Annual General Meeting of COIN held on 31 May 2014
in Bellie Church Hall, The Village Square, Fochabers, Moray, Scotland.

As is our custom, we gathered an hour or so before the start of the meeting to catch up with old friends as we enjoyed the tea, coffee and delicious cakes and biscuits provided by our hosts, Jeff and Lynne Lowndes.

We were invited in to the church proper, where we were treated to a splendid talk by the Revd Alison Meighan, Minister in the Bellie Kirk in the Church of Scotland. She gave a lively and comprehensive account of the history of the church, including how it fitted in to the surrounding network of churches. She introduced us to the very fine new stained glass windows at the front of the church, explaining their significance within the church's story. We are most grateful for her time, her energy and her interest in our work.

We then repaired to the garden behind the Hall for the traditional AGM photograph.

Present: Andrew Foulsham (in the Chair), Susan Cooper, Meg Gilley, Liz Jennings, Alan Jesson, Andrew Leach, Jeff Lowndes, Lynne Lowndes, Peter Muir, Ron Newsham, Brian Poulson, Roger Stokes, Chris Wright, Jill Wright and Sheila Wright.

1. We were **welcomed** by Chairman Andrew Foulsham and our **Opening Worship** was led by Jeff Lowndes, ably assisted by Ruth Foulsham who lit the candles and Sheila Wright who played the keyboard. The text of the service can be found at Annex A.

2. **Apologies** for absence had been received from Sallie Bassham, Peter Bowes, Stephen Carter, Ian Clark, Martin Dale, Brian Elliott, Gordon Giles (twice!), ?Nick Gomersall, John Hartley (twice!), William Howard, Martin Joss, Simon Kershaw, Peter Lear, Sandy Lear, Clem Lewis, Andy McQueen, Ryk Parkinson, Brian Poulson, Carolynn Pritchard, Alison Fisher Smart, Mike Todd, Tony Whatmough and John Winterbotham.

3. The Minutes of the 2013 AGM had previously been published. One small error had been amended. There were no other errors or omissions and it was proposed by Peter Muir, seconded by Jeff Lowndes and agreed unanimously that they should be signed as a correct record.

4. Matters arising: Susan Cooper said that she had been very pleased that the talk about cleaning up the computer had been included in the Minutes and she had used it to good effect! Otherwise, there was nothing arising which would not come up during the meeting.-

5. Report from the Chair for the year ending 31 December 2013: Andrew Foulsham's report can be found at Annex B.

Comment was made that the tone of the lists has been much easier to deal with this year. Also, we do all come from very different places, with very different views – but we are generally accepting of the other's point of view.

6. Financial accounts for year ending 31st December 2013 can be found at Annex C. Peter Muir reminded the meeting that he had taken over from Gordon Giles at the last AGM. As usual, there had been very little activity! Because of modern banking requirements, we need to set up a new bank account, necessitating a new set of forms before we can implement the changes agreed at the last AGM. It was proposed by Alan Jesson, seconded by Susan Cooper and agreed unanimously that we accept the Accounts. Roger Stokes voiced the thanks of the meeting to Peter for his work.

7. Other Reports:

7.1 The Electoral Roll Officer, Alan Jesson, had previously published his report and the text can be found at Annex D. After altering the title of the Report to reflect the fact that it was the report for 2013 (rather than 2011) Alan noted that the financial year ran from 1st Jan to 31st Dec, whereas his runs from AGM to AGM. Paragraph 3concerned the problem caused by bounces occasioned by the absence of a workable email address. One solution would be to write to those members, but a) this would cost financially and b) we have no guarantee that the member still lives at the address we have. Comment was made that we can be found via Google or other search methods and that a condition of membership is having a valid email address. Peter Muir suggested that we put the bounces on a list of Associate Members, publicising this by means of the website and asking for comments. This was agreed. The Roll would reopen after this meeting with 452 members listed, which continues the gentle downward trend in our membership.

Paragraph 4 asked "what does membership mean?" We agreed to speak about this in the freer discussion after lunch.

Alan was thanked for his work on membership and congratulated particularly on the number of CompuServe addresses he has managed to track down!

7.2 Technical Report. The text of Chris Wright's report can be found at Annex E. Andrew Foulsham commented that as ever, however smoothly things seem to run, there is always a lot going on under the surface and Chris was thanked for his work.

