# UNITARIANS IN EDINBURGH

# Minutes from Council Meeting 27/02/24 at 7pm on Zoom

(Any potential conflicts of interest were declared as they arose)

1. Welcome and Apologies:

Present: Julie Finneran (Chair), Elyse Jacks, Mandy Orr, Ann Sinclair, Jill Woolman,

Joan Cook.

Julie welcomed everyone to the meeting with a short check-in.

Opening Words:

To start the meeting, Elyse led us in a relaxing grounding meditation, which encouraged us to listen attentively.

1. Minutes of Council meeting 15/01/24:

Acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting of Council was proposed by Julie, and seconded by Ann.

1. Update on roof repairs, financial position and insurance company visit:

A report was received from Ann (Chair, Management Team). The works on the roof of the upper hall are now complete.

Portable Appliance Testing [PAT] has been carried out. Our caretaker is exploring the possibility of the Church purchasing a kit which would enable this to be done in-house in the future.

The area of the ceiling above the balcony with fallen plaster is to be repaired soon.

Financial:

Ann is pursuing the possibility of a VAT refund on the costs of replacement glazing etc. from the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme.

Ann (outgoing Acting Treasurer) and Jill (incoming Treasurer) are pursuing the changing of signatories, and access to on-line banking for the Church’s bank accounts.

1. Review of St. Mark’s policies on ‘Bullying’ and ‘Complaints and Grievances’:

The documents have been reviewed by members of Council, and no additions, corrections or inclusions were found to be necessary. Julie will sign hard copies for the Church, and post the documents on the website.

1. Delegates to General Assembly.:

Council was pleased to approve Elyse & Jill, as St Mark’s delegates to the Annual Meetings of the General Assembly in April.

The voting, procedures, motions and re-imbursement were discussed.

The possibility of a ‘Reporting Back’ service following the meetings on 7/4/24 was raised, Jill and Elyse are happy to lead that.

1. Update on ‘the Way Ahead’ survey.

There were 10 responses to the survey.

The suggestions identified, incl. new projects, activities, communications, engagement, Ministry, and will be used as topics for the small group discussions at the meeting on the 3rd March.

Elyse will circulate anonymised responses.

1. Possible Ministry student: *NB Confidential Item*

*Joan declared a possible Conflict of Interest as a member of the Unitarian College board.*

Should St Mark’s proceed with the possibility of having a Ministry student on placement, the congregation will need to look at practicalities such as;

finances, accommodation, preparation, and management of expectations from the congregation, as well as a working schedule which would suit the student and congregational needs.

It was suggested that Council (as many members as are available) should have a zoom meeting withRev Ant Howe, Ministry Tutor. *Joan to contact Ant*

1. Discussion on ‘New Smart goals’ meeting to be held on 3rd March.

Ways of including those on zoom were discussed, to be explored. *Elyse*

Julie will host in the hall, Elyse on zoom.

A1 Flip chart, paper and pens are needed. *Ann and Jill*

1. Cork boards in Upper Hall.

The notice boards do provide a degree of sound deadening, but we no longer require as much ‘notice board space’, so it was proposed we re-hang the 2 noticeboards of the wall next to the door into the hall, but not the one by the kitchen.

*Ann to liaise with Caretaker*

9. Any Team Updates not covered already:

Management team /Financial team.

See [3] above.

Ministry team/Pastoral team.

At the recent Ministry Team meeting there was discussion around the routine tasks involved in supporting the zooming of services. It was decided that Julie and Joan would discuss the possibilities of the technical support host to include opening up, admitting people, and the sharing of slides as part of their duties.

Elyse confirmed that these tasks could be included in the in-Church tech support role, it was decided to start this Sunday.

Jane has kindly said she is willing to continue with the current situation until a plan is decided on, and ready to go, and is prepared to continue hosting online Teas & Coffees.

We will need a rota for hosts for the zoom only services.

It was suggested that there was no real need for notices to go into chat box, as all those online have access, by definition to the e-bulletin. Some notices re: collection, Teas & Coffees, etc. may still need to be added, Jane to supply a note of these, which will be looked at, and the most appropriate way to include these.

It was also noted that Jane has been dealing with the support of the zoom attenders single handedly, for practically every Sunday, for the past four years.

Council expressed their thanks to Jane for the time, effort, and energy she has put into this role.

Communications team.

We are grateful to Monika for continuing to monitor the Facebook pages, and Julie the website since our Web Manager left.

11. Safeguarding issues: No issues or concerns have been noticed or raised.

12. Any Other Competent business.

EIFA donations; Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association has asked member organisations to look at the possibility of increasing their donations, and perhaps for members of congregations to become Individual Members. It was thought that St Mark’s should support EIFA by increasing their donation from £50 to £100.

*Jill /Ann*

E-Bulletin; it was thought the bulletin provides a good deal of information on services, meetings, events etc, but could be made simpler. Members of the congregation are to be asked which parts of the bulletin they find most useful, or relevant to them, at the meeting on 3rd March.

*Elyse & Julie*

It was suggested that St Mark’s may benefit from offering a sound technician placement to a student from one of the colleges/universities to enable the current technical support team to have some free Sundays.

A Social Anthropology student from Edinburgh University has approached St. Mark’s for permission to conduct some research at the Church, looking at membership, Unitarianism etc. Jill has volunteered to liaise with him.

*Jill*

13. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 17th April 2024 at 7pm on zoom.

Opening & Closing words will be given by Ann.

14. Closing Words:

Elyse closed the meeting with words from Joan Sutphen, an American poet, and

Paul Tillich, a German-American Christian existentialist philosopher.