UNITARIANS IN EDINBURGH

Minutes of Council Meeting 14/11/23 at 7pm on Zoom

*(Any conflicts of interest to be noted as the meeting proceeds)*

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present: Julie Finneran *(Convenor),* Ann Sinclair *(Acting Treasurer),* Mandy Orr, Elyse Jacks, Brian Robertson, Joan Cook *(minute taker)*.

Apologies: *none*

Opening Words were taken from ’You and your microbiome' about the role of the microbes in our bodies' in the New Scientist, read by Ann. “The human being is not a discrete organism, but a meta-organism”

1. Minutes of Council meeting 11/10/23 were agreed as correct, proposed by Julie, seconded by Brian.
2. Update from Ann on roof repairs, financial position and pre-visit questionnaire from insurance company.

Ann submitted a full written report. Due to the inclement weather there have been some delays on external works, but time was spent on internal work. Slates have been removed from one side of the building (with appropriate weather-proofing in situ) with faulty slates to be replaced with Scottish slate to match existing slates, in line with conservation area requirements.

The first invoice has been received, £27,696, and paid by Ann.

The pre-Visit Questionnaire from the insurers is just about completed, with the checks on lightning conductors to be carried out on completion of works by the contractors.

Portable Appliance Testing has not yet been carried out due to the difficulties in finding an electrician prepared to do this as yet.

1. Team Updates:
	1. Management team / Financial team

 The recent problems with the heating have been resolved.

 With permission for access, our caretaker has been able to re-paint the kitchen walls, as well as sanding and oiling the wooden worktops.

 Gas bills will be rising as we come to the end of our current agreement. This will result in greater costs to those using our building, but will be introduced gradually over a period of time.

 The church broadband and telephone contracts have been renewed which will improve speeds, with Virgin, at no extra cost. A new router should be arriving in the next couple of days.

  Our caretaker is investigating the purchase of a 50” monitor and appropriate cabling, together with a portable stand, which are expected to cost around £800.

 The two events taking place in the Church on 16th (Christmas Carol) and 17th (Mrs Wetherby’s Christmas Party) may be of interest to members of the congregation, and will be advertised in the bulletin, along with ticket prices.

* 1. Ministry team /Pastoral team

 The Pastoral Care team have held their final meeting, with responsibilities being taken on by Ministry team. Council expressed their recognition of the work undertaken by this team in the past and thanked those who have been involved.

 It has been suggested that a special collection could be taken at the Christmas service for a local homeless charity, Social Bite was proposed and agreed. Those on zoom will be able to donate individually.

* 1. Communications team – proposal for consultation exercise.

 No report from communications team.

1. Contractor rates.

 Rates for the hourly paid contractors are due for review, as there is expected to be a rise in the minimum wage in the Treasury statement later this month, it was decided to defer a decision until then. We are aware of the need to ensure we are rewarding the good-will and loyalty of our contractors, as well as recognising local rates for similar tasks.

1. Set new Smart goals. Offer by Elyse to help facilitate this – date?

It was felt that goals should be set with the expectation that they could be completed or extended following the election of a new Council at the next AGM.

It was decided to hold an open (to all members) workshop on 21st January, to look at the ‘Way Ahead’ for St. Mark’s, which would then inform the selection of SMART goals. This will be discussed further at the December meeting.

1. Subgroup to look at options for ‘the Way Ahead’?

 It was suggested that a group including Elyse and Mandy (with possibly Monika) have been asked to look at compiling a questionnaire for inclusion in the bulletin, to feed into the ‘Way Ahead’ workshop on 21st January in the Church, following the service. Julie will include a notice to give advance notice of the workshop, to try and encourage as many of the congregation to attend in person, as possible. Those on zoom will be asked to provide questions, comments, suggestions in advance.

Fundraising was discussed, it was felt that increasing the use of the building by various groups and charities, increasing awareness of the Church’s potential with other charities, as well as encouraging new users would be profitable in many ways. This could be one of the topics for discussion at the ‘Way Ahead’ workshop.

1. Upcoming social events

 Following our Christmas Celebration on 17th December, we will hold a special lunch in the Church after the service. As we will still not be able to access the hall.

 There will be a ‘Christmas Coffee & Chat’ and Christmas Tree decorating on the morning of Saturday 16th December.

1. Safeguarding issues

 There were no issues to report.

1. Any Other Competent business

 A review of policies is overdue and will be carried out at the next meeting. Any comments suggestions in advance of the meeting to Joan please.

1. Date of next meeting? Who will do next ‘words’

Next meeting to be held on 12th December 2023 at 7pm on zoom, with Opening and Closing words by Brian.

‘Way Ahead’ workshop to be held on 21st January in St Mark’s at 1:30pm following the service. **(Note: this date is now to be changed due to a slight delay in completing work on the roof)**

1. Closing Words read by Ann, from the same piece in the New Scientist,

“People think of themselves as being apart from nature,

and we need to go back to thinking of ourselves as being part of nature”.

*JMMC*

*15/11/23*