

AGM 2023 General Council Reports

Tom Packer-Stucki – Trustee and Convenor of General Council

It's been a busy last year here at SCM, so let me recount three highlights:

I was a part of the incredible Project Bonhoeffer trip to Berlin which, while I was supposed to be writing my dissertation at the time, was a worthy distraction from work. The trip was organised brilliantly by the staff team, and as a group we were genuinely moved and inspired by every visit we made. We are excited to be offering the trip again this year.

Then there was Greenbelt! The SCM stall at the festival looked so eye catching; we definitely had the best spot in the house, and our new displays and banners brought the whole thing to life. We had so many good conversations with students and parents, and I genuinely feel as though a significant number of potential members were made aware of SCM as a result. I hope that many groups have seen new members off the back of Greenbelt conversations.

We launched the Honest Church campaign at Greenbelt too (which I'm sure you've seen from the brilliant Comms), and it went down a treat. So many people were interested, from churches which were not yet making any steps towards inclusivity, churches who were inclusive but were quiet about it, and churches who were on a journey. Over the weekend, our press release was picked up by Premier Christian News, and Jacob and I were interviewed by the Church Times for a feature which was published in the paper. It has been really exciting to see that, in partnership with WATCH (Woman and the Church), we have expanded the scope of the campaign to also cover churches' inclusion of women as well as LGBTQ+ people.

I should also mention just how brilliantly our faith in action project is going, we have offered part-time roles to four recent graduates now, in partnership with Project Bonhoeffer. Lizzy, Alana, Grace and Naomi have achieved (and still are) loads during their time with us; writing thought-provoking blogs, designing and delivering workshops, and much more. In the last year, we have also welcomed Sophie, Jen and John to our staff team – it was a privilege to be involved in some of their annual reviews this last month, all three are an asset to the Movement and work so hard. In a similar vein, I would like to thank our CEO Naomi Nixon and all our staff team for their work this last year. You are ace.

Finally, I should say that this will be my *last* AGM as convenor and as an SCM trustee. I'm coming up to the fourth anniversary of my stint as a trustee of the Movement, and I have also served as chair and convenor of General Council for most of this time. I've loved every minute, but I now feel like it is time for me to move on. One of the brilliant things about SCM is the fact we are a student-led organisation, and I believe our student leadership benefits immensely from new

people and new ideas. So, it is time for someone else to take the reins and I'm looking forward to voting in new GC members at the AGM.

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

I thought I'd use this opportunity to round up my time as an SCM trustee for the past four years, as my term is coming to an end.

I came across SCM at an LGBTQ+ Christian Movement (now OneBodyOneFaith) event during my first year of uni in Southampton. Tom and I set up our SCM group in our second year in 2017, meeting on a Monday night after our chaplaincy's pasta night. Exploring faith, wrestling with difficult questions and creating a safe community, with the help of the staff team, I can safely say that my involvement with SCM became the defining feature of my time at university.

As a trustee, I have been involved in lots of different parts of the life of SCM. From my legal responsibilities of approving budgets and decisions, to helping to run events and representing SCM at festivals, I have gained so much both personally and professionally.

There is far too much to go into detail about during my time on General Council, so I thought I'd pick a couple of highlights. One particular piece of work I'm most proud of is our "More Beautiful Stories" campaign, our response to some of the homophobic narrative surrounding the initial publication of the Church of England's 'Living in Love and Faith' (LLF) materials. A few of us decided to create a series of videos highlighting the experiences of LGBTQ+ Christians in churches. After sourcing contributions from around 25 people, we produced 5 videos on the themes of identity, love, faith, church, and marriage. Not only was this a great opportunity for us to share a positive message about LGBTQ+ Christian lives, it allowed me to develop important skills which have led me to a job in communications.

On a similar note, another highlight was our collective reading of the LLF book. We met every two weeks, reading a chapter at a time and reflecting on the content. We were able to engage with the materials in a meaningful way, and the safe environment we curated allowed us to explore the sometimes challenging and painful questions. I was hugely encouraged by the input, support, and wisdom of the group, and it gave me a real sense of hope for the future of the Church.

I want to finish this (uncharacteristically long!) report by thanking the SCM staff team, trustees, and members for your incredible work in the movement. SCM has been, and will continue to be, an essential part of my faith journey. Your commitment to living out God's love in the world is a beautiful witness to the gospel. I will keep SCM in my prayers, and I'm sure I'll see you around at Greenbelt (you've not seen the last of me yet!). Thank you for all that you do and all that you are.

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 a member of General Council (GC). In the summer of 2022, my role on GC moved from access and inclusion portfolio (a role I held for four years) to graduate rep.

As graduate rep, I am looking at the work SCM can do with our members who are recent graduates. Part of this includes relaunching the SCM Coventry group, with a focus on involving graduates in the group. Additionally, we are looking at what events we can run for graduates.

I have also been involved in other activities such as talking on the SCM panel at Greenbelt, helping to run an SCM supporters event in February and exhibiting at Big Church Day Out, alongside the usual trustee activities of attending meetings and voting on ideas and projects.