8. Election of Officers: Jill Wright stood down as Secretary, having served a three year term. According to the Constitution, she was eligible to stand for re-election. Her re-election as Secretary was proposed by Andrew Leach, seconded by Meg Gilley and agreed unanimously.

9. Election of one third of the Executive: John Hartley and Simon Kershaw had reached the end of their three-year term. There were two nominations. Simon Kershaw had been nominated by Meg Gilley and seconded by Andrew Leach; Roger Stokes was nominated by Sheila Wright and seconded by Jeff Lowndes. Another name was mentioned but he is not actually a member; he has shown an interest and a willingness to serve and has sent a cheque to the Membership Secretary! We agreed unanimously that Simon and Roger were elected to serve for three years and that the Exec would consider whether to co-opt a third person.

10. To appoint an independent examiner for the Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2013. Susan Cooper was nominated by Alan Jesson, seconded by Peter Muir and agreed unanimously.

11. What next? How do we serve the churches we are in now? How can COIN best serve the membership?

COIN was set up to help churches use the internet properly. Alan Jesson gave an example of a website using yellow writing on a red background. He suggested that part of COIN's remit might be to comment on how this kind of thing might be improved – dissemination of best practice. We could become the COIN equivalent of the Ship of Fools' "Mystery Worshipper".

Peter Muir suggested putting up a survey asking what people like about COIN and what they don't like? Peter suggested just 3 or 4 questions; he offered to analyse the resultant data.

Do we keep email lists or move to a message board debate? Is email dead? Young people use Facebook or other social media, rather than email. Email is now being used more for official communication, rather like the OHMS brown envelope.

Email is a different way of communication – it's not really "social media".

COIN now is a hugely different animal from what it was originally. A number of COIN members are ignorant of the more modern social media.

Meg Gilley uses Twitter which is then transferred to Facebook; she looks at it perhaps a couple of times a day and she pointed out that you can't follow everything on Twitter.

Susan Cooper uses Facebook for General Synod stuff, for other, church related communication and for family stuff.

The point was made that one needs to be careful what is put on Facebook – for all sorts of reasons. Post nothing which you are not happy to have in the (very) public domain.

There is an option available to set up Open and Closed groups on Facebook. Google Plus also allows ways of communicating with different groups.

Ron Newsham had very helpfully prepared a Lightning Talk on Social Media which he delivered at this point. Ron is a very experienced used of social media and what follows is a summary of the points he made.

Each element does a different job and has a different purpose. Why use each different medium? He made the comparison between The Times and a BBC 3 thirty second news bulletin. **Twitter** gives a fast response but you have no guarantee it reaches the required audience. It's a quick disseminator of information. **Facebook** does a similar job but without the character limitation: some of the content is social interaction, some is just "a cute cat". Conversation is shared and commented upon – but it is very public! Both Facebook and Twitter have to be used with the assumption that everything written is in the public domain. You can download a file of everything you have written on Facebook – but so can other people, like advertisers. Use of a closed group makes it harder, but still doesn't preclude use of your data. On all of these systems, one can use alternative aliases. **LinkedIn** is an example of a professional medium; some people use it effectively, for example to get your CV into the system. It is essentially a major networking tool. Again, you have to set the safety and publicity parameters you want.
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The meeting then broke for a delicious lunch which had been provided by Jeff and Lynne. During lunch, we were delighted to welcome Bishop Mark Strange, who is Bishop of the Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness, in the Scottish Episcopal Church. He had generously given up some of his precious time to come and speak about the life in the church in his Diocese – which is hugely different from any of the Dioceses represented at the AGM! The main points of his very full and very interesting talk can be found at Annex F.

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After a suitable break, the meeting resumed the discussion which had preceded lunch.

The Chairman said that it was very encouraging to hear how the Scottish Episcopal Church has weathered its challenges and that it provided a good example for us to follow. He quoted a tweet from COIN member Richard Barrett: "Interesting challenges in social media. How do we ensure those interfacing with COIN in this way are reasonably enfranchised?"

Discussion started with answering the question "What does COIN membership mean?" At present, it means those with an active email address who have paid a one-off subscription of £5.00. Maybe we need to rephrase the question: what is the purpose of COIN? Over the last 20 years, we've moved on a very long way from handholding for those first forays into the church's use of computers. Perhaps we should now look at offering advice: on building websites; some parish sites and some Diocesan sites are good and some are anything but! Or the use of Skype to broadcast a baptism service or the kind of technology which can display hymns. How should we set up a Facebook account – and why? What are the pitfalls?

