

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND

Meeting of trustees, Tuesday 24th February 2015
Quaker Meeting House, Edinburgh

MINUTES

Present:

Pam Brunt, David James, Margaret Morton, Jacqueline Noltingk, John Phillips

1. Opening minute

We have held Robin Davis in the light during our opening worship. He has been unable to join us following Christine's death on 17th February 2015.

We thank John Phillips for circulating papers for this meeting and appoint him to act as clerk this time.

2. Scottish Parliamentary Engagement Officer

2.1 Memorandum of Understanding

We understand that the Memorandum of Understanding with BYM trustees covering the management of this post was agreed and signed before the end of 2014 (see Minute 2 of our last meeting). We ask that a *pdf* copy of the signed Memorandum should be circulated to all GM trustees as well as to the Clerk of General Meeting. A hard copy should be kept by the clerk of GM trustees and by GM clerk.

2.2 Parliamentary Engagement Officer

The newly appointed Parliamentary Engagement Officer, Mairi Campbell-Jack, started work on 6th January 2015. She has introduced herself to us through an article in the February *Scottish Friend*. Elizabeth Allen has circulated a report of work started by Mairi in the period to 15th February, together with the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Parliamentary Liaison FG.

We note that Mairi is working on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (half day) using office space at The Hub in Rose Street, Edinburgh.

2.3 Parliamentary Liaison Function Group

We note from the minutes of the Parliamentary Liaison Function Group (meeting on 11th February) that General Meeting has not yet taken a stand on certain currently contentious issues that are under discussion by other churches. We hope that General Meeting, working through the Function Group, will encourage our Parliamentary Engagement Officer to keep each of our Area Meetings up to date with these discussions, since it is important to help General Meeting to become more actively involved in these Scottish issues.

We recognise, however, that it is not straightforward to formulate clear views; it is the encouragement of informed debate within General Meeting that is important. A key task for the Parliamentary Engagement Officer is to build good

links with members in each Area Meeting, and we would encourage the FG to put Mairi in touch with engaged Friends from all over Scotland.

We would also encourage the FG to use telephone conferencing to try to involve more Friends from distant Area Meetings – perhaps the FG could co-opt some Friends to assist them before formal appointments are made by General Meeting in session.

2.4 The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

We note that the FG has suggested that GM should affiliate to CND and that this matter should be brought to our next General Meeting. We ask John Phillips to clarify our position as a Scottish Charity in this respect in order to inform General Meeting's discernment.

2.5 Public statements and press releases

Public statements by General Meeting are made following discernment within General Meeting and they are issued over the signature of GM Clerk. GM trustees may be consulted in order to ensure compliance with charity law. We are reminded that similar principles apply within Area Meetings (which are themselves independent charities that are subject to charity law).

Advice about what is permissible is available through the OSCR and Charity Commission websites, and staff at Friends House are available for consultation.

3. Safeguarding policies and procedures

3.1 Review of policies and procedures

John Phillips has received responses from meetings in SE Scotland AM (see Minute 5 of our last meeting). Both documents have been welcomed but one local meeting safeguarding officer commented on the very long delays experienced in obtaining clearance for new adults to work with children when submitting applications through the Churches Agency for Safeguarding in England; she has raised the question of why GM does not work directly with Disclosure Scotland.

We note that, following the consideration at our last meeting, the clerk of GM trustees should ask each Area Meeting to undertake a review of its experiences in using the documentation, informing us of the outcome before mid-June. We should ask them about their experiences with the registration process at the same time.

Meanwhile John Phillips has asked Madeleine Harding to clarify the position of Scottish meetings with staff at Friends House. It seems, however, to be a common experience that applications made through Disclosure Scotland are processed rapidly and effectively.

4. Appointment of General Meeting administrator

4.1 Resignation

Bronwen Currie intimated her wish to stand down from this post at some time during the first half of 2015. We express our gratitude to Bronwen for the years of friendly and efficient service that she has provided for General Meeting since her appointment in July 2008.

4.2 Appointment process

The post has been advertised in *The Friend* and in *Scottish Friend*, with an annual salary of £4,350. We agree to this. We are happy with the documentation provided for the post, noting that General Meeting is prepared to provide additional training if required.

We do however wonder whether there should be a probationary period, and we ask Martin Burnell to clarify this point for us. A small number of preliminary enquiries has been received and John Phillips has sent out details of the post by email. He will ask for applications to be submitted directly to him.

Interviews have been arranged for Wednesday 25th March. The intention is that Robin Davis and Martin Burnell will conduct the interviews together with one other Friend. We suggest that one or two of the following Friends might be approached by Robin and Martin, as long as they are willing and able to serve: Elizabeth Allen, Alyson Buchan, Robin Waterston.

5 Draft Report and Accounts for 2014

5.1 Approval of the Report and Accounts

John Phillips has drafted General Meeting's Report and Accounts for 2014. They have been examined by Paul Kenny.

We have asked John to expand the section of the Report that deals with the General Meeting's reserves policy (page 3).

We ask Jacqueline Noltingk to sign these documents on behalf of our clerk Robin Davis, and we ask John Phillips to present them to General Meeting on 7th March.

5.2 Independent Examiner of the accounts

We agree to increase the honorarium paid to our examiner from £50 to £60 and we reappoint Paul Kenny, subject to consent, to examine the accounts for 2015.

6 Date of next meeting

We appoint our next meeting to be held if required on Tuesday 2nd June in the Edinburgh Quaker Meeting House. We ask John to check the availability of a suitable room.

John Phillips