

Meeting House Management Committee Notes
Tuesday 13 May, 5:15 p.m., in 7 Victoria Terrace

Actions noted in bold

Attendance

In person – Henry Thompson (HST), Rachel Fitzgerald (RF), Duncan Wallace (DW), Sammi Searle (SS), Andy Tucker (AT), JP Ascher (JPA), Laragh Quinney (LQ), Jackie Noltingk (JN)
Online – Katrina Macrea (KM)

Convenor's Report

Trustees meetings 14 January, 18 March
Nothing to report

6 month review with MH Managers
This has been scheduled between HST, SS & AT.

Meeting with Central Edinburgh Clerks
HST has met with Mark Bitel and Juliet Henderson following two incidents that caused some concern amongst staff.

Following the Westminster police invasion, Juliet had asked Ellie to write out some extracts from Faith & Practice and post them in the meeting house windows. Juliet did this without explaining her role in the meeting and without consulting the managers. Juliet apologised during the meeting with HST and it was clarified that dressing the windows is a LM responsibility and that a group for this is in existence. This group could use some support and are happy to receive input from staff on this issue and we believe they will get in touch with the managers when they're ready and able to take things forward. **HST will confirm with the window dressing group that this is the case.**

It was also clarified that the artwork on the walls of the meeting house is the managers' responsibility.

HST will write a short article for local Friends that introduces the staff and explains the staffing structure and the correct procedures to use to contact them and make requests.

The other item discussed at the meeting was the issue of late running LM events on Sundays. It was clarified that staff should make sure they inform local Friends when they're nearing the end time of their event to ensure a prompt finish, in the same manner as they would for paying hirers through the week.

Trustees meeting 2025-04-25 et al.

The building tour that took place on this date was a great success and HST expressed his thanks to staff for their help in answering questions. Trustees raised a few issues:

- Is it possible for managers to obtain an estimate from our lift servicing provider on the expected life expectancy of our lift? **SS & AT to take this on**
- The Westminster Meeting House police invasion was raised, particularly in relation to our lettings policy, and trustees asked for an update which HST provided. HST also took the opportunity to remind trustees that the review of the lettings policy is sitting with them and awaiting action. They undertook to look at this.
- The quinquennial review was discussed as the report is still in draft form. **HST will send the draft report to RF and DW. JN will also look at the report again and make any comments.** Once all of our comments on the report are fed back to trustees, they will send them on to John Renshaw who should take them into account in the final report.

Manager's Report

Warner Bros.

The film company have scaled back their 'ask' in terms of space hire in June which means the filming will be less disruptive. They will still need around 72 hours of use though which amounts to around £4700 of income.

HST suggested that the managers request an upfront payment of £1000 to secure the booking.

Westminster invasion by police

SCALP (Scottish Community & Activist Legal Project) have offered to do some tailored training for staff. SS & AT are in the process of firming up a date and will then offer it out to other local churches/venues as well as local Friends.

DW shared that Adam Ballard from Portobello and Musselburgh LM has put together a manual for young friends on these issues and that he is hoping to be able to share it with us soon.

The Managers are also working with local Friends on our social media presence in this regard.

Staffing

SS & AT met with Ellie for her 3 month job review which had gone very well. Ellie had shared with them that prior to their starting in post she had been very close to leaving the Meeting House but since SS and AT started, she has gone full circle and is really enjoying her work.

A 3 month review with Majk has been scheduled.

The next all staff meeting is next week and they are combining it with a belated Christmas 'do'! At the gathering the staff will trial the new menu being offered by Lemon Tree to see if it will work for the building hirers.

Trustees meeting 2025.04.25

SS and AT felt this had gone very well from their perspective.

C Venues summer 2025

We are now in a position to sign a contract with Hartley and all seems to be going smoothly.

Blinds in meeting room

Some of these have been broken for some time now and are incredibly challenging to remove/repair. A new contact made by AT and SS has suggested that a hacksaw could be used to remove them by force and AT wanted to check that MHMC were happy for him to proceed on this basis. The committee agreed unanimously that it was!

3F2/4F Report

JP reported that everything so far that he has dealt with in the flats has either been below the threshold that he needs to ask for approval or has been dealt with via a between meetings procedure, so committee members will already be aware of it.

He had a query about an insurance obligation that asks for a declaration from us that illegal drugs are not being propagated on the premises. We agreed that it would be perfectly adequate for JPA to make that inspection and declaration on our behalf. **JPA to action**

The relationship with Southside letting agents is very productive and they have been very helpful in recommending contractors.

We have been told informally that our current tenants will probably only let from us for a year or two but there is a member of staff who is very interested in taking on the lease as and when it comes up.

Edinburgh Young Friends Meeting

The meeting formally agreed to offer Edinburgh Young Friends flexible scheduling of their own meetings, free of charge, by issuing them with a key to the meeting house. A condition of this agreement is that at least 2 of their group are trained in the health and safety and emergency procedures of the building and that if none of the trained people are available to be present at a meeting, it must be cancelled. A further condition is that meetings must be booked in advance through a suitable procedure with meeting house staff, and access must not be gained to the building at any times other than those that have been booked. The meeting house staff will endeavour to accommodate young friend's requests as far as reasonably possible but they will also ask for flexibility in the unlikely event of a clash with a paying hirer. **On approval of this note, JN has indicated her willingness to communicate**

with young friends and put them in touch with the managers who will take the process forward.

Date of next meeting

Mon 23rd June, 5.15pm at 7 Victoria Terrace

We also added a tentative 'first week of September' for the meeting following this.

Time without staff

HST asked for any comments or queries to feed into his 6 month review meeting with SS and AT.

First and foremost we all agreed that the managers are doing a brilliant job!

We wanted to underline to them that being a good employer is important to us and that we were keen to hear of any development opportunities they would like to participate in. The meeting could be an excellent opportunity to hear from them about what it's really like to work for us, and how we can improve and enable them to do an even better job.

JN raised concerns about income levels, particularly as the regular monthly income from the meeting house account to AM hasn't been forthcoming in the last couple of months. We all agreed that a marketing strategy and business plan is an essential next step. DW is keen to be involved and it was suggested that a meeting of MHMC in the near future could have a focus on marketing. We are aware however that the process needs to be led by the managers so a pre-meeting with them would be important.

HST would like to add a regular finance agenda point to MHMC meetings and JN will try to put some figures together to show our income through the year.