Joshua Mock – Trustee

It has been a busy year at SCM with lots of exciting projects and programmes. As campaigns rep, my year began in July when we held interviews for the two Faith in Action roles. We had many fantastic candidates, and, in the end, we chose Naomi and Grace who have worked fantastically over this past academic year producing resources and leading workshops. It was great to meet with our funders from project Bonhoeffer who are pleased with how the project is going and are happy to continue funding the posts and bursaries for the trip to Berlin. As part of my portfolio, I have also written some blogs and public statements reacting to political and other events that are of interest to our campaign areas.

I have also spent some time as SCM's representative on the Inclusive Church trustee board. It was interesting to see how our partners are working and areas that we can collaborate. I no longer have time or capacity to take on this role, so I have stepped down from this and Russell is the interim representative.

A particular highlight of this year has been working with Tom to build up SCM London. We've held two sessions so far and we've made some great connections with London churches, many of whom are willing to offer free meeting space and other support. We're hoping to have a third session soon and continue connecting with students, churches, and chaplaincies across London. Our vision is to have a central SCM London group that acts as a meeting point for individual London university groups, and we're hoping that once we have more people coming along to our sessions, students from the same university will find each other and set up their own groups.

Liddy Buswell – Trustee

As a trustee without a portfolio, my role largely consists of attending GC meetings and responding to emails and messages between them, rather than working on a

specific goal or project like some of the other GC members do - so I feel like I have very little concrete to say in this report other than "I went to meetings and answered emails".

Some of the highlights of the year have been things that I haven't done in an official trustee capacity - such as the national gathering and meeting up with everyone at Greenbelt.

Being on GC has been a great chance to get involved with the behind the scenes running of SCM, and I've found it truly fascinating. A lot of work goes into SCM's output, and it's been great to play a small part of that! I'm stepping down soon as both my term as a trustee and my membership are expiring, but it's been really great!

Joanna Ramsey – Trustee

I am a trustee without a portfolio so I don't feel that I have a lot to report. My role mostly consists of attending general council meetings and then responding to emails and messages in between meetings, although I have also helped with a staff annual development review meeting and making up the advent care packages. In December I went to the staff and trustee Christmas dinner which was really fun and it was great to get to know everyone better.

I have also been helping to run SCM Birmingham this year, first as treasurer and then taking over as president in March. The society has had a great year as we've had a few new members and we've organised a couple of extra trips as well as our usual weekly meetings, so I'm feeling really positive about the direction the society is going in.

Russell Frost - Trustee and Finance Portfolio

This year I have had the chance to take part in a number of SCM events. The summer was a rollercoaster of exciting activities; beginning with the Annual Gathering, where it was great to catch up with loads of you (even if half of you are now making me feel very old!). This was quickly followed by the Berlin trip, from which I recovered relatively quickly. Finally, I got to help out at the SCM stall at Greenbelt, which was great apart from the Lovecraftian horror that were the lavatories.

Apart from my general responsibilities as a trustee, I have helped decide the financial policy of the Movement throughout the year. I am still quite concerned about our finances, so I encourage anyone who wants to help out to get in touch with either myself, or a member of staff!

Finally, this year, I have taken over as deputy chair of GC and line manager to the CEO. A few weeks ago, I took part in Naomi's annual review. She's doing great by the way!

Joshua House – Trustee and Members and Groups Portfolio

Over the last two years I have really grown into the role of trustee, I feel as though it is only recently that I have become truly effective in my role. I have finally got my head around GC meetings, I now see how the systems at SCM work and, as a result, I have been able to support our work more comprehensively. Likewise, this year I also took on the portfolio of 'Safeguarding' alongside my initial portfolio of 'Members and Groups'. I look forward to the prospect of another two years, if successfully re-elected, and seeing how I can use these foundations to support SCM further.

Upon reflection, I realise that one of the key contributions I have made to SCM throughout my tenure has been through my contributions and questions at GC meetings - here I have sought to consider all issues from the perspectives of members and groups and advocate respectively. Whilst this is the work of the whole trustee and staff team-an advocacy to which all trustees and staff members take seriously and contribute to wholly-I try to maintain a personal focus on this, in order to retain integrity to my portfolio for members and groups. I have focused on how decisions will impact and effect the membership, and I think that these questions, on behalf of our membership, help to ensure that their interests are always kept at the front and centre of what we do. This has manifested itself most recently through the support, editing of and additions to the 'Member's Survey' to ensure that we continue to build on the needs of the membership.

Alongside this advocacy at meetings, I have supported SCM over the year by representing SCM at Big Church Festival (Big Church Day Out) in June and speaking to members of the public about our work. Likewise, I supported our work at Greenbelt (not as a volunteer though *ashamed*!) but by attending events to encourage everyone's work. Finally, as a representative of GC, I attended a staff member's probationary review - this was a really encouraging experience and I look forward to supporting these in future.

Going into the next two years I'm hoping to continue this work. I would like to offer more support to the staff team through attending interviews or review meetings, to review our policies for safeguarding and beyond, to begin making proposals for future GC meeting and to continue being an advocate for members and groups.

Victoria Turner – Movement Editor

Ciarán Nevers – BAME/GEM Students' Rep