Trustees of South East Scotland Area Meeting

Minutes of meeting (25.4)

At 6.45 pm on Tuesday, 22 April 2025 at 7 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh

Present:	Mark Ballard (online) Katrina McCrea Jonathan Riddell (AM Treasurer) Ian Robertson Martin Ward (clerk) Henry Thompson (Edin MH Management Committee) items 1-4
Minutes copied to:	Alastair Cameron (AM Clerk) Cath Dyer (AM Assistant Clerk) Jacqueline Noltingk (TT rep on MHMC)

1	**Introduction** We began with a welcome from the clerk and a short period of opening worship. All trustees are present. Apologies have been received from the AM Clerk.	
2	**Declarations of conflict of interest** There are no declarations of conflict of interest.	
3	**Matters arising from last meeting, 22 Apr 2025** There are no matters arising that are not covered on the agenda.	
4	**Edinburgh Meeting House** Henry Thompson reported for Meeting House Management Committee. Duncan Wallace has joined the committee, and along with Rachel Fitzgerald will take the lead on matters to do with the fabric and maintenance of our property in Edinburgh. The Warner Brothers filming went ahead without major incident, but having someone on duty overnight was clearly necessary. After extensive consultations, agreements have been reached about upgrading both our intruder alarm and our fire alarm systems, for a total cost of just over £2,000, as agreed with the Treasurer. Managers will have better control over their operation, and gain a "lone worker alarm" function. Hartley Kemp of C Venues has been involved in the procurement process and is happy that the functionalities he needs for the Fringe will be met. Henry Thompson has begun to review the C Venues programme of shows, which has only just appeared. Henry has conducted a six month review at the end of the probationary period for the Meeting House managers, Andy Tucker and Sammi Searle. This was a positive experience and their appointment is therefore confirmed. MHMC will confirm whether the draft quinquennial report from John Renshaw can be accepted. A number of questions on next steps will be agreed with MHMC and put back to John Renshaw by our clerk. Trustees, MHMC and staff are continuing to consider possible improvements beyond the routine maintenance recommended by the architect in his quinquennial inspection, for consideration along with the budget process for future years. To that end the Meeting House Managers, Katrina McRea, Ian Robertson, Martin Ward, Jacqueline Noltingk (from MHMC) and David Sterratt (one of the authors of the Affordability Group Report in 2023) were able to tour the meeting house again today to look at some features.	

	We have reviewed our published lettings policy and the procedure for controversial bookings dated March 2023 in the light of the police raid on Westminster Meeting House and subsequent legal advice provided to BYM. We do not see a need to change the policy and procedures at present but will review them again next year or when asked by MHMC, We have reviewed toilet provision at our meeting houses in the light of the recent Supreme Court ruling on the meaning of 'sex' in relation to the Equality Act 2010. In line with recent statements by BYM Trustees on facilities at Friends House and Swarthmore Hall, we confirm that we wish SESAM meeting houses to be welcoming to all including, as confirmed in minute 31 of BYM in 2021, trans and non-binary people. We do not police the biological sex of those using our toilets and note that single user facitilies are available at both meeting houses.	
5	**Risk Register for SESAM** We have reviewed the provisional risk ratings following the scoring carried out at our last meeting and agree that the resulting ranking seems reasonable. Our clerk will schedule a review of each risk in the course of our meetings over the next two years. We are pleased to note that Martin Burnell will be reviewing the health and safety manual for SESAM over the next few weeks, and look forward to receiving the results.	
6	**Kelso Meeting House** We note that the plan to replace the coaches on the gates with 'Qs' has been shelved, but that the architect will be contacted to consider how structural issues with the gates are addressed.	
7	**Local Meetings** We have received minute 2025/06/03 of Portobello and Musselburgh local meeting, reporting the success of the offer for Bellfield Big Build community shares. The additional guarantee offered from SESAM was therefore welcome but not required in the event. Chris Holman, as local meeting treasurer, has been nominated by them to hold on our behalf the £2500 shares which were purchased. We agree to this appointment and add our thanks to Chris and to other Friends in Portobello and Musselburgh for their work on this exercise. We look forward to hearing how the work progresses.	
8	**Treasurer's Matters** Following our last meeting we confirmed by correspondence that minute 7 of that meeting should be understood as giving approval for the clerk and treasurer to present the annual report and accounts to Area Meeting on 6th May. This was done, and Area Meeting authorised the clerk to sign them. Area Meeting also noted our proposal that consultation on the right use of the legacy from Sue Freshwater should take place alongside a budget process for 2026 and beyond. We agree that our clerk and treasurer, consulting with MHMC, SESAM clerks and David Sterratt (in relation to the 7VT affordability study) should draw up a draft budget for the next three years which we can consider in September for presentation to AM in November, bearing in mind the following principles: • The budget should be presented for AM approval before year end, thereby meeting our commitment to consult on the legacy • It will be short and understandable to those attending SESAM • It might group some headings to keep it simple • It shouild give AM chance to steer priorities, within a realistic framework • It should distinguish if possible between routine spending and investment in upgrading our buildings • It should cover 2026 plus two further years to make a three year overall	

	- horizon, to take account of the legacy (timing of some spend will depend on architects and builders, in practice) - Investments should aim to enable the two meeting houses to cover their costs by 2029, once Quaker use of the buildings (at prevailing rates) is taken into account. - We should engage with Friends across SESAM on plans as they develop, and with General Meeting for Scotland, given the need to balance investment in buildings with other Quaker activities and that 7VT is an asset for all Quakers in the area and across Scotland. Our Treasurer has provided a copy of the management accounts to the end of May, and a written report. We ask our Treasurer, in consultation with JN, to report back to us on how 2024 outturn compared with the pessimistic and optimistic scenarios in the 2023 Affordability Report. We note that the annual return has been sent to OSCR. We note that opening new accounts takes considerable time and effort and we need to bear this in mind in our decisions. We note a number of changes in the Treasury Team. Philip Corrie-Hawes, assistant treasurer for local meetings, is leaving at the end of June, being replaced by Chris Jardine. We thank Philip for his service and authorise the consequent changes in signatories for the Bank of Scotland, Triodos and Charity Bank accounts. Jacqueline Noltingk, currently Treasury Team representative on MHMC, will complete her service at the end of September, and there is no replacement appointed yet.	
9	**Any Other Business** Our clerk is unable to be at Area Meeting on 21st June. We ask Katrina McRae and Ian Robertson to ensure a presence from trustees. We agree that our Treasurer can set up an account with Google “Workspace for Nonprofits” to try and see whether it works better for us than Dropbox.	
10	**Next meetings** - 2nd September (TBC at Kelso or 7VT and online) - 28th October (probably mostly in person at 7VT)	