to Fr. Keith for collating

The Central Council for 2022-2023 will consist of:

Honorary President:	Mr Paul Briers (Workington)
Honorary Vice-President:	Ms. Catherine Burns (Wanstead)
Honorary Secretary:	Mr Marc Besford (Billingham)
Honorary Treasurer:	Mr Quoc Van-Tran (Limehouse)
Goods Manager:	Mr Vincent Shalvey (Clerkenwell)
Communications Officer	Paul Woodhouse (Blackpool) Co-opted

Members of the Council:

Miss Nicola Christmas (South Chingford)  
Mr Ian Mulholland (Preston)  
Mr Anthony Ogunseitán (Westminster Cathedral)  
Mr Michael O'Leary (Lincolns Inn Fields)  
Mr Philip Prior (Stamford Hill)  
Mrs Elizabeth Woodhouse (?)

Co-opted members:

Mr Stefan Wicek (Stamford Hill) – Web Master.  
Mr Jon Woodford (Ware)

Honorary Counsellors:

Mr Michael Chute (Brook Green)  
Mrs Rose Curry (Liverpool Cathedral)  
Mr Michael Moriarty (Kingsland)  
Mr Nicholas Tilbury (Westminster Cathedral)

All Dioceses are able to nominate representatives to attend Central Council meetings and those listed below have been regular attendees:

Brentwood: Catherine Burns (Wanstead)

### **APPOINTMENT OF THE EXAMINER FOR THE ACCOUNTS:**

The Chair proposed that Mr Alan Worsfold be appointed as Examiner for the Archconfraternity's Accounts. The proposal was carried unanimously.

### **MOVING THE GUILD FORWARD:**

Anthony Ogunseitán who is Chair of the Moving the Guild Forward working group gave an update. The team meet online so as to give access to members across the country. They are the energy behind the initiatives of the Central Council. There are several projects in the pipeline.

The Cardinal, when we met with him in May, has approved the Altar Servers Course initiative. There is the plan for a National Conference around the launch of the programme.

We now have the first ever President from outside of Westminster. The first Hon Secretary from outside of Westminster and we have the National Mass being rotated every other year outside of Westminster.

CYMFed is part of the initiative that we are trying to make sure we get involved with. To be closer to the servers, to be closer to those who really need to understand what the guild is doing.

If anyone has skills, expertise or knowledge to offer to move the Guild Forward, please don't hesitate to contact the President or Secretary.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS:**

The Annual Guild Dinner for Altar Servers: will be held in the Polish Club in Hammersmith on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

The Westminster Diocesan Mass for Altar Servers: will be held at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2023. 2:30pm

### **PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS:**

Mr Paul Briers (Honorary President) offered his own reflections of the last twelve months. We have a real part to play in forming tomorrows Catechists, Teachers. Priests. Serving is a lifelong vocational journey.

The President talked briefly about the Servers Certificate Initiative which is a vehicle for people to develop their faith and understanding. The serving ministry must transform, nourish and deepen our relationship with Jesus.

The President talked about Social Media accounts that are growing and people are engaging with them more by pictures of days out and medal presentations. The website is becoming more relevant for parish life with downloadable training planners, prayers and other resources.

The President confirmed that the Archconfraternity of St Stephen is now a member of CYMFed. Sitting around the table with 50 other members all working for the Youth Ministry. We are attending Flame 2023 at Wembley with 10,000 people attending, raising the profile of the Guild.

The President publicly acknowledged and thanked members of the Central Council for their commitment, generosity and support.

The President gave an introduction and welcomed Canon P J Smith the Guest Speaker.

### **GUEST SPEAKER:**

Canon P J Smith shared his reflections of his own faith journey sharing many stories about his First Holy Communion and then to being an Altar Server and receiving his Guild Medal, and the start of his vocation journey to give his life to the service of His Church. Gratitude offered to the adults who shepherded, guided and influenced his faith and who he is today, as a priest. Their work in formation had a huge impact.

He continued reflecting on Youth Ministry and through his role as Chair of CYMFed and the work of the Guild, we all talk in the same way, in language that comes from Pope Francis > Accompaniment. This gives us the opportunity to walk with Young People, side by side. They want to be valued; we are all the Body of Christ walking together, side by side. Young people have a place at the table.

They are a gift from God. We are called to have an open mind, an open ear, an open heart. Welcome that young person where they are, because that is where God wants them to be.

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

The President presented a certificate and offered thanks to Mr. Andrew Johnson from Colchester, who recently received a Gold Medal. The certificate acknowledges long term service and dedication to the Guild. Mr. Andrew Johnson offered a few words in response, sharing stories of his own faith journey as an Altar Server, a Parish Catechist and as a member of the Catenian Association.

A number of general questions were taking from the floor and online.

**CLOSE OF MEETING:**

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and there being no other business proper to an Annual General Meeting. The meeting was closed with praying 'Hail Mary' and singing a verse of the Guild Hymn led Fr Keith Stoakes. (Westminster Diocesan Director)

**Signed:**

**Printed:**

**Dated:**