

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND TRUSTEES

Minutes of the meeting held 9th May 2022 by Zoom

Present: Martin Burnell (Clerk), Nigel Dower, Michael Hutchinson (left before the end), Margaret Mortimer, Robin Waterston, Katrina McCrea (by invitation)

Prevented: None

1. Welcome

We began with a brief period of worship. It was noted this meeting was being conducted through video conferencing. Katrina McCrea has been appointed Assistant GM Treasurer from June 2022 and is attending by invitation.

2. Annual report and accounts for 2021

Our Treasurer, Nigel Dower, has presented the draft annual report for 2021 which we approve subject to some minor amendments. We also approve the annual accounts subject to minor amendments to the notes. We note that they have been approved by the independent examiner. Our Clerk will sign the annual report and accounts which will be presented to General Meeting on 11th June 2022. 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.

Nigel has also reported the recent receipt of a legacy of £10,000 from an Aberdeen Friend.

3. Restricted funds

We note that little use has been made in recent years of the General Meeting Fund for Healing. We feel that we should consider better ways of using this fund consistent with the original intention of supporting spiritual healing, and we agree to discuss this further at our next meeting. We ask Nigel to advise Friends through the Scottish Newsletter that this is being considered by Trustees.

4. BYM fundraising in Scotland

It was agreed with BYM that the costs of the Parliamentary Engagement post would be met from the core BYM budget from 2022. The Recording Clerk was however concerned that the overall level of financial support from Friends in Scotland should continue to be maintained through contributions to the BYM annual appeal.

Discussions were begun on the possibility of there being a version of the annual BYM appeal tailored for Scotland but after an initial meeting there has been no further contact from the BYM fundraising team about this. GM agreed, in consultation with the Area

Meetings, that for 2022 the existing £10,000 direct funding from AMs and GM would be maintained while a new fundraising approach was being developed.

We note that £4000 of the £10,000 was contributed by GM, initially from the Jenny Auld legacy and for 2022 from reserves.

We feel it unsatisfactory that General Meeting and the Area Meetings should continue to contribute specifically to this post as opposed to the generality of BYM work. We ask our Clerk and Treasurer, together with the GM Clerk, to seek a meeting with the Clerk to BYM Trustees and the Recording Clerk to consider this further.

5. Safeguarding

The special group of Clerks to Trustees and Safeguarding Officers has now met four times. Discussions have concentrated on the establishment of some general principles which will need to be reflected in the final document. These are attached as an appendix to these minutes.

It was noted the safeguarding group is an informal one. The principles have been agreed by the group to assist the production of a revised policy and procedures. They will go to AMs and GM as part of the proposed new model policy and procedures for their discernment in due course.

The group has established two smaller sub-groups. One to look in more detail at training once the proposed policy and procedures are available, and one to do the detailed work of drafting using the BYM document for England and Wales as a starting point.

6. Update on ACTS/Scottish Churches Forum

At our last meeting it was reported that the voting members from Church of Scotland and the Society of Friends were proposing to call a special meeting of ACTS as provided for in its governing document to enable member churches to understand the lack of progress and to consider what action should be taken in relation to ACTS and its assets.

Subsequently, it appeared that this would be unnecessary as the Chair of ACTS indicated she proposed to call such a meeting. However, this has not happened and the position continues to be unsatisfactory.

We ask our Clerk, after making further enquiries, to write formally to the Chair of ACTS expressing our concern.

7. Liaison with the Local Development Worker

The General Meeting Clerk, in discussion with AM clerks, has proposed a mechanism whereby suggested priorities for the LDW could be put forward annually by Local and Area Meetings which would be considered by a joint meeting of GM and AM Clerks, the LDW and her line manager, following which two areas of priority work would be brought forward to GM for approval.

8. Meeting of Clerks to Scottish Trustees

This group has met twice since our last meeting. It serves as a useful forum for the exchange of information about matters of current concern within Area Meetings including property issues, employment and the simplification of financial work.

9. Minutes of PEWG of 8th March.

These minutes were noted.

10. Any other business

We agreed to discuss at our next meeting the use of legacy money given to General Meeting.

11. Dates of future meetings

Tuesday 9th August as a blended meeting provisionally in Glasgow with BYM fundraising as the major item of business and Tuesday 18th October by Zoom.

Martin Burnell
Clerk.

Points of principle agreed by the informal meeting of Clerks to Trustees and Safeguarding Co-ordinators as a guide in the drafting of a revised Scottish Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures.

- a) The Safeguarding Co-ordinator should not be a Trustee, but one Trustee should be nominated as a link person to give the Safeguarding Co-ordinator ready access to Trustees and to ensure that Trustees received regular reports on safeguarding issues. Trustees carry ultimate legal responsibility for safeguarding.
- b) An introduction to safeguarding issues should be part of the induction of all role holders - clerks, elders, overseers, trustees etc. It need not be a formal course but requires at least a conversation and a record it had taken place. A formal cycle of refresher courses every 3 years was not considered necessary unless there had been changes in legislation or practice, but induction would be necessary for all new appointments.
- c) Basic training in safeguarding (a formal course probably lasting half a day) should be a **requirement** for all those working regularly with young people and that it should be **offered** to all overseers, elders and trustees, recognising that not all would wish to attend. Attendance should be required for Safeguarding Co-ordinators, the Trustee acting as safeguarding link and Meeting House Managers/Wardens. Each local meeting should have at least one elder or overseer who had received basic training.
- d) The Safeguarding Co-ordinator, their deputy if any, the Trustee acting as link and PVG Verifiers will require additional training related to their specific role.
- e) PVG checks are necessary for all those working regularly with children and for Safeguarding Coordinators and assistants. They will only be required for overseers in exceptional circumstances. Trustees of AMs and GM do not qualify for PVG checks under Scottish law.
- f) It is good practice to have a job description for every Quaker role. Those being considered for roles working directly with children plus safeguarding co-ordinators and assistants should be required to fill out a personal details form and provide two referees as part of the process of consideration prior to nomination. For other roles, the use of 'Offers of Service' forms was helpful to nominations committees who would make informal soundings before suggesting someone for appointment.
- g) A formal probationary period was not considered to be consistent with the Quaker nominations process, but everyone newly appointed should be given a mentor to support them in the initial stages of their appointment who could report back any difficulties to nominations committee.
- h) BYM suggests all PVG checks should be formally minuted. We agreed this would be covered by each local meeting listing those with PVG clearance in its annual report to the AM on safeguarding matters. The principle of annual reporting by LMs was agreed although the form this will take will be considered later.

- i) Proof of identity is established as part of PVG checks. Birth and marriage certificates should not be sought as part of the process of appointment to Quaker roles.

- j) Room hire conditions should make clear that organisations using our premises are responsible for safeguarding at their events, but it is going too far to require all such groups to have insurance and a formal safeguarding policy in accordance with national good practice. This is a matter for the groups themselves dependent on the nature of their activities.

- k) It is important to place our specific safeguarding responsibilities for 'adults at risk' as defined by legislation within the context of the broader pastoral care offered by overseers.