We need to know the audience we are working with and that what we are offering is hitting the right target. Do we need a series of stepped guides: beginner, intermediate and experienced? How many Diocesan websites have a link to COIN? Should we set up a mystery visitor to parish and Diocesan websites? Perhaps Peter Muir's questionnaire might ask some of these questions.

Andrew Foulsham offered the possibility of a session about whether our News Sheets are breaking the Data Protection Act. Because of time constraints, we agreed to put this as a discussion thread on General, possibly following it up with something for the website.

Chris Wright encouraged us to use the "Add a comment" facility on the web pages; perhaps we might set up a "Mystery website visitor" page, which will have an "Add a comment" button to allow for rebuttal and/or asking for help in righting the wrong.

Contact details: all churches should have their postcode prominently displayed.

Andrew Foulsham will begin to put together a presentation on information security. Peter Muir will take responsibility for putting up a survey about what people want from COIN. Can people send ideas to him by September 1st.

Our final discussion centred on where is the AGM for 2015 would be held? Our policy has been to spread the venues. We also need to ensure wifi access if at all possible. Andrew Foulsham suggested Abingdon, where the building project is now complete and transport facilities are good. We suggested that the AGM for 2016 could possibly be in Leeds (Tony Whatmough country). Exec is to sort the dates for these meetings.

Annex A: Opening Worship, led by Jeff Lowndes

MORNING PRAYER AT THE COIN AGM 2014 IN FOCHABERS

We sing together:-

Take, oh take me as I am; summon out what I shall be,

set your seal upon my heart, and live in me.

PRAYERS WITH CANDLES FOR THE COIN AGM

These <u>unlit</u> candles represent the modern world in which we live and work and the call we have to take the Good News of Christ to that world. They are the media, the computer, the web and the technology which we can use to help in that work. Let us melt the wax that represents the problems and difficulties in that work, and our fears and doubts, as we struggle with how we may do this to the best effect.

<u>We light the 1st Candle</u> - it represents God, whose light and warmth reaches out and enfolds us - the God we worship, who loves us and gives us life.

<u>We light the 2nd Candle</u> - it represents Jesus who is at the centre of our life, and to whom we may call when doubts and fear trouble us, who commands us to go forth in his name.

<u>We light the 3rd Candle</u> - it represents the Holy Spirit who is with us, and in us, and who gently guides us.

<u>We light the 4th Candle</u> - it represents both the early church and the church today, new ways to be church and the need to hold them together in tension - taking that which is good and true and a gift from God.

<u>We light the 5th Candle</u> - it represents Coin, shining a light to guide others, to help us reach out using technology, taking knowledge and experience to and through our churches in mission and in ministry.

In the light of these candles we pray for guidance at our meeting today, that what we say and do will be relevant and in accordance with God's will, and that we will leave here refreshed and enthused to increase our efforts and be to others that which our title speaks of - Christians on the Internet.

We sing together:-

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer;   when I call, answer me.

O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer;   come and listen to me. *(repeat).*

Amen.

Annex B: Chair's Report:

It is very tempting to begin this report in the manner of Garrison Keillor's Lake Woebegone Days... "It had been a quiet year on the COIN lists..." but I think that would be to miscast ourselves and underestimate all that COIN is and does.

Whilst it is true that the volume of traffic on the lists is markedly lower than 10 years or even 5 years ago, I feel that there is a certain quality & depth of the postings today that – in years gone by – may have been simply drowned out by the general chatter.

I take part in a number if mailing lists for work and for my other interests, and I must say that COIN is one of the most accepting and supportive. I came to these lists some 16 or more years ago expecting to offer my technical knowledge – such as it was – to churches & other Christians. Today I find that the support and prayerfulness of the list members is something amazing. It's a place where members can admit to doubts, finding it hard to worship or having struggles with depression I, myself, have benefited so much from the advice and support if people on the lists as I searched for appropriate schooling for Ben, my son. We haven't neglected the technical advice, though – and not just in IT and on the technical list! Have you seen the quality of some of the answers on the Music list recently? So, would I change the COIN of today for that of 5 or 10 years ago? I don't think so!

