

Society for the Study of Christian Ethics

Annual General Meeting,
5th September 2015, 4:00 pm
Cunningham Room, Westcott House, Cambridge

MINUTES

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Esther Reed, Joshua Hordern, Mike Mawson, and Brian Williams.

2. Minutes of 2014 SSCE AGM

The minutes were accepted unanimously by those present at the AGM.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. President's Report

SSCE president David Clough extended a warm welcome to those in attendance for the 2015 conference. He noted that the SSCE committee had met for a special mid-term session to discuss vision and strategy for the SSCE more broadly and a report summarizing this meeting was disseminated.

5. Secretary's Report

Jeremy Kidwell presented a secretary's report, which was a brief survey of a written report which was disseminated. He noted statistics with regard to our website and suggested that SSCE finances and membership were relatively stable, but that cash reserves were quite low (less than £1000). Kidwell recommended that the society consider developing cash reserves and highlighted several possible options for this listed in his report. In light of these low reserves, Jeremy noted how rates for conference had been rationalized to more accurately reflect the real costs passed on from Westcott for the various kinds of attendance and to continue our subsidy of PG attendance. He noted the topic for the 2016 conference and that we were in active conversation with *Societas Ethica* about co-hosting a conference for 2017. There was some discussion from the floor by society members. Susan Parsons suggested that it might be wise to approach potential benefactors in order to enhance SSCE reserves. Brian Brock noted that the society should be careful in constructing an approach or such an approach. Helen Dawes queried as to whether the society had considered taking on liability insurance and towards that end, Anna Rowlands suggested that the society might consider becoming a charitable incorporated organization.

6. Co-Opted Positions on Committee (PG Forum Conveners, Treasurer, and Conf. Secretary)

The committee was pleased to announce that they were co-opting Kevin Hargaden as Conference Secretary, Esther Chew and Nicholas Baumgartner as Postgraduate co-conveners and Hal St John as treasurer.

7. Committee Member elections

The committee proposed to the society that they re-nominate Margaret Adam for a second term to the SSCE committee. This was approved by unanimous vote from the floor.

8. Gender and Advancement Sub-Group Report

Margaret presented the findings of the Gender and Advancement Sub-group to the AGM and highlighted several features of the report which they tabled (see attached).

9. Feedback on 2015 Conference

Members were invited to comment on the first half of the conference. Guido de Graff affirmed the choice of clustering papers around a common theme for short paper sessions. Neil Messer agreed, noting that this approach had been successful in provoking conversation in the session he attended. Brian Brock inquired as to whether we might be able to set aside time for an evening workshop style presentation. On a similar note, Eric Wollaston asked whether we might host seminars with pre-distributed papers in a workshop style. John Perry also affirmed the new format and explained some of the rationale behind changes made to short paper sessions, particularly in trying to ensure good audiences for presenters and that delegates might be able to capture available funding to cover their participation.

10. Discussion of Future Conferences and Topics

There was some discussion of possible future conference themes. Towards 2016, which will have a theme of “Christians and Other Animals” Jeremy Kidwell noted that we have three confirmed plenary speakers: David Clough, Ellen Davis, and Carol Adams. In response to a question to Brian Brock about the plans for catering on that conference, Jeremy noted that the plan is to make meat an opt-in choice for the conference.

On the matter of the 2017 conference, David Clough noted that *Societas Ethica* had approached us to run a joint conference. Neil Messer raised the possibility of running a conference on Mind and Neuroethics, based on the possibility that it might work well as a collaboration with philosophers. Helen Dawes suggested the possibility of running a conference on International Relations and Christian Ethics. Nick Townsend suggested further a focus on Europe. Guido de Graf asked about suggestions left over from 2014 – Jeremy noted that they were on Christian Hope, Mind, Animals, and Money. Guido noted that the tradition tends to be to cycle between conceptual / thematic choices and wondered whether we should emphasize a non-topical choice, though Neal M. noted that hope and mind were both possibly conceptual / abstract themes. Nigel Biggar asked whether there was some memory of what happened in the collaboration of 2006, and David Clough noted that he had a firm recollection of the specific problems. Susan noted her enthusiasm for the theme of hope as a theme on which philosophers and European scholars might be able to meet us, perhaps in “startling ways”.

11. *Studies in Christian Ethics*

Susan Parsons highlighted several items from her editor's report, noting that the issues have been full, with special themed issues, and they have been able to exercise editorial scrutiny. Two editorial board members, Esther Reed and David Fergusson, have stepped down and they have been replaced by Brian Brock and Michael Northcott. SP also noted that SAGE is now putting up accepted articles as "online first" while they are waiting in the queue to be printed in specific issues. Susan also highlighted several features of the report from SAGE, particularly that there are discounted rates available to theological colleges and international institutions.

Susan noted that she and Brian Brock had revisited the possibility of starting a new series in Christian ethics with Anna Turton (of T&T Clark). The publisher's reaction was enthusiastic. Susan also noted that the discipline has moved in new and exciting directions since they had raised the possibility a number of years previously.

12. 'Sister' Societies (SCE and Societas Ethica)

DC noted that we discussed *SE* above and that Bill Schweiker had already brought greetings during his presidential address the previous day.

13. Postgraduate Forum

Anna Westin presented an oral report of the PG conveners. She noted that they had a successful forum in Edinburgh with guests that brought the discussion in new directions, including Mona Siddiqui and paper on social anthropology. They held a session on Fri 4 Sep with two speakers, Anna also noted that she and David are stepping down as PG conveners and excited to pass the baton to Nicholas Baumgartner and Esther Chew. David Clough thanked them both for their service and noted his enthusiasm for all the hard work undertaken by our PG conveners.

14. Other Business

David Clough noted that the SSCE committee had chosen at the mid-term meeting to affiliate with TRS-UK.

Peter Harvey raised a question about whether the SSCE might make some statement of support for Heythrop College. David Clough proposed that Jeremy Kidwell write a letter of support to show the SSCE and this was approved by unanimous consent.

David Clough closed by expressing his thanks to Jeremy Kidwell and Kevin Hargaden for their diligent work on behalf of the society.