

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND TRUSTEES

Minutes of the meeting held 21st May 2020 by Zoom

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

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. We welcome Margaret Mortimer to her first meeting as a trustee.

2. Annual report and accounts for 2020

Our Treasurer, Nigel Dower, has presented the draft annual report for 2020 which we approve. We provisionally approved the accounts at our February meeting and they have now also been approved by the independent examiner. Some very minor amendments have been made as a result of comments at our last meeting and a comment from the Independent Examiner. Our Clerk will sign the annual report and accounts which will be presented to General Meeting on 12th June 2021. We thank Nigel for his work on the report and accounts and for his stewardship of our finances.

We agree a reduced fee of £50 for the work undertaken by Gordon McKay, the independent examiner and express our gratitude for his generosity.

3. Future Funding of Parliamentary Engagement Post

BYM funding of the Parliamentary Engagement post is only guaranteed to the end of 2021. Discussions have taken place between the Recording Clerk, other staff at Friends House, the GM Clerk, Convener of PEWG and clerk to GM Trustees regarding future funding arrangements. Relevant background to this is that BYM has undergone a loss of lettings income, previous legacy funds have been exhausted and they are now aiming to reach a balanced budget by 2023. Broadly speaking an increase of 20% in contributions from Friends will be required to avoid cuts in activity.

It has been agreed in principle that the Parliamentary Engagement post will be fully funded from the BYM core budget from 2022 onwards. BYM is looking to Scottish Area Meetings to participate in a joint funding appeal which would focus on the benefits Friends in Scotland receive from the central work, particularly the Parliamentary Engagement post and the Local Development Worker. Friends in other parts of BYM will also be asked to increase their contributions.

Although General Meeting will no longer be expected to contribute the £10,000 pa that it have given towards the Parliamentary Engagement post over the last six years, BYM, while relying on a hoped for increase from the general funding appeal, is looking for a

guarantee that if contributions do **not** increase, Friends in Scotland will make up any shortfall by an amount up to the £10,000 pa that they are giving at the moment.

The General Meeting Clerk called a meeting of AM Clerks and Treasurers on 14th May to explain the position and seek their support both for the fundraising campaign and the temporary financial underwriting. The issue is now being referred to AM and GM trustees in the hope that at least the underwriting of up to £10,000 pa can be agreed by GM on June 12th, which in turn would enable BYM to issue a permanent contract to the current postholder.

We have discussed the practicalities of underwriting the £4000 that has previously come direct from GM funds or the Jenny Auld legacy. We have been advised by the Treasurer that our reserves are sufficient to give the guarantee without drawing further on the Jenny Auld legacy. We support the principle of a Scottish fundraising campaign and suggest that GM Trustees might take greater responsibility for considering whether Friends throughout Scotland are adequately supporting the central work in conjunction with the proposed fundraising campaign.

4. Safeguarding

Further to minute 11 of our meeting on 23rd February, it is apparent that a number of Area Meetings have queries about some aspects of the new BYM recommendations on Safeguarding. The documents that have been issued may be subject to a number of revisions, and in any case a version compatible with Scottish law has not yet been produced. We therefore agree to await the outcome of the current discussions in England and receipt of the Scottish version before taking further steps to revise the model Scottish Safeguarding Policy. The target date for completion of this work is the end of 2022. We will notify Area Meeting Trustees of our approach.

5. Establishment of Google group for Clerks to Trustees

We note that an informal Google group has been established for Clerks to Trustees in BYM to enable mutual sharing of information and discussion of shared issues. This is being supported by BYM technically but has no official status. The Clerk to GM Trustees and Clerk to Trustees of Meeting of Friends in Wales have been admitted to the group.

6. Co-operation between trustees in Scotland

The proposed initial meeting of Clerks to Trustees in Scotland has not yet taken place in view of the large number of other meetings for trustees across BYM arranged in the first part of this year. A meeting is now being called to discuss the proposed fundraising campaign and to agree what other meetings would be helpful in the rest of the year.

7. Preparations for COP26

We note that preparations are continuing in relation to Quaker communications during COP26.

8. Progress Report on the Scottish Christian Forum

Adwoa Bittle, our representative to ACTS, has been appointed as a trustee of the new Scottish Christian Forum and work continues on setting it up. The trustees of ACTS are proceeding with the procedures necessary to wind up that body and to transfer its funds to the SCF.

9. Proposed GM Zoom account

Up to now, General Meeting has used Martin Burnell's personal Zoom account which will be closed in June after General Meeting. As remote meetings are still currently necessary and blended meetings are likely to be a permanent feature of GM, we agree that GM should take out a Zoom account at a cost of approximately £120 pa. We thank Martin Burnell for making his Zoom account available to General Meeting for the last 12 months.

10. Revision to GM Governing Document

No objections have been received from local meetings or AMs to the amendments to the GM Governing Document proposed by trustees. GM will be asked to formally approve the changes at its meeting on 12th June.

11. Revision of Quaker Faith and Practice

The meeting we provisionally fixed for 23rd March to discuss this did not take place and the deadline for responding to this particular consultation has passed. Michael Booth has advised that this consultation about trusteeship is only an initial exercise and he is expecting that further consultations will happen while material is being developed. The Clerk will circulate the relevant chapters from the 5th Edition of Quaker Faith and Practice to Trustees and we will consider further at our next meeting whether we need to discuss this in more detail.

14. Dates of future meetings

Tuesday 12th October in Glasgow or by Zoom or blended and Tuesday 22nd February 2022 in Edinburgh or blended.

Martin Burnell
Clerk.