

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND TRUSTEES

Minutes of the meeting held 26th February 2019 in Glasgow

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

Prevented: none

1. Welcome

After a brief period of worship, the Clerk has welcomed Trustees to Glasgow.

2. Annual report and accounts

2.1 Accepting the annual report and accounts

Our Treasurer, Nigel Dower, has presented the draft annual report and accounts for 2018. noting that the accounts still have to go to the independent examiner. We accept the report subject to minor amendments, and the accounts subject to any further comments from the independent examiner and some minor clarifications agreed in the meeting. We thank Nigel for his work on the report and accounts and for his stewardship of our finances.

2.2 Authorisation to sign

We authorise our Clerk on behalf of trustees to sign the annual report and accounts once the amendments have been incorporated and the independent examiner's report received.

2.3 Report to General Meeting

We ask Nigel Dower to present this annual report and accounts at the General Meeting to be held on 8th June 2019.

3. GDPR implementation

Revision of the Book of Members has been more cumbersome this year because of the need to obtain individual data consents in line with the GM's data protection policy. It has been necessary to extend until 1st March the deadline for return of information as many Meetings still had information to submit, and this means the Book will be published later than usual.

Westray and Papa Westray have not yet submitted any information despite numerous requests. We agree that unless it can be confirmed by 1st March that data consents have been obtained, none of their members and attenders can be listed in the Book. Nigel and Derek will contact Sandy McEwan informally.

We agree to ask local meetings for feedback on the implementation of GDPR in general and to consider the need for any amendment to our policy or procedures at our May meeting.

4. Data Security.

Jacqueline Noltingk has introduced a discussion on the things that might be covered by a data security policy. We are conscious of the need to balance security measures with the degree of risk and the requirements of practicality, bearing in mind that much of our administration is carried out by volunteers in their own homes using their own equipment. We ask Jacqueline and Martin to work together, after consulting David Sterratt, to bring a draft statement of good practice back to a future meeting, ideally in May.

5. ACTS and the Scottish Christian Forum

Martin Burnell has reported on correspondence from Huw Lloyd-Richards, our representative on the ACTS Members Meeting and a member of the Transition Group which is to report to ACTS Trustees on transition arrangements. There is considerable lack of clarity at present as to the form which the new Forum will take and an indication that some of the major churches may wish to force the pace of change.

We are supportive of the move to a more inclusive body, preferably with a focus on practical action and co-operation. However, we feel it essential that there is a clearly defined constitution setting out how decisions will be taken and ensuring that the voice of the smaller denominations continues to be heard.

We feel as a member of the current body that the transition to the Scottish Churches Forum needs to be orderly with due regard to the future of any assets currently owned by ACTS and to its liabilities to staff and others. We owe a duty of care to the remaining staff, many of whom have been employed for a long time, and we need to ensure that their rights under employment law, including to a period of consultation, are recognised and respected.

We ask our Clerk, after consulting the GM Clerk, to write to the Convener of ACTS Trustees setting out these views and seeking clarification about how ACTS Trustees intend to proceed.

6. Evaluation of the Parliamentary Advocacy Project

We note the arrangements that have been agreed between the PEWG and BYM to arrange for the commissioning of an independent evaluation of this project. We are content that the selection of an evaluation consultant be left to the PEWG in consultation with staff at Friends House. We note that our Clerk to Trustees and Treasurer will have the opportunity for input to the evaluation on behalf of Trustees as GM postholders. We would, however, like question 4(a)(i) to specifically allow for input by GM Trustees. We hope the evaluation can be completed by the autumn.

7. North Scotland AM concern re trustee arrangements.

We note that the Clerk to General Meeting participated in a well-attended and positive gathering of NSAM on 23rd February. The AM will continue to explore ways of streamlining its administration in consultation with Jonathan Carmichael, the BYM Simplifier

Meetings Project Manager, but is no longer actively pursuing a merger of all trustee bodies across Scotland.

8. Review of Insurance

We agree to undertake a review of our insurance policy as this has not been reviewed for some time. As a first step, our Treasurer will circulate the existing policy and we will try to identify alternative providers.

10. Jenny Auld Legacy

We have been asked how we might assist GM in considering the use to be made of that part of the Jenny Auld legacy which has not been committed to an extension of the Parliamentary Advocacy Project. We are clear that the remaining funds should not be used for routine expenditure, be given away to another organisation nor be used for the parliamentary engagement work.

We suggest that a brainstorming session in small groups at GM might produce some useful ideas to explore further. We have discussed the possibility of educational events, possibly in conjunction with Woodbrooke, to deepen our understanding of Quaker beliefs and to encourage Members to hold office. However, we think GM needs to identify and explore a variety of ideas.

11. GM Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

It is now over 5 years since these were approved and it is evident that they need to be updated. As a first step, our Clerk has asked Madeleine Harding to identify any elements which are clearly now incorrect or out of date. We will consider this further at our May meeting.

12. Dates of future meetings

Tuesday 21st May in Edinburgh (already agreed) and Tuesday 22nd October in Glasgow.

Martin Burnell
Clerk.