



Unitarians in Edinburgh

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 26th May 2019 at 12.40 hours in the Church Hall.

1. Present: The meeting was chaired by Mary McKenna (Convener) with the minister, 27 members and 4 friends in attendance. The meeting was quorate. Mary apologised for the delay in getting the Annual Report and Accounts to the Congregation but work on the accounts had been protracted.

2. Welcome and Opening Words:

Mary welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Apologies for Absence:

Jon and Mulan Bagust, Andrew and Margaret Hill, Kate Foggo, Amy McDonald, John and Barbara Clifford, Amy McDonald, and Edward Prince.

4. Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 24th June 2018 and any Matters Arising:

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 24th June 2018 were approved as a correct record of the 2018 meeting. The approval of the minutes was proposed by Lynsey Bailey and seconded by Michael West.

5. Convener's Report:

Mary McKenna summarised our performance on the plans agreed for the year 2018. In May Rev. Peter Fairbrother was appointed and we have experienced a wide variety of thoughtful worship from Peter since then and he has supported members and friends to plan and deliver services. There has been a small but significant increase in the number of people attending services. Peter has developed our pastoral care work and is committed to building the community. A new outside sign has been produced and we have raised our profile with an updated website and Facebook. We had as a community an outing to Same Ling Monastery in the Autumn. On the venue we had a number of groups renting the premises and this and the fringe contributed to our income substantially. Help is needed in supporting the overseeing of these events from the congregation and members and friends were asked to consider this and speak to Ann Sinclair. More people are needed to go on the Church Rotas and those interested should speak to Jane Aaronson. If anyone wished to help organise Social Activities they should speak to Lynsey Bailey.

The basement work had not yet taken place as we did not have the resources (financial and people) to do this at present. The sound system has been almost completely upgraded. Thanks went to everyone who had made this happen.

We concluded we had addressed many of our aims we set ourselves, with the exception of our green credentials and St Mark's is looking for someone who could pioneer environmental issues in relation to the Church.

Gillian Stamper expressed thanks to Council and members for all their work.

6. Future Ministry:

Mary McKenna advised the meeting that Council had met on 22 May 2019 to discuss the future ministry of St Mark's and after exploring all the possibilities had agreed that a proposal would be put to a special General Meeting of the Congregation in September 2019 that we appoint the Rev. Peter Fairbrother on a part-time permanent contract.

7. Presentation of the Trustees Annual Report for 2018:

The Treasurer, Alasdair McDonald summarised the Financial Report for 2018.

Income continued to come from donations, subscriptions, grants, investments and venue lets. Ali said that the last twelve months had been very different from the previous twelve months. There had been a drop in donations and legacies of £ 3000 for 2018. Collections had remained about the same. There had been a drop in the income in 2018 from the Speed Trust from £ 8000 to £ 4000, over which we had no control.

Expenditure Our main aim had been to find a new minister and since the appointment of our Minister in May 2018, we now have considerably more expenditure. We also pay people to provide services to us, such as care-taking, cleaning, financial assistance, music and assistance with the Children's Programme, on contracts. These are invaluable supports to maintaining the community.

To meet these expenditures we rely on our investments, and the Geddie Fund, which are managed for us by Brewin Dolhpin, as an essential part of our monthly income. Our investment portfolio dropped in value in 2018 from £ 370,000 to £ 325,000, though to date we have not had to reduce our draw down. Our investments are reviewed regularly and this year we have updated our investment policy which is contained in the Annual Report.

Ali confirmed that between £ 68,000 and £70,000 were readily accessible from our current account. He acknowledged a need to increase income and advised that it is really helpful if members and friends subscribe to St Mark's using a standing order and those who pay tax should complete a gift-aid form. Ali will make gift-aid forms available. Beyond this the most effective way to increase our income is by growing our membership.

A question was raised about the basement work which would eventually need to be done. It is estimated this work might cost £120,000, eating into our reserves, unless grants were available.

Ali thanked B Jones for her help with gift-aid, and Council for all their help. Ali had come to the end of his term as Treasurer. The meeting thanked Ali for all his work as treasurer and wished him and his family well.

8. Adoption of Trustees Annual Report and Accounts 2018:

Gill Stamper proposed that the Annual Report and Accounts for 2018 be accepted and Lesley Hartley seconded this proposal. The accounts were adopted by the meeting. When signed by Mary McKenna and Alasdair McDonald they will be sent to Chiene and Tait and copied to OSCR.

9. Election of Council Members:

The following 9 nominations (out of a maximum of 9) for Council had been received for session 2019/2020:-

Mary McKenna, Margery MacKay, Ann Sinclair, Jane Aaronson, Joan Cook, Lesley Hartley, Kirsty Murray, Hugh McNeil, Katie Brown

The meeting elected these nominees who had already been proposed and seconded individually by members of the Congregation. Council members are the Trustees and Council will appoint the Officers at the first Council meeting. This was proposed by David McGill and seconded by Anne Witcomb.

10. Appointment of Independent Examiner of Accounts:

Our current Examiner was Chiene and Tait and they knew us well and did a good job, but they were expensive. At the AGM in 2018 it was agreed that Council explore other possibilities. Because of our level of income our Accounts could be presented in a simpler manner and Council proposed that we appoint Susanne Urquhart, a member, who is a Chartered Examiner and is prepared to do this. This was proposed by Gillian Stamper and seconded by Jane Aaronson.

11. Affiliations of the Society:

The seven affiliations on page 6 of the 2018 Annual Report were reaffirmed for 2019. These were acceptable to the meeting for the 2019/2020 session.

12 Any other Competent Business:

None

13. Vote of Thanks:

Thanks went to Ali McDonald (and for his work as Treasurer) and Bláthnaid Quinn who were stepping down from Council.

14. Closing Words:

Peter closed the meeting with a blessing for Change. He thanked everyone for attending.

15. Values and Behaviours Workshop:

Following the AGM Julia Macintosh who facilitated a Workshop for members and friends on 9th March 2019 on “Values and Behaviours” at which 17 members and friends participated, was invited to share some of the work.

Julia outlined the six key values they appreciated about St Mark’s, from an individual, community and personal point of view. These were:-

Community, Integrity, Learning, Kindness, Peace and Joy

Mary explained that this was the beginning of a dialogue and that everyone would be involved. Julia invited people who were interested to a future “Journaling Workshop”.

Thanks went to Julia for all her work.

Margery MacKay (Secretary) and Mary McKenna (Convener)

3 June 2019

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