

AGM 2022

General Council Reports

Tom Packer-Stucki – Trustee and Convenor of General Council

Hi movement! It's been a rather busy year for both myself and General Council overall. Now that time feels a little more real again, I should have an easier job summarising everything compared with last year...

It's been wonderful that we have been able to enjoy life more normally again, and this (SCM) year started with our National Gathering. It was a beautifully healing time of meeting friends face-to-face for the first time in what felt like a long while. A highlight for me was our visit from Ruth of the Iona Community; it was great to meet her and to discuss a future partnership with Iona and SCM, watch this space!

Later in the autumn came around the first GC meeting with our newly elected representatives from the 2021 AGM - it's always great to welcome new members, and as I'm sure you'll read in these reports, they're all doing a great job so far. We spent some time during this first meeting familiarising our new members with SCM, and how decision-making and responsibility works amongst portfolio-holders and trustees.

Recruitment, as always, has been a big theme of my year. Though I wasn't involved in either of the Faith in Action roles, it's been wonderful to see Lizzie and Alana settle in so well and achieve so much in such a short space of time. I was involved in the shortlisting and interviews for our Movement Administrator, Finance and Fundraising Administrator and Fundraiser roles, and I'm pleased to say that John, Jen and Sophie respectively, have made an excellent start. It was a concern that the staff team was a little over-stretched at the beginning of this year, so it's a big relief for us all to see a few more hands on deck. SCM is still running with fewer hours and resources since our restructure, and we will soon be completing our new strategy which will help us focus on particular areas of importance with our reduced capacity.

I can't write an AGM report for 2022 without at least a brief mention of our 'Christians Support the (conversion therapy) Ban' letter. I was involved just a little in the writing of the letter, and it's been amazing to see the work of Naomi, Lisa and Ruth (as well as our progressive Christian partners) in getting it out there. We accumulated more signatories than that *other* letter, which made me immensely proud of our work. Of course, the government has broken its promise of a full ban on conversion therapy - excluding trans people from legal protection. I wrote a statement on behalf of SCM about this last week, and we will be finishing a plan for campaigning against this U-turn imminently. It goes without saying that we will not be won-over by the government's tactics of division. Your movement will always stand with its trans members and campaign for their rights both in the church and in the rest of society.

Finally, looking to the future, there are some exciting things coming down the way! The aforementioned strategy will also come hand-in-hand with a new vision statement, refreshed and refocused this year thanks to the hard work of GC members. It's been great to attend some of the meetings so far. We are also putting plans into place for 'Honest Church', a new campaign to encourage Churches to be more open about their position on LGBTQ+ inclusion and affirmation, more to come soon. The last thing to mention is that Naomi and I have started work on ensuring GC is never without particularly important portfolios and representation. Most important to me is the classification of at least one LGBTQ+ and BAME/GEM representative as essential for SCM. We will be putting more plans into place to ensure we are never without these roles, but you will have seen some changes to how we advertise GC roles in the promotional materials for this year's AGM.

Thanks to all the staff and all of GC for their hard work this year. What follows is always only a flavour of the amazing effort that both groups put in to make sure the movement thrives. Happy reading...

Patrick Ramsey – Trustee and International Portfolio

My work as International portfolio holder has mostly consisted of building links with Christian students and other ecumenical organisations across Europe. This started when I joined a working group of WSCF-Europe (the World Student Christian Federation - the global organisation with which SCM is affiliated), looking at editing their by-laws. I then attended the European Regional Assembly as SCM's delegate, where I was elected vice-chair; in this role, I've begun work on various campaigns with partners such as the Conference of European Churches and the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe – we are hoping for a high level of participation in our campaign for the European Year for Youth, so please look out for that!

You may also have seen the occasional Facebook group post from me, sharing news from other SCMs around the world and opportunities to get involved with European events.

More generally, I've been involved in various pieces of other work with SCM, such as our language group, which is looking at updating the way we express our vision as an organisation. I also helped prepare our annual report for the Charity Commission and was involved in the recruitment process for our three newest staff members. Finally, Lou and I represented SCM at the annual conference of the National Justice and Peace Network, but didn't meet many students.

Emilia De Luca – Trustee and Access and Inclusion Portfolio

In the past year, I have worked on various projects and activities in my roles of trustee and access and inclusion portfolio holder.

