

GENERAL MEETING FOR SCOTLAND TRUSTEES

Minutes of the meeting held 22nd October 2019 in Glasgow

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

1. Welcome

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

2. Budget for 2019

Nigel Dower, Treasurer, has prepared a draft budget for 2020. Due to some additional earmarked contributions, income in the current year will probably be about £1000 more than budgeted. The budget for 2020 envisages a deficit of £430 after drawing down £4000 from the Auld Legacy. Just under £13,000 of the Auld Legacy has not yet been committed.

The budget assumes the continuation of the BYM grant, in relation to which the Treasurer has submitted an application as normal. We note the Family Weekend was very successful but ran at a deficit higher than anticipated. The event for new members and attenders made a small surplus

We agree the attached schedule of proposed donations. The subscription to the Joint Committee on Religious and Moral Education has been removed and the following recipients of donations added: Stop Climate Chaos, Together Scotland and the Scottish Peace Network.

We approve the draft budget subject to a minor adjustment to the figure for staffing costs and ask Nigel to introduce it at the General Meeting to be held on 16th November 2019 in Perth.

3. Insurance

Nigel has reported that he is still investigating alternative insurance providers but has not yet found a cheaper quotation covering our exact requirements. We agree he should pursue this further with our brokers.

4. Independent Examiner

We agree to recommend the appointment of Gordon Mackay to act as Independent Examiner for the 2019 accounts.

5. GM Administrator

We note the resignation of Marion Sharkey as our GM Administrator and thank her for her work over the last 4 years. She has agreed to continue in post until we have made a new

appointment and to assist with the handover, for which we are grateful. We have reviewed the job description, person specification and terms of appointment. We agree that an advertisement be placed in The Friend, The Scottish Friend, and circulated to local meeting clerks within Scotland with a view to interviews being held on 9th December. We agree the interview panel should consist of the GM Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Clerk to GM Trustees and Michael Hutchinson as a trustee.

6. Report of telephone conference with BYM Trustees and Clerk to Meeting of Friends in Wales

Jacqueline Noltingk represented GM Trustees as the Clerk was on holiday. She has reported that it was difficult being the only person not in the room. It seems Wales is close to agreeing a MoU with BYM. The question of a Scottish MoU was not raised. It is clear that some issues, particularly language, are different for Wales than in Scotland, although there are other things in common. There was some discussion of the Vibrancy Project (now renamed Experiments in Faith). If Scotland wants a Scottish-based worker, we will need to make a bid. She was also asked about the Parliamentary Advocacy project and how priorities are set for the work. We thank Jacqueline for her report.

We agree to ask the GM Clerk to include an item on Experiments in Faith on the agenda of next General Meeting as we see this represents a good opportunity, and to draw this to the attention of Area Meetings as well.

7. ACTS

We have discussed a letter from Sandy Horsburgh, convenor of the Church of Scotland Ecumenical Relations Committee, proposing that at the next Members Meeting of ACTS on 18th November a resolution be passed initiating the dissolution of the organisation. A separate, new charity, the Scottish Christian Forum would be established with similar objectives and would in due course take ownership of the remaining assets once ACTS was dissolved.

We have some doubts as to whether this is the best way to proceed and a number of questions. We have agreed the terms of a response to be sent on our behalf to Sandy Horsburgh. Our Clerk and the GM Clerk intend to go to the Members Meeting, although each church has only one vote.

8. Evaluation of Parliamentary Advocacy Project

We have received a copy of the report of the consultant engaged by BYM to assess the project. The assessment is supportive of the project but is a summary of the views expressed rather than containing recommendations. Among the issues raised are the fact that the work is not well-integrated into BYM organisationally and that priorities established for the project may be different to the priorities of QPSW and Meeting for Sufferings; that proposals for the decentralisation of some Friends House staff might provide additional support for the Parliamentary Engagement Officer; that there is a need for additional administrative support; and that funding needs to be put on a more permanent basis.

In discussion it has been pointed out that the parliamentary engagement aspects of the project have been more successful than creating an awareness of Quaker concerns through the media.

We see the next step being a discussion involving representatives from GM Trustees, the PEWG and BYM staff, preferably the Recording Clerk or his deputy. We feel there needs to be a clearer definition of the scope and objectives of the project, We would welcome a meeting between BYM Trustees and GM Trustees to consider a wider range of issues if the opportunity arose and we agree the Clerk should speak in the first instance to Alastair Reid about this.

9. Minutes of PEWG for 30th July and 24th September

We note receipt of these minutes

10. Electronic Data Security

We have considered draft advice on this subject prepared by Jacqueline and Martin. We agree that subject to some minor amendment and consultation with David Sterratt, this can now be issued. We see the need for one or more technical advisors to assist Friends with queries about data security and ask GM Nominations Committee to suggest one or more names.

11. Conference of the Parties environmental conference

Michael Hutchinson has reported that West Scotland Area Meeting has established a Hub Group involving local Friends, the Parliamentary Engagement Working Group and staff at Friends House to co-ordinate the Quaker response to this major UN Climate Conference to be held in Glasgow in November 2020. We support this initiative by West AM.

12. Update on Safeguarding Arrangements

The Clerk has reported that he prepared a paper for the meeting of clerks held in July and although he is still waiting for formal confirmation, it has been indicated informally that we can go ahead with proposals to use Volunteer Scotland to process disclosure requests.

Following an indication that BYM was happy for us to attempt to negotiate new arrangements with Thirtyone:eight for the provision of safeguarding advice within Scotland, he has written formally to Thirtyone:eight proposing that membership be held by GM rather than at AM level. If this approach is rejected, we agree that we should look at alternative sources of safeguarding advice within Scotland. BYM do not require membership of Thirtyone:eight, but are anxious that meetings should have advice available when needed.

We thank our Clerk for his work on this. We are still awaiting the new Model Safeguarding Policy from BYM and will further review our Policy when we receive this.

13. Dates of future meetings

Tuesday 25th February 2020 in Edinburgh and 26th May in Glasgow.

Martin Burnell
Clerk