Association for Promoting Retreats

Charity Reg. No.: 222458

c/o 2 Brookfield Cottages
The Strand
Lympstone
Exmouth EX8 5ES

Tel: (01395) 272243

Email: promoting.retreats@gmail.com

Minutes of APR Annual General Meeting held via 'Zoom' at 2pm on Thursday 5th November 2026

The meeting was chaired by Revd Cameron Butland, who opened it with prayer, before welcoming everyone, especially those who had joined from abroad.

Trustees Present: Cameron Butland (Chair), Alison Christian (Vice-Chair), Jason Cottingham, Rosemary Feuell, Dawn Harrison, Urs Mattmann, Stewart McCredie, Susan Parker (Treasurer), Ian Spencer

Others Present: Demelza Henderson (Administrator), Jane Arden, Janet Bone, David Cassian, Jane (and Jack) Franklin, Hilary Garraway, Maggie Kingston, Hermann Kuschke, Anne Lindley, Colin Lunt, Shelagh Norton, Ros Steel

1. **Apologies for Absence**

   Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani (President), Clare Dowding, Helen Evans, Laura Garnham, David Goodacre, Nick Helm, Claudine McCreadie, Elizabeth Mills, Rachel Ross Russell, Yvonne Walker, Glenda Webb, Donna Worthington

2. **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at St Columba's House, Woking, and via 'Zoom' on Thursday 23rd October 2025**

   These were signed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Matters Arising**

   There were no matters arising.

4. **Address from the APR Chair, the Revd Cameron Butland**

   Cameron began by thanking Bishop Guli (*in absentia*) for accepting the APR's invitation to become its new President, and for her great energy and enthusiasm towards the charity since this was announced in April. Cameron reported that APR Trustees recently met online with Bishop Guli, where she offered useful insights into how to 'promote retreats' to an increasingly ambivalent public, as well as suggestions for expanding the age and diversity of APR's membership, and encouraging APR's work with the wider Church of England to improve its messaging about retreats and spiritual accompaniment. Bishop Guli will join APR Trustees for a full day at their next annual residential.

Cameron then drew the meeting's attention to a number of points:

a) Firstly, in order to remain as open as it can be to anyone wishing to make a retreat, APR Trustees have proposed a short addendum to be included in the APR Constitution (see item 5 below). Likewise, to lend a clearer accountability to APR's charitable objectives and to help with future fundraising efforts, recipients of bursaries are now invited to submit feedback after their retreats. Cameron noted that the APR Bursary Fund continues to be well-used, with £7,507 being spent in the last financial year.

b) In response to recent conversations with members, APR is hoping to arrange a conference for Retreat Leaders in January 2028; APR Patron, Bishop John Stroyan, has offered to contribute to the planning and leadership of this.

c) Cameron congratulated Demelza Henderson on completing her sponsored Land's End to John O'Groats bike ride in the spring. Covering 1180 miles in 23 days, Demelza not only raised more than £7,000 for the APR Bursary Fund, but consolidated relationships with 20 different retreat house wardens and retreat leaders along the way.

d) In a break from tradition, the APR's biennial Spirituality Conference in April opened its doors to representatives of diocesan wellbeing teams, as well as to spirituality advisers and those involved in coordinating diocesan spiritual direction networks. With inspiring keynote talks from Professor Chris Cook, the conference was fully-booked, attracting 40 delegates from 26 different dioceses; the feedback afterwards was overwhelmingly positive. Planning is already underway for the next conference, to be held at Launde Abbey in May 2028.

e) Looking ahead, Cameron was delighted to highlight three exciting events in 2027:

   i) The APR Spring retreat, to be led by Diarmuid O'Murchu at Holland House in Worcestershire from 16-18 April. Cameron expressed his thanks to Ian Spencer for facilitating the introductions for this, and encouraged members to attend.

   ii) A day of Christian meditation in central London, jointly led by Bishop Guli and Chris Whittington (of the School of Contemplative Life), on Saturday 22 May.

   iii) A Richard Rohr-inspired autumn retreat at Foxhill Retreat House in Cheshire from 9-11 November, led by APR Trustees Urs Mattmann and Ian Spencer.

f) Noting that Ian Spencer is not standing for re-election as a Trustee, Cameron expressed his grateful thanks for all that Ian has contributed to APR in the last three years, and wished him a peaceful and enjoyable retirement.

g) Finally, Cameron welcomed two new Trustees to the APR board, Rosey Feuell and Jason Cottingham, and thanked Rosey Feuell and Urs Mattmann for representing the APR with the *Retreat Association*. He also thanked Susan Parker for her thorough and committed work on the APR finances, Demelza Henderson for her conscientious administrative work, the rest of the Trustees for their cheerful engagement with the work of the charity, and all APR members for their ongoing support and prayers.

