



The Campaign for Homosexual Equality Minutes of the 2018 Annual Conference

Held at the London Friend Office on 24th June 2018

1. Conference Opening

- 1.1 The meeting was called to order at 2.30 pm with about 26 members and guests present. Apologies for absence were received from 5 members and guests.
- 1.2 Peter Burman and Peter Scott-Presland were appointed to chair the Conference sessions.
- 1.3 Peter Burman and Nettie Pollard were elected to form the Steering Committee.
- 1.4 Peter Scott-Presland and John Marshall were appointed to form the Appeals Committee.
- 1.5 Notification was received of one Emergency Motion - concerning the deportation of an LGBT+ CHE member to Nigeria.
- 1.6 Peter Burman expressed his thanks to Ross Burgess for all his work in preparing the Annual Report and arranging the Conference in this and recent years, and this sentiment was echoed by those present at the meeting.

2. CHE Annual General Meeting

2.1 Approval of the Minutes of the 2017 AGM

The Minutes, which had been circulated beforehand, were adopted unanimously.

2.2 Approval of the Statement of Accounts for 2017

The Treasurer informed the meeting that, due to awaiting bank statements, the Audit of the 2017 Accounts had not yet taken place; those statements had now been received, and did not affect the Accounts as presented, so auditing of the accounts would now take place. The Treasurer's Statement of the unaudited accounts for 2017 was adopted unanimously.

2.3 Approval of the Annual Report for 2017-2018

The Annual Report, which had been circulated beforehand, was adopted unanimously.

2.4 Reports and Updates:

- *Amiable Warriors* - Peter Scott-Presland reported that about 60%, some 300–400 pages, of Volume 2, which details the national situation from 1970-73, had been written. He stated that there had been various problems with advertising on Amazon and eBay, and that a proper marketing strategy was needed to promote sales of the book.
- LGBT History Festival - Nick Billingham and Ross Burgess had attended the Allan Horsfall lecture given by Tom Robinson in Liverpool during March 2018. The EC had agreed to continue funding the Lecture with a £500 donation.
- The LGBT Archive - Ross Burgess reported on the continued growth of the Archive, and invited people to volunteer to write articles for inclusion.
- Millivres-Prowler photographic archive - Peter Scott-Presland reported that, despite extensive investigation, it appears that there is now no trace of the archive still existing; the likely explanation, as stated in the current CHE Annual Report, is that there was a flood in the room where it was being stored and that it was severely damaged and subsequently disposed of. Peter expressed his disappointment at this, a feeling that was shared by the meeting.
- Gayle Newland - It was reported that Gayle had been imprisoned after a re-trial and that she was not

intending to appeal her sentence, though no reason for this has been given. Although her sentence was reduced from that imposed at the original trial, the feeling of the meeting was that it was still harsh and that the charge itself was unwarranted.

2.5 Questions to the Executive Committee:

None.

3. Invitation to join the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees

Ross Burgess informed the meeting that there would be an election to the EC in the weeks after the AGM and that anyone interested should fill in the Nomination form. It was stated that prospective candidates could attend Committee meetings to see how business is conducted. People could also be considered for co-optation onto the Committee later in the year if they wished to become an EC member.

4. Motion on the future of CHE

Motion, proposed by the Executive Committee:

This Conference, having noted the Executive Committee's view that the problem of maintaining CHE in its present form is becoming more and more difficult in the light of reduced membership and volunteer effort, agrees that the Executive Committee should explore possible alternative solutions, which may include seeking a form of partnership with another LGBT+ organisation.

Amendment, proposed by Michael Steed, Peter Scott-Presland and Ross Burgess:

Add at end:

... and which may also include the transformation of CHE into a grant-awarding trust. In regard to such a trust, the possibility of charitable status, including the option of creating two trusts, one charitable and one not, should be explored.

Opening the debate, Ross Burgess explained that the current EC members had come to a point where they had other pressing commitments and needed to put their efforts into those avenues. He felt that, due to this and the lack of volunteers, CHE could not transform itself back into a major campaigning organisation but it does have funds that could be used to support other LGBT+ organisations. He stated that much had been achieved by CHE in the past and there was more to be done in the way of campaigns. Ross suggested one way forward might be to combine with other group(s) like Friend, Consortium or Metro.

