

Chair's Report, June 2018-19  
Neuendettelsau, 6 June, 2019

Introduction

From my first experience of CEUC in Ariano, Italy in 2014, I have been a great believer in our fellowship. I have become convinced that any sentence which begins "A University Chaplain will always do/say/believe..." is untrue. The rich variety of people and forms of ministry is (almost!) unbelievable, and I marvel at our diversity.

And so, when Anette Brandt announced she was leaving to take on a church position, I was absolutely delighted, if a tad daunted, to assume the position of Chair.

The past year has been good, although altering our Constitution has not been without its trials – just ask Janning & Anette! However, I hope the work your Board has done since Dublin has been worthwhile.

Personnel

Board members for the year 2018-19 have been as follows:

1. David Hutchison (Chair)
2. Beáta Gombkötő (Vice Chair)
3. Janning Hoenen (Secretary)
4. Risto Korhonen (Treasurer)
5. Laura Mäntylä
6. Lene Crone Neilsen
7. Günther Sturms

Meetings

Your Board has had five Skype meetings, usually lasting just over the hour mark, umpteen sub-group meetings to deal with Constitutional changes and the faith identity issue, and we had a three-day spell here in Neuendettelsau in September 2018. During this last meeting we visited the various locations we will be going to during our conference and we met with the Local Host Committee to discuss the programme for the week. We also attended a short worship service within the gorgeous Chapel of Augustana Seminary.

Issues

- a) The issue that has undoubtedly occupied the most amount of time has been the changes to and revisions of the Constitution. The former regional groupings was showing its age, there was no mention of our aspiration to be as inclusive and diverse as possible, plus we are seeking to clarify our faith identity.
- b) By May of last year, GDPR issues were closed and there have been few problems as a result of these changes to our holding of personal information.
- c) Monthly updates on this year's conference from Janning as well as updates on the global IACHE conference from Günther.
- d) Financial issues have been few. The CEUC bank account has been successfully transferred from Copenhagen to Tampere, and the account is looking very healthy having had two conferences (Aberdeen 2017 and Dublin 2018) generating a surplus.
- e) We discussed whether, and how, we could make funds available to CEUC members to attend relevant conferences that they might otherwise miss owing to financial constraints. We will continue to discuss the correct procedures for such a scheme.
- f) Most recently we have been assessing how best to host next year's International Association of Chaplains in Higher Education (IACHE) conference to be held in Sheffield, 15-19 June, 2020. This will be an ongoing conversation with the Local Planning team and the Pan-European Strategy Group.

### Concluding Remarks

I still feel very naïve when it comes to European University Chaplaincy work. My home in Aberdeen is relatively isolated, and I am a University employee, not a church-supported minister on campus. This also exacerbates the feelings of being out-of-touch with many of you, my European friends.

However, I believe strongly that what unites us is far, far greater than any geographical or employee status divide. We all seek to befriend, nourish, support, challenge and share with staff and students, regardless of need, colour, faith, gender or sexuality. Our locations, our offices, our programmes and our timetables vary enormously, and I hope these differences will motivate us all to strive for unity not uniformity. We are blessed, we are rich, we hold our own truths but seek to connect not convert.

Please do all you can to listen before talking this week, although I fully appreciate if we all take this literally, it'll be a very quiet and uninspiring week! So please, listen to the stories others tell, listen to the experiences of others, and relish having so many colourful characters together for a whole week! But share too your troubles or feuds; we will grow stronger and more able to help each other, the more we can connect.