5. **Addendum to APR Constitution**

Since the APR wishes to remain open to everyone involved in retreat-taking (ie retreat house wardens/directors, retreat leaders and individual retreatants), and to balance some of the very traditional Anglican language of the existing document, Trustees proposed a short addendum to be included into the APR Constitution, namely:

> *In the light of traditional Anglicanism, APR Trustees believe that in the twenty-first century, retreats should be open to all, irrespective of their church affiliation, their religious beliefs, or none. APR welcomes everyone to share in retreats, and in supporting the ministry of the APR.*

The addendum was proposed by Ian Spencer, seconded by David Cassian, with all in favour. The changes will be highlighted on the APR website as a news item.

6. **Election, Re-election and Co-option of Trustees**

a) **Election of Jason Cottingham and Rosey Feuell as new Trustees**
Jason and Rosey affirmed their willingness to stand, and were duly elected as Trustees (proposed by Stewart McCredie, seconded by Susan Parker, all in favour).

b) **Re-election of Dawn Harrison and Urs Mattmann as Trustees**
Dawn and Urs also affirmed their willingness to continue with APR, and were duly re-elected as Trustees for another three year term (proposed by Alison Christian, seconded by Stewart McCredie, all in favour).

c) **Co-option of Susan Parker as Treasurer**
Susan confirmed her willingness to continue as APR Treasurer, and was duly re-elected (proposed by Dawn Harrison, seconded by Alison Christian, all in favour).

d) **Co-option of Stewart McCredie as a Trustee**
Stewart affirmed his willingness to be co-opted as an assistant APR Treasurer, and was duly elected (proposed by Dawn Harrison, seconded by Alison Christian, all in favour).

Cameron expressed his thanks to all the new and re-elected Trustees, particularly thanking Stewart for offering to continue to work with APR after his recent retirement. APR Vice-Chair, Alison Christian, also proposed an extra vote of thanks to Susan for her ongoing and reliable oversight of the APR's finances.

7. **Adoption of Trustees' Annual Report**

This was adopted without amendment (proposed by Stewart McCredie, seconded by Rosey Feuell, all in favour).

8. **Adoption of Trustees' Accounts, for the year ending 31st March 2026**

Apologising for the late distribution of the Report and Accounts, Susan Parker reminded the meeting that APR's finances work on a two-yearly cycle, reflecting the rhythm of the Spirituality Conferences. She noted a total income this year of £46,898 and an expenditure of £42,706. £10,000 was withdrawn from the CCLA in September 2025, leaving investments there standing at £93,247, which, when added to cash at

the bank (held in both the Current Account and Bursary Fund), gives a total asset value of £109,925. This has resulted in a small overall net loss for the year of £3,293.

Susan noted that in anticipation of CCLA investment reserves falling below £100,000, APR Trustees commenced a comprehensive financial review in July 2025 and developed a five-year Business Plan to strengthen APR's long-term sustainability. It was agreed that, until 2028, withdrawals from investments would be limited to supporting the Bursary Fund and general running costs, and external charities and other grant-making bodies would be approached to help maintain APR's charitable work. In addition, the APR Bursary Fund would be more closely monitored to provide feedback for potential new donors to the Fund.

Susan concluded by reporting that APR Trustees have diligently taken stock of the current state of APR finances and developed a workable Business Plan, and so can now look forward to the future with a renewed confidence. Cameron thanked Susan once more, especially for advising Trustees to face up to some important financial issues. It was agreed that a brief summary of the progress of the Business Plan will accompany the 2026-27 Report and Accounts.

The Accounts were duly adopted (proposed by Stewart McCredie, seconded by Rosey Feuell, all in favour).

9. **To approve the re-appointment of Messrs Duncan & Toplis as the Independent Examiner until the end of the next Annual General Meeting**

Given the repeated last-minute receipt of the APR's accounts in recent years, and the stress this has caused for Susan Parker and Demelza Henderson, it was agreed not to reappoint Duncan & Toplis as Independent Examiners. Susan will seek tenders for a new accountant for APR, who will be appointed by Trustees at their next regular meeting (proposed by Cameron Butland, seconded by Susan Parker, all in favour). In answer to a question from Shelagh Norton, this will not mean any gap in the provision of accountancy services for the APR. The new accountancy firm will be announced in the 2027 Spring newsletter.

10. **Any Other Business**

a) Following a question from Rosey Feuell, Demelza Henderson confirmed that APR supports applications for membership from retreat houses of all sizes and denominations.

b) Having been an APR member for many years, Jane Arden expressed her thanks for a most enjoyable and accessible meeting, and overseas members, Hilary Garraway and Hermann Kuschke offered their grateful thanks that the meeting was conducted online so they could attend.

c) Alison Christian thanked Cameron Butland once more for his conscientious leadership of APR, describing him a 'gift to APR'.

11. **Date of the next Annual General Meeting**

2pm on Thursday 21st October 2027, via Zoom.