

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND TRUSTEES

Minutes of the meeting held 6th February 2017 in Glasgow

Present: Catherine Brown, Martin Burnell (Clerk), Nigel Dower, Michael Hutchinson, Derek McLean, Jacqueline Noltingk.

In attendance: John Phillips and for part of the afternoon, Paul Parker

Prevented: none

1. Welcome

We welcome Nigel Dower, our new Treasurer, to his first meeting of trustees. We are pleased that our former Treasurer is able to join us to present the accounts for 2016 and we look forward to welcoming Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, for a discussion on the future of the Parliamentary Engagement post.

2. Future of the Advocacy project

We have had a preliminary discussion on various aspects of the Review of the Advocacy project in preparation for our discussion with Paul Parker.

3. Annual report and accounts

3.1 Accepting the annual report and accounts

The previous Treasurer, John Phillips, has presented the draft annual report and accounts for 2016. We accept the report and accounts. We thank John warmly for his work during his period as Treasurer. We see merit in the suggestion we might produce a shorter and more accessible version of the report as part of a broader communications strategy.

3.2 Authorisation to sign

We authorise the clerk on behalf of trustees to sign the annual report and accounts on behalf of the General Meeting. He has done this during our meeting.

3.4 Report to General Meeting

We ask John Phillips to present this annual report and accounts at the General Meeting to be held on 11th March 2017.

4. Meeting with Paul Parker re future of the Advocacy project

We considered the review report prepared by Douglas Rennie and Beryl Milner and are pleased to note their conclusion that there have been worthwhile achievements and that the work is going in the right direction. All those present shared this view. The work has increased engagement of Scottish Friends and brought increased understanding at BYM level of the opportunities in Scotland for furthering Quaker testimonies.

In regard to the specific recommendations in the report, the following views were expressed:

a) That Scottish Parliamentary Engagement work should be accepted by trustees of BYM and GMS as core work for Quakers in Britain.

GM Trustees concurred with this recommendation - BYM Trustees will be considering the matter on 17th - 19th February and GM on 11th March. Paul indicated that BYM Management Meeting accepted the recommendation in principle, although it might be necessary for funding to continue to be outside the core budget. We hope BYM Trustees will consider continuing to commit funding to support advocacy work in Scotland.

b) That Scottish Advocacy work should continue for at least another three years (2018 – 2020); the Pilot be renamed to reflect its core status; and a revised MoU be agreed by Trustees of BYM and GMS.

Those present agreed with this recommendation. Even if the continuance of the project was for a longer or unspecified time, it was agreed that there should be a further review three years from now to take account of any developments. It was also agreed that in revising the MoU, this should be broadened to encompass the whole of the relationship between BYM and GM for Scotland. It was agreed a revised document should be prepared prior to GM in November 2017. This broader Memorandum would also encompass the annual grant (currently set at just under £7,000 p.a.) which is provided by BYM to GMfS. We feel that the objectives for the partnership work on advocacy will need to be revisited, to take into account not just the advocacy objectives of the GMS Parliamentary Liaison Function Group, but also wider objectives about how this work supports the relationship between Scottish Friends and BYM.

c) That the basic arrangements for governance and management between BYM, GMS, PLFG, and the relevant staff members should continue.

This was agreed subject to any views of the PLFG.

d) That consideration be given to increasing the hours of the SPEO (e.g. from 2.5 days to 3.5 days) to reflect the increasing opportunities and needs for this work, if these continue through 2017, and subject to agreement as in recommendation e.

The desirability of this was agreed if the necessary funding can be found. We hope BYM Trustees will give due consideration to this.

e) That new arrangements for financing the project be agreed between BYM and GMS trustees. We recommend that Friends in Scotland continue to contribute, within their capacity.

GM Trustees were prepared to recommend that GMfS should continue to make a financial contribution of £6000 pa based on the existing level of quota on Area Meetings. During the first three years a further £4000 pa had been contributed by drawing on GM reserves, but the reserves were now at the minimum safe level and could not continue to assist with funding. GM Trustees felt that any additional demands on Area Meetings would be likely to result in Area Meetings struggling to meet the suggested contribution to BYM each year.

This would mean that in future, GMfS would be contributing approximately 20% of the cost (if hours were increased) as compared to approximately 40% for the first three years. Nevertheless, it was felt that there were benefits in GM continuing to contribute specifically to this project as an exception to the normal principle that contributions to BYM are not earmarked.

Paul hoped that BYM Trustees could give a preliminary view after their meeting in February with a decision on financing being taken by June.

f) That existing and future concerns be discerned as at present by PLFG, with agreement by GMS trustees and GM Clerks.

This was agreed subject to any views of the PLFG..

g) That the work programme continue to be developed between PLFG and staff at Friends House.

This was agreed.

h) That the SPEO should be encouraged to strengthen links with Scottish media, under guidance from QCS; and that GMS and AMs in Scotland be encouraged to continue improve their websites.

This was agreed. A review of the GM website is currently in progress.

We send this minute, once agreed, to BYM Trustees, the Convenor of the PLFG and the Clerk of GMfS.

It was agreed that the Clerk would draft the minute of this discussion after the meeting and circulate it for comment.

5. GM Function Groups

We have agreed that in order to prepare a memorandum of understanding with BYM that would set out the functions and responsibilities of GM, we need to look at how GM structures operate to ensure GM fulfills those responsibilities. We note that the Clerk of GM has instituted discussions that bear on this and we ask her to keep Trustees informed as these develop. We ask the Clerk to prepare a summary of past and present function groups.

6. Scotland's Churches Trust

This body has introduced an annual membership fee. We agree not to subscribe.

7. Dates of meetings 2017

Tuesday 30th May and Tuesday 24th October, both in Edinburgh (confirmed).

Martin Burnell
Clerk.