

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND TRUSTEES

Minutes of the meeting held 25th February 2020 in Edinburgh

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

Prevented: Catherine Brown

1. Welcome

After a brief period of worship, the Clerk welcomed Trustees to Edinburgh. We are also pleased to have in attendance for the first part of our meeting our new GM Administrator, Sue Proudlove. Sue took up post at the beginning of January and is combining the role with her existing jobshare of Meeting House Manager at Victoria Terrace. We record our thanks to Marion Sharkey who undertook this role for four years up to January 2020.

We have had a useful discussion with Sue regarding various aspects of her new role.

2. Trustees Annual Report for 2019

We have agreed our annual report to General Meeting subject to minor alterations to the draft prepared by our Clerk. The report will be re-circulated and will go to General Meeting in March

3. Parliamentary Advocacy Project

We noted at our meeting last October the evaluation report on the Parliamentary Liaison Project prepared by an external consultant. The current phase of the project was due to end in December 2020 but consideration of the future of the project became a matter of urgency when Mairi Campbell-Jack resigned in November to take up another appointment. A meeting including the GM Clerk, Clerk to Trustees, Convener of the Parliamentary Liaison Committee, Recording Clerk and other BYM staff was held in January to discuss the issue.

Agreement was reached in principle that the project had proved its worth and should continue on a permanent basis. Accordingly BYM intends to advertise for a replacement for Mairi on a permanent contract. The balance of funding remaining for the current phase (including the contribution from GM) will cover the new appointment for 13 months from the date it is made. Thereafter it will be covered from the BYM budget. The duties of the post will be expanded to cover media issues as well as parliamentary representation.

BYM is anxious that Scottish Friends should continue to feel ownership and involvement with the project, and while there might in future be no direct contribution from GM funds, they are looking to compensate for the loss of this funding by an increase in the contributions which Scottish Friends make to BYM that is at least equivalent in amount. It was envisaged that there would be a joint fundraising exercise between GM, the 4 AMs and BYM explaining to Friends both the importance of this particular post and the other work undertaken centrally on behalf of Friends. An individual Friend has agreed to

underwrite the sought for increase in contributions up to a maximum of £10,000, but we hope that it will be unnecessary to call on this.

Trustees have considered this proposal and see some difficulties, both in identifying whether the target funding increase has been met and in knowing how this will relate to the likely devolvement of some other BYM staff to Scotland.

We propose that to allow time for these issues to be explored, GM continue to commit to sending £10,000 to BYM as a contribution to the post for a further year after the expiry of the existing commitment. Subject to the agreement of GM and the four AMs, this would be raised by continuing the £6000 asked from AMs and by encouraging Friends to contribute individually to GM. We will use the extended time period to explore with the BYM fundraising team a longer term fundraising model. We will consult AMs and take this to GM in June.

4. ACTS and the Scottish Christian Forum

At a Special Members Meeting of ACTS on 18th November attended by Adwoa Bittle and Martin Burnell it was agreed that the proposed new Scottish Christian Forum should be a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation rather than a limited company which ACTS is at present. A draft constitution has been prepared and circulated to churches and a further Special Members Meeting is to be held on 9th March to discuss this draft.

We agree to propose some amendments to the procedures for electing trustees and that the minimum number of trustees should be 5 rather than 3, of whom a majority have been appointed by the Members Meeting.

5. Update on Safeguarding

ThirtyOne:Eight has agreed that membership can be held at GM level rather than by the four Area Meetings and BYM has no objection to this. The Clerk has formally applied for Membership which costs £120 pa. and notified the four AMs that they can cease membership. This will ensure that expert safeguarding advice will be available to those Friends with safeguarding responsibilities in Scotland.

BYM has also agreed that disclosure requests in Scotland can be submitted through Volunteer Scotland rather than through DDC as this offers certain advantages. We are currently ascertaining which Area Meetings wish to take this up as opposed to staying with the existing arrangements.

Friends House are still working on the new model safeguarding policy and we will reconsider our policy once this is available.

6. Update on Data Security Guidance

Our draft guidance has been discussed with David Sterratt and John Fitzgerald who have made helpful suggestions and provided links to other information. We feel that the advice should be available in electronic as well as paper form and our Clerk is working to produce an electronic version which will be circulated to Trustees for final comments before being issued.

7. Training for GM and AM Trustees and other postholders

We have received GM minute 19/11/08 asking us to consider the training needs of Trustees and other postholders and potential postholders within Scotland. We propose that as a first step we might arrange a one day event in the Summer aimed primarily at Friends under 50 with speakers who would talk about how the Society is organised, the role of trustees and other post holders and the relationship between trustees and Area Meeting. We will approach John Phillips, Kate Gulliver and Gill Reid to see if they might be willing to lead such an event. We will ask GM and AM nominations committees to encourage attendance and to help guide us in setting the priorities for the event.

We note that there are more specific training opportunities through Woodbrooke, Quaker Stewardship Committee etc, but see the immediate need as being to stimulate interest in serving the Society.

We also agree to arrange a Zoom video conference in April/May for all AM and GM Trustees to share current issues and experience and to encourage ongoing networking over the longer term.

8. [REDACTED - staff confidentiality]

9. Review of Insurance

Our Treasurer is still following this up and will report to a future meeting.

10. Representation at the FWCC Central European Gathering of Friends

GM has been invited to send a representative to this Gathering. We note that BYM will have been separately invited to appoint representatives. We would like to clarify the basis on which we have been invited to send a separate Scottish representative, but agree in principle that financial assistance might be provided from GM funds.

11. Dates of future meetings

Tuesday 26th May in Glasgow (already agreed) and Tuesday 13th October in Edinburgh.

Martin Burnell
Clerk.