Recruitment has been a strong feature of the past year, with various changes in staff and the challenges of a staff restructure in 2021. Recently, I was involved in the recruitment group for the admin and fundraiser roles. Alongside the rest of the General Council, I have also been contributing to our recent and ongoing work on SCM's vision.

At October's General Council meeting, I presented an idea for SCM carrying out specific work with graduates. I am hoping to develop this idea further in the future, if I am elected into a new role as graduate rep. I have also updated SCM's equality, diversity and inclusion policy, to better reflect our ethos and commitment to inclusion. Additionally, for the past year I have been an ambassador for the Young Trustees Movement (YTM), an organisation that is working to increase the number of young trustees (under 30) in charities in England and Wales. SCM is unique in that typically all of its trustees are young trustees, so I have been able to represent SCM and my unique experience of trusteeship at YTM, to encourage charities and individuals to focus on board diversity.

Ciarán Nevers – BAME/GEM Students' Rep

I'm one of the newer members of the General Council, so thank you for your attention and support in reading what is my first (and hopefully not last) AGM report.

As the new BAME/GEM rep portfolio holder (we still are figuring out which acronym to use!) my first seven months on the GC has been a learning experience. In many ways I am still figuring out what this portfolio means for SCM and for the wider context the Movement serves, so most of my work has been a mix of learning the ropes and an extended vibe check of where SCM is as an anti-racist, de-colonising space.

My role really began in October with co-leading SCM's work celebrating Black History Month, which was a baptism by fire. This did, however, serve me well in rope-learning and vibe-checking, with the level of engagement and community feedback being incredibly encouraging. Around this time I also attended my first GC meeting, which was a key moment in learning about the behind-the-scenes magic of the Movement. Together, these experiences have formed the basis of subsequent work.

In terms of active work being completed, I am working with our 'Language Group' to help update our mission and vision statement for the Movement. This is particularly important to my role as we want our choices in language to be as inclusive as possible. I have also worked to help figure out SCM's response to the current conflict in Ukraine – again, an issue directly linked to my portfolio given ongoing debates on the role of whiteness in shaping media attention towards the conflict. Less formally, my pet project is trying to get my anti-racist and de-colonising vibe check down onto a coherent document that can be used to inform SCM's future work. This is on-going, but my hope is that it can help direct the focus of the BAME/GEM rep portfolio in coming years.

Josh Mock - Trustee

This has been my first year as a member of general council and I have really enjoyed my time! Although it has been hard to contribute from afar (I am currently on my year abroad in Jordan), I have attended general council meetings online and

offered a critical ear to ongoing projects and ideas. In September, when I return to the UK, I hope to be more active on General Council.

Liddy Buswell - Trustee

This has also been my first year on GC, and likewise I have really been enjoying it. As a trustee without a portfolio, I don't have any specific duties, but I have enjoyed being involved in various conversations and meetings that have been going on.

Josh House – Trustee and Members and Groups Portfolio

This is my first year as trustee and my portfolio is members and groups. When I stood for GC, I wanted to lead on sustainability for both groups and members, as well as SCM Nationally - this has been my most important focus through my role on GC. I have taken an interest on our strategic plan and the language that we use, as a result I have been busy on the language group. It is one of the most important ways that I see my portfolio being honours so that I can contribute most effectively - ensuring that as an organisation we are able to clearly convey our message to all stakeholders; students, donors and beyond.

We are currently doing this in the Language Group, by focusing on how we convey what/who/why SCM is to those who don't know it implicitly - this will help every element of our work, from fundraising, to growing groups, to empowering our students. I intend on continuing my close engagement in this group as part of my portfolio work and focusing on this specific element of SCM's work to support members and groups.

By the AGM I will have completed my safeguarding training, which is a new area of work that I would be interested in supporting. Having been on GC for under a year I am now feeling a lot more confident in my role and how I can effectively support SCM Britain.

Russell Frost - Trustee and Finance Portfolio

For the last year, in addition to being a trustee, I have held the finance portfolio on the general council. This is certainly an interesting time to hold that role, as the SCM is operating at a deficit of around £40,000 per year. Please get in touch if you would like to help reduce this number! (we take debit card, PayPal, bank notes and kidneys).