So, to all the contributors, commentators, prayers and advisers on the lists, I thank you. You make COIN what it is.

There are times when the Chair's report is – inevitably – a bit like a groom's speech at a wedding. There are so many thank-yous to get in!

Firstly, I should thank Chris, our "web servant" as he so appositely puts it. Without him we wouldn't have our lovely & easy to update website, or mailing lists that run so well. I try to give him a hand once in a while – but I feel as if I'm only handing the spanner to the master mechanic or chief engineer!

And Jill, our Secretary, who keeps me on the straight and narrow and ensures that minutes & notices of meetings are all done to time.

Peter bravely took on the role of Treasurer after Gordon's many years of faithful service – thank you both!

And Alan has done sterling work as our Membership Secretary for more years than I have been a member. I'm always amazed at his perseverance & attention to detail Thank you for serving us in this way.

And to the "wise heads" of the Exec – who have been unstinting in their advice to me & steering us collectively through some occasionally tricky waters. Thank you for your wisdom & ability to gee me on when I flag a bit, or rein me in if I'm getting carried away.

In particular, I must thank all the Exec for their wise advice at a rocky point last year. The run-up to this AGM has been notable for the absence of one of our more vociferous members. H took himself off our mailing lists part way through last year in response to what he saw as censorship. The position that I took, after seeking the advice of the Exec, was that it wasn't the content of the postings, but the manner in which they were made which we took exception with. As the member concerned took exception to this, he unsubscribed from the lists. Any suggestion that this was in

response to a centrally dictated liberal agenda is very far from the truth. COIN has always drawn members from all parts of the British churches - as is its brief – and the suggestion of an agenda from one particular tradition would be to suggest a level of theological sophistication that I, certainly, don't possess! However, this is all water under the bridge – I heard from him at Christmas in very friendly terms, and I wish him well in all that he does.

And finally, as Alan has indicated (or will indicate!) in his report, we need to have some serious discussions about COIN. What does "membership" mean when most members joined over 10 years ago when the internet was very different? What should COIN be doing? Are we happy going along as we do now, & risk a slow decline into irrelevance? There is one thing I know – the ideas will need to come from you, the members. We need to know what you want COIN to do, and how we can enable you to do what you're called to do in the internet age.

I suggest that we discuss more of this in the "future of COIN" section towards the end of the meeting.

But before I end can I particularly extend my thanks to Jeff & Lynne for hosting us and arranging what I am sure we all agree has been a particularly memorable AGM. Thank you, Jeff & Lynne!

Annex C: Accounts for the year 2013:

CHRISTIANS ON THE INTERNET (COIN)

Annual Accounts for the period 1st January to 31st December 2013

Income and Expenditure Account

Income	2013	2012	Expenditure	2013	2012
Subscriptions @ £5	£5.00	£10.00	Web hosting	£91.50	£35.00
			AGM Hall Hire		£105.00
			Flowers for host		£40.00
Total income	£5.00	£10.00		£91.50	£180.00
Excess of expenditure/income				-£86.50	-£170.00

Assets

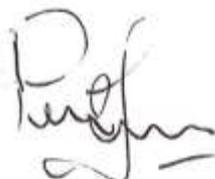|				2013	2012
Bank balance brought forward				£1,145.54	1315.54
Movement in funds in the year				-£86.50	-£170.00
Bank balance carried forward				£1,059.04	£1,145.54

Notes to the accounts:
Expenditure in 2012 included costs for hall hire in 2012 and 2013
Web hosting costs for 2013 comprise
(i) domain hosting for the period 01-Sept-12 to 31-Mar-14 @ £45.00 p.a.: £67.50
(ii) mail list hosting for the period 01-Mar-13 to 01-Mar-14 @ £24.00 p.a.: £24.00

Reverend Peter Muir
Honorary Treasurer

Date: 24ᵗʰ May 2014

Annex D: Electoral Roll Officer's Report:

1. For the second year in succession no new members were enrolled. There were five removals from the Roll; two by death and three by resignation. One of those resigning was a founder member, Andrew Black, and I should like to formally note his enthusiasm and energy in the early days of COIN. In accordance with our Constitution the Electoral

Roll was closed for revision with effect from noon on Monday 12th May 2014. Following the closure and revision the Roll will reopen after this meeting with 452 members listed, again following a downward trend. There are now 79 names on the former members list

2. During the year I have traced 31 address changes for Anglican clergy and been given a further 11 from reminders published on the mailing lists. I still have 125 outstanding 'bounces' which I am at the moment unable to trace, some from Anglican clergy whose email addresses in *Crockford* remain the ones which bounce. On the positive side I have now identified all but one of the old Compuserv addresses, but sadly, apart from one who has not responded, I cannot trace the current address of the remainder.

