

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND TRUSTEES

Minutes of the meeting held 26th May 2020 by Zoom

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

Prevented: None

1. Welcome

We began with a brief period of worship. It was noted this meeting was being conducted through video conferencing because of the covid-19 restrictions.

2. Annual report and accounts for 2019

Our Treasurer, Nigel Dower, has presented the draft annual report and accounts for 2019 which we approve. They have also been approved by the independent examiner. Our Clerk will sign the annual report and accounts which will be presented to General Meeting on 13th June 2020. We thank Nigel for his work on the report and accounts and for his stewardship of our finances.

We agree a fee of £100 for the work undertaken by Gordon McKay, the independent examiner, a reduced amount suggested by him.

3. Contribution to General Meeting from Area Meetings

We note that General Meeting expenditure in the current year will be lower than normal due to the covid-19 restrictions on travel and gatherings. We agree it would be appropriate to grant a rebate to Area Meetings on their contributions of an amount to be determined by the Treasurer towards the end of the year.

4. Parliamentary Advocacy Project

Further to minute 3 of our meeting on 25th February, we note that BYM Trustees felt unable to proceed with an appointment to the vacancy for Parliamentary Engagement Officer due to the financial uncertainty arising from the covid-19 restrictions. A number of applications had been received and these have been put on hold for the time being. We feel it important that we proceed with the appointment as soon as practicable. In the circumstances we are not taking the issue of funding to General Meeting in June, although we note Area Meetings have paid their contributions towards the project for the current year and these will be carried forward.

5. Local Development Worker

We note that General Meeting has now been officially informed that there will be a Local Development Worker on the staff of BYM to be based in Scotland covering all four Area Meetings. It is currently expected that an appointment might be made in the first quarter of 2021. The pilot BYM hub for which we had also applied will be based in Leeds.

6. ACTS and the Scottish Christian Forum

Following the decision of the ACTS Members Meeting that the constitution of the new Scottish Christian Forum should take the form of a SCIO, a draft constitution was prepared and was formally approved by all current Members of ACTS except the Church of Scotland. It was originally at the instigation of the Church of Scotland that the SCIO model was adopted and it would appear that the reluctance to proceed relates more to financial concerns arising from the covid-19 emergency than to any issue with the wording of the proposed constitution.

ACTS will therefore continue to operate for the time being under its current constitution, but will make what progress it can towards the new arrangements. We are concerned at the delay this creates in moving to the new arrangements and will continue to monitor the position, keeping under review the continuing financial contribution from the Society of Friends.

7. Safeguarding

General Meeting is now in membership of ThirtyOne:Eight and Area Meetings have been advised that they can terminate any existing memberships. Safeguarding Co-ordinators have been provided with the necessary details to access the Members section of the ThirtyOne:Eight website and the advisory helpline.

General Meeting has also enrolled with Volunteer Scotland and is in process of setting up the arrangements to use their disclosure services. The four Area Meetings will be treated as associated intermediary bodies and will be able to deal directly with Volunteer Scotland for the purposes of obtaining disclosure certificates.

8. Data Security Guidance

As agreed at our last meeting, the guidance has been translated into an interactive web page which can be included in the GM website. We agree that, subject to some minor amendments, this should now be published alongside an abbreviated paper leaflet.

9. Review of Insurance

Our Treasurer has reported that he is still following this up and will come back to Trustees by email.

10. GM Administrator

The GM Administrator reports that she is settling into the job. She has sought guidance on the timing for the next Book of Members. We agree we should aim for the Book to be available in March 2021 and note that the process of checking entries will have to be done by phone and email. We will ask our Administrator in consultation with our Clerk to suggest when it might be appropriate to initiate this. We agree to investigate the possibility of putting the Book of Members online in the longer term.

11. Parliamentary Engagement Working Group

We note the minutes of the meeting of the PEWG held on 6th May.

12. Membership of GM Trustees

Past practice has been to ensure all Area Meetings are represented amongst GM Trustees, but there is currently no Trustee from ESAM because of difficulty finding someone. We think it desirable that there is representation from ESAM and our Clerk has contacted them to see if the position might have changed. Any new appointment would be an addition to the current Trustees.

13. NSAM - difficulty in finding Trustees

The Clerk of NSAM has approached the GM Clerk asking for advice as they have two trustees retiring in December and have not so far been able to find replacements. A Zoom discussion will take place on 30th May in which our Clerk will participate. We will give what advice and assistance we can, but feel this is ultimately for the Area Meeting to resolve, if necessary seeking advice from BYM.

The actions agreed at our last meeting regarding a Scottish training day for Trustees were not carried forward because of the covid-19 restrictions, but we feel that we should now proceed to arrange an event by Zoom.

The Clerk will also put in hand arrangements for the Zoom meeting for AM and GM Trustees to share experiences which we agreed at our last meeting, but which has been delayed.

14. Dates of future meetings

Tuesday 13th October by Zoom and Tuesday 23rd February 2021 provisionally in Glasgow.

Martin Burnell
Clerk.