I am an active member of the finance committee, which meets regularly to assess our finances and offer advice to the General Council, who produced our current ten-year financial plan. The short version of this is that we need to plug the gap in the next four years, or cut back significantly on our operations. This led to an organisational review that resulted in a staff restructure. Sadly, we had to say goodbye to two much loved team-mates in September last year.

Fundraising was scuppered slightly when Simon, our hard-working fundraiser, left to become a funeral director. In this endeavour I wish him well, and hope that he remembers us when families ask about making charity donations in their relative's name.

On a more cheerful note, I was involved in the recruitment of our five newest members of staff. I'm particularly chuffed with this as they are all excellent! I also spent a week working in the SCM office last September. It was good to see how the movement operates in practice. Also people very kindly insisted on taking me out for dinner every evening, which was fantastic of them, but it did absolutely torpedo my diet.

Jack Woodruff – Campaigns Portfolio

This past year, SCM's campaigns have been focusing on current topics such as the Borders Bill and Food Poverty. With two project workers on the Faith in Action Project, there has been lots of campaign related blogposts and social media posts. SCM's campaigns have had the largest reach when they've been in reaction to current events.

Last year we launched the Peace Bunting project which allowed members to engage with campaigning in a new way. Bunting triangles were sent out to members who were then invited to reflect on what peace means to them and draw this, in pictures or in words, on a bunting triangle. These bunting triangles were collected and turned into the Peace Bunting which went to the No Faith In War Day at the DSEI Arms Fair Protest in London.

At the last AGM, it was decided that SCM would focus on one campaign subject each year. This means there will be a change in focus from looking at Food Poverty to looking at a new topic voted by members.

This year marks my last year on SCM's General Council. It's been lovely being involved with SCM in this way, and helping to shape our campaigning. And I'd like to thank Emma, Lizzy & Alana (previous & the two current faith in action project workers respectively) for all their work in ensuring SCM continues to be active when it comes to social justice.

Lou Dover – Trustee, Deputy Convenor of General Council & LGBTQ+ Rep

What a year it's been! Admittedly, 2021 was **slightly** more 'precedented' than 2020, but I don't think any of us could have predicted the past couple of years.

One of my highlights as LGBTQ+ rep has been the success we had engaging with Living in Love and Faith. We formed a reading group and spent around 8 months together reading through the whole book (and it's not a quick read!). It's not an easy process, and I'm proud of the work we put in to be able to fully understand, wrestle with, and respond to the material. We all responded individually, as well as collectively, and we definitely feel like we're playing a part in the journey towards full LGBTQ+ equality in the Church of England.

I've been working with Naomi & One Body One Faith on some new Allyship resources, which I'm looking forward to developing further. I've also done a couple of talks for local SCM groups, which has been super fun. I hosted our round table discussion for LGBTQ+ History Month, and whilst I was worried we might not have

enough to talk about, we could have chatted for hours! The addition of chaplains to our LGBTQ+ Facebook group has been a blessing, and we're really grateful for their presence in our safe space online.

Personally, life has been a little hectic recently, so there are a couple of things I'd like to have dedicated more time to. The TikTok and the Discord server have been neglected by me a bit, so I'm hoping to get back on track with those. Equally, I think the Home event last year could have done with a little more preparation, so I plan to get started on the arrangements for that a little earlier this year.

Looking ahead, I'm attending a conference in Denmark at the end of May, representing SCM Britain among a group of other WSCF-affiliated organisations. I'll be speaking on God and gender, and I'm looking forward to it!

Victoria Turner – Movement Editor

Since coming into my post last April I had some involvement with the September issue of *Movement* (it was a not-in-post but kinda-in-post situation) and produced our January 'SCM and the Word' magazine! I'm currently working on commissioning articles for our Anniversary edition for the autumn term.

The January issue was all about extending our horizons and listening to people from the non-Western world and how we can have better relationships with them and understand them better. This coming issue will be more internal, thinking about who we are, our impact, and where we want to go! My hope is that we can try and get a better student diversity writing for the magazine (you guys are obviously invited to write things too!) and maybe even we can try and push the mag to help with our general recruitment. I've been thinking about some kind of article writing competition to go around the universities/theological colleges to get the interest up, so watch this space for more info.

In less official SCM roles, myself and Liz Marsh were at Churches Together in England (CTE) Forum (me as a Trustee and Liz as a speaker) and we pushed the importance of SCM greatly in that space.