3. There continues to be a discrepancy between the number I have enrolled on the membership database and those on the ANNOUNCE mailing list which is, effectively our means of communicating with all the members. This is partly due to the effect of the bounces which cause people to be removed from the ANNOUNCE list. In the absence of a workable email address I am prepared to send out letters of enquiry to the postal addresses I have registered but I have two caveats about that. One is the expense: now I no longer have parochial support I should have to charge not only for postage but stationery as well. Secondly there is no guarantee that the member still resides at that address. I should be grateful for guidance from the meeting.

4. The meeting may also wish to consider whether, in view of the fact that our mailing lists are open to non-members not only members, whether or not we wish to maintain a membership at all.

Alan F. Jesson

28th May 2014

Annex E: Technical Report

Chris had almost nothing to report…

Following suggestions, the Exec debated the insertion of a short tag at the beginning of each list subject: [Gen], [Tech], [CofE] and so on. Opinions were very divided but, on a vote, it was decided to implement these.

Due to a significant dose of inertia, I did not do this immediately. I then rather waited till someone said, "OI! This was decided, so do it!" The cry did not come and I did not do it. So the status quo remains.

We have suffered from spam. This is not spam arriving onto the server (where it is fairly easily sorted and deleted) but spam coming out through the server. Two reasons for this. One is that trusty Gabriel, the server on which all of my domains are hosted, is getting a bit elderly and was not set up quite as securely as it might have been. The big, real reason though is that too many domains were being hosted there – and by too many, I really mean all of the ECS domains. The Sudanese treat things like security and passwords with a delightful lack of attention! As a result, Gabriel was blacklisted by most of the agencies. In particular, all BTInternet customers stopped getting mails through Gabriel.

The solution has been to set up three new servers, to set them up securely and to reserve one of them for Sudan alone. So Chamuel, Raziel and Jophiel were born. Getting these all set up – and getting Mailman installed and making sure that the security certificates are in place has taken a lot of time, so the transfer has not been quick. Recently, other priorities (such as preparations for our arrangements as the Tour de France passes around the walls of our churchyard) have intervened. So COIN is still on Gabriel. Moving the lists SHOULD be painless and invisible to all. But we are talking computers here…

Annex F: Main points of the talk given by the Bishop Mark Strange, the Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness in the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Bishop Mark told us that the Diocese is one of the seven dioceses of the Scottish Episcopal Church and part of the world-wide Anglican Communion. Its origins go back to St Ninian and the twelfth century and its people are celebrating 900 years of the Diocese. It has been in existence in one form or another since the foundation of the church by Margaret, Queen of Scots.

Bishop Mark said that the Scottish Episcopal Church exists largely because Scottish Bishops refused to support William of Orange and episcopacy was abolished from the Scottish church. The SEC does not have its foundation from the Church of England. Rather, as the Bishops walked, so did many of the congregations and the SEC was born. From Culloden, the church was under penal authority for about 90 years. But instead of dying out, they grew to be the third strongest church except that we cannot be in the presence of the Queen, who in Scotland is a Presbyterian!

Bishop Mark has seven fulltime clergy spread over a huge area: their parishes are as big as English Archdeaconries. Bishop Mark explained the effect this has on parish ministry and on lay involvement. The wealth is on the East coast, where the institutions are, but the people are in the West, where they live. This makes for a very transient, itinerant Bishop's life. Communications are via travel, telephone, Skype (where broadband allows), website and video-conferencing. The Diocese is working with BT to ensure that no-one has to travel perhaps hundreds of miles to get to a meeting.

There is no Archbishop in Scotland and has not been since the 1700s. The seven Bishops in the SEC operate as a college, with a "Primus inter Pares" elected by the Bishops to chair and to take the lead role in liturgy.

Finally, the Bishop told us that the Referendum on September 18th (to determine whether Scotland will leave the United Kingdom and go it alone) will have a significant effect on the future of the SEC.