Nick Billingham asked whether CHE has a future; if so, what sort of future; as a membership organisation or not? He felt that CHE had an honourable past, and many members had loyally supported the organisation for decades. He noted that there was much campaigning going on through a plethora of new campaigning bodies, and that they would likely attract new volunteers. Nick feared that CHE might simply collapse without planning for the future.

Peter Scott-Presland suggested that the organisation could be re-formed into 2 trusts - one charitable, one not. Campaigning could still be carried on by one trust, which is allowable under Charity Commission rules. The other trust, perhaps needing only two members, could look after the funding and production of *Amiable Warriors*. Peter stated he was deeply distrustful of amalgamating with other organisations, fearing that CHE's funds would simply be absorbed by them. He stated that CHE needed to preserve the funds committed to producing *Amiable Warriors*.

Nick Billingham felt we would need to be careful of how a charitable trust was set up as Charity Commission rules and regulations were complicated. He was in favour of exploring the options, but thought a trust to administer CHE funds was a more viable option.

Peter Scott-Presland agreed with Nick. He suggested looking at how other grant-awarding trusts had been set up and to check through their rules/regulations to see how CHE could set up a similar trust.

Nick Billingham suggested that such a trust would not need a membership but could keep people informed through a mailing list. He was reluctant for CHE to combine with other organisations, feeling we would lose control of our objectives and funds. Nick stated that we needed advice from

people with expertise in such trusts to take the idea forward.

After this discussion, the Motion as proposed was carried with 14 votes For, and 4 abstentions. The Amendment was carried with 15 votes For.

5. Emergency Motion

Motion proposed by Nettie Pollard and Peter Scott-Presland:

A CHE member, who had been seeking asylum in this country due to his fear of persecution in Nigeria for his sexual orientation, has recently been deported to Nigeria. This Conference notes that LGBT+ people seeking asylum are being deported to countries where they would be at risk of physical harm and imprisonment due to their sexual orientation. This Conference believes that nobody should be deported from this country to a country where they would be in genuine fear of persecution, and calls on the Executive Committee to offer suitable support to anyone who finds themselves in such a position.

It was explained that the member, who originally entered the UK in 2005 as a student, and who for the purposes of his security and safety was not named in the meeting, was unexpectedly held in detention earlier in the year and then shortly afterwards deported to Nigeria. Both Nettie Pollard and Peter Scott-Presland tried to visit him in detention but found he had just been deported.

He had claimed asylum in 2015 on sexual orientation grounds fearing he would be in grave danger if deported to Nigeria; his claim had been refused. He appealed but the authorities had written to an out-of-date address informing him of his appeal date, which meant he missed the hearing (which refused his appeal in his absence) and he did not know of it until he was detained. He has since then had an appeal against that decision, which CHE funded, and has been granted leave for his original appeal to be reheard, though at present he would be unable to attend. There are efforts being made to get him returned to the UK for him to attend that hearing.

He is now in hiding in Nigeria and fearful for his life. In Nigeria, many people believe that LGBT+ people are possessed by evil spirits which results in persecution and harsh treatment.

Peter Tatchell has also been involved in offering advice and support to him, and was willing to campaign on his behalf. However, in consultation with him about the danger of publicity around such campaigning, he and Peter had agreed it would be best not to take any action.

After this discussion, the Motion as proposed was carried with 15 votes For.

6. Constitutional Amendments

None received.

7. Film Showing - *David is Homosexual*

The film, *David is Homosexual*, written and directed by the late Wilfred Avery, and produced by the Lewisham CHE group in the 1970s, was introduced by Ray Crossley, Wilfred's partner of 50 years and involved with the making of the film, and David Belton, who was the cameraman.

Ray and David talked about the making of the film and how it was received back in the 1970s. They said how pleased they were that it had been preserved by the BFI and that, after all this time, it was getting a new lease of life in being re-shown. The audience were very appreciative and thanked Ray and David for attending and reminiscing about the production.

8. Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 5.30 pm. Votes of thanks were given to the organisers and speakers.