

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND
General Meeting Trustees

Minutes of the meeting held in Edinburgh, 2.6.2014

Present: Pam Brunt, Robin Davis, David James, Margaret Morton, Jackie Noltingk
Prevented: John Phillips

1 Advocacy: job description and person specification

We have looked again at the draft job description as amended by Paul Parker and his staff, together with Martin Burnell's suggestions. We are concerned to strengthen the Scottish nature of the post, and wish to revise the last sentence of the first paragraph ("Background") to read:

"The postholder will work in close cooperation with General Meeting for Scotland through the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group which will act in an advisory capacity."

We recommend that there is a review after the first year of the mechanisms by which the post is being managed, and the priorities discerned; General Meeting should have input into such a review.

Under the section "Key accountabilities and main tasks", we wish to insert after "Participate" the phrase "and represent Quakers in Scotland, in consultation with the General Meeting Parliamentary Liaison Function Group". Further, in the last paragraph beginning "Attending regular meetings" we suggest then inserting "and be part of the discernment process of the General Meeting Parliamentary Liaison Function Group". A new paragraph could then begin "The convener of that Function Group will consult with the Clerk to General Meeting and the Clerk to General Meeting Trustees before" (etc).

In the Person Specification, under the heading "Essential knowledge", we suggest instead of "knowledge" the phrase "understanding the Scottish parliamentary and legal system", deleting references to other parliamentary systems.

We ask the Clerk to write to Paul Parker with these suggestions, with a copy to the Clerk to General Meeting.

2 Advocacy: financing the post

We thank our treasurer for his clear and supportive paper (copy attached). We want to stress to General Meeting that Britain Yearly Meeting is underwriting the cost of the post; our contribution is limited to £10,000 a year.

3 Advocacy: what we say to General Meeting

We have discussed the points we need to make at General Meeting on June 14. We understand that the Clerk to Trustees will be asked to bring Friends up to date on the discussions with the staff of Friends House.

First, we need to summarise the position of the Area Meetings as indicated by their minutes. Then we can say our role has been to look at the practicalities - who discerns

the priorities, what exactly we want the person appointed to do, how that person will be employed, and the type of person best suited to carry it out. We have drawn up, with the help of the Function Group and Jane Dawson's team at Friends House, a draft job description and person specification. We have examined the financial implications and wish to make some suggestions about how we manage the costs involved.

This is a Scottish post, the person is based in Scotland and does work discerned by General Meeting. Yearly Meeting trustees are supporting the proposal and in particular providing the structure in which the person appointed will work. Thus the post will be advertised throughout Britain Yearly Meeting and other suitable outlets. Scottish Friends will be part of the appointing panel, and we will ask for the interviews to take place in Scotland. The person appointed will be part of the Friends House advocacy team, and will be managed by the head of that team. We have suggested the post should be part-time (17½ hours a week) for three years and reviewed after two years. We can add that Paul Parker, the Recording Clerk, came up specially to see us and that he is acting on behalf of Yearly Meeting trustees in these discussions. He advised that we need to let them know of General Meeting's decision by October at the latest to allow for the post to be included in the 2015 budget.

4 Advocacy: other matters

Margaret Morton has offered to look into the channels for advertising within Scotland, including the use of electronic media; "The Big Issue" was suggested as one place in which to advertise. We will advise Paul Parker on the most suitable ways to advertise the post.

Where the postholder will work will depend very much on the person appointed. The location could be the offices of Scottish Churches Housing Action or another sympathetic organisation - or the person could work from home. We hope the person will be able to be based in Edinburgh.

5 Public statements: draft procedure (This is a gold minute)

At our meeting with Paul Parker, the Recording Clerk, on May 12, he recommended that we adopt a process to use when General Meeting wishes to make a public statement on behalf of Quakers in Scotland. He suggested that it might be the Clerk to General Meeting, who would sign the statement, having consulted the convener of the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group and the Clerk to General Meeting Trustees. We note that this procedure is to be used when action is needed at short notice and General Meeting is not scheduled to meet.

We agree to recommend this to General Meeting.

6 Administrator: how we are managing during her leave of absence (see minute 2 of the meeting of 25.2.2014)

We have heard from Martin Burnell, Clerk to General Meeting, that there had been a relatively small amount of routine business, which he and the other Friends had managed to handle straightforwardly. We continue to uphold Bronwen while she is giving this service abroad.

7 Annual report of trustees to General Meeting (see paper attached)

The Clerk had prepared a short draft annual report of trustees' activities since June 2013 to be given to General Meeting on 14 June. We accept this report, with some minor amendments) and ask the Clerk to send it to the Clerk to General Meeting.

8 Date of next meeting

This will be our budget meeting for 2015. We suggest we meet in Edinburgh on Thursday November 6, subject to John Phillip's availability that day.

Robin Davis

Clerk