

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND TRUSTEES

Minutes of the meeting held 13th October 2020 by Zoom

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

Prevented: Derek McLean

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. Anticipated financial outcome for 2020

We will not spend as much as our budget for 2020 anticipated due to the fact that since March we have not been able to meet physically nor have we had to pay travelling expenses for our representatives or committees. We agree to return the sum of £3000 to Area Meetings, apportioned according to their original quotas.

3. Independent Examiner

We agree to recommend the appointment of Gordon McKay to act as Independent Examiner for the 2020 accounts.

4. Budget for 2021

Our Treasurer, has prepared a draft budget for 2021. This envisages a surplus of £1375 which we feel is prudent in the light of the current uncertain circumstances.

The budget assumes the continuation of the BYM grant, in relation to which the Treasurer has submitted an application as normal.

We agree the attached schedule of proposed donations and note the arrangements for General Meeting to receive reports from representatives.

We approve the draft budget and ask Nigel to introduce it at the General Meeting to be held by Zoom on 31st October.

5. Signature arrangements on bank accounts

We note that on our current bank account, withdrawals can be made with a single signature/electronic authorisation and that it may not be possible with electronic banking to introduce dual authorisation for withdrawals over a defined amount. We agree that in future all

payments over £3000 should require dual authorisation and ask our Treasurer to investigate with the Co-op Bank if this can be applied to online banking.

We agree to ask Derek McLean to be a fourth signatory for our accounts. We ask our Treasurer to check if our savings account requires dual authorisation and if not, to institute this.

6. Parliamentary Engagement Officer

We note that Andrew Tomlinson has been appointed as Parliamentary Engagement Officer to replace Mairi Campbell-Jack but that BYM is not at present in a position to guarantee funding beyond 2021. The appointment has therefore been made on a short-term contract.

7. Local Development Worker

We note that BYM has agreed to appoint a Local Development Worker for Scotland and anticipates making an appointment in February 2021 to start in April. This will be a permanent post working 28 hours per week and will be physically based in Scotland although part of the central organisation of BYM. The informal meeting of AM and GM clerks will liaise with BYM in the meantime pending discussion on longer term liaison arrangements.

8. ACTS

We note that Church Leaders have called an informal meeting to try to find a way forward in relation to the transition from ACTS to the proposed Scottish Christian Forum. Progress was stalled when there was a failure to agree a governing document for the new body. Our Clerk is keeping in close touch with Adwoa Bittle, our ACTS representative, who will report back. We would like to see the current impasse resolved, but consider that the new body must be properly constituted as an organisation and able to take ecumenical initiatives in addition to being a forum for exchange of views.

9. Safeguarding

Our Clerk has reported that Volunteer Scotland is now accepting disclosure applications after previously restricting these to work directly associated with responding to covid-19. However, it appears that it may be necessary for each Area Meeting to join Volunteer Scotland in its own right unless all applications and disclosures are channelled through General Meeting.

We agree to organise a meeting of the Clerks of AM Trustees and AM Safeguarding Co-ordinators in January to consider this further and to review the current operation of the Safeguarding Policy.

10. Informal Meeting of Quaker Trustees in Scotland

An informal meeting of Quaker Trustees in Scotland was held by Zoom on 12th October. This provided a useful exchange of information and views and it was generally felt it would be worth repeating after a few months. Various ideas for areas of collaborative working were discussed. Trustee bodies have been asked to consider which of these might be taken forward and to report back.

11. Grant for IT equipment

The Treasurer was approached by a Friend seeking financial assistance towards the purchase of a computer to enable her to participate in a representative position to which she had been appointed by General Meeting. We agree that in principle such applications can be considered depending on the financial circumstances of the applicant and that decisions should be taken by our Clerk and Treasurer who may, at their discretion, refer the matter to trustees.

12. Insurance

We note that after pursuing several options, it was decided to renew the existing policy.

13. Proposed Memorandum of Understanding with BYM

At a meeting between the Clerks to Trustees of Meeting of Friends in Wales, General Meeting for Scotland and the BYM Governance Officer, it was agreed that further work on the proposed MoUs with BYM should not proceed at the present time in view of pending changes in the roles of those bodies in relation to Area Meetings.

14. GM Governing Document

Our Clerk has drafted some factual updates to the General Meeting Governing Document. We accept these and will consider further, in consultation with Area Meetings, whether the role of General Meeting needs to be more broadly defined. We hope it might be possible to submit a revised document to General Meeting next March.

13. Dates of future meetings

Tuesday 23rd February 2021 by Zoom and Friday 21st May in Glasgow or by Zoom.

Martin Burnell
Clerk