

Sukkat Shalom – Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community
Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 17th February 2019

Present

Nick Silk (chair), Lisa Barcan, Sue Bard, Jonathan Broadie, Marjory Broadie, Adam Clark, Norman Crane, Wendy Crane, Helen Ford, Stefano Giossi, Stew Green, Maureen MacKinnon, Maurice Naftalin, Gareth Owen, Charles Raab, Gillian Raab, Ronnie Todd, Miriam Vickers, Graham Webster, Andrew Yule

Apologies

Yonatan Eisenberg, Joe Goldblatt, Rebekah Gronowski, Thelma Henderson, Dan Hershon, Lorraine Hershon, Ricky Hogg, Isobel King, Nancy Lynner, Paul McPhail

1 Approval of Minutes of 2018 AGM

Action

The minutes of the 2017 AGM were accepted as a true record. (Proposed by G Owen, seconded by G Raab.)

NS noted that the only action from the last AGM was that NS would thank Sharon Goldwater for her time as Membership Secretary, and that he had indeed done so.

2 Chairman's Report (N Silk)

NS noted that his report had been circulated prior to the meeting. He then highlighted some specific areas:

- It was mentioned at the last AGM that we expected to see a saving of some £2,000 on premises, and without wishing to steal the thunder of Andrew's report, we have indeed seen this saving. Although not in the accounts which are to the end of August, we also held a fundraising event in October which raised over £800, which was also really good, and thanks to Ricky for organising this
- It is still the case that NS intends to stand down at the next AGM, and we need to consider who will take over as Chair
- NS noted that he had asked in a recent 'Word from the Chair' article in Etrog whether we do enough on welfare for our members, noting that much goes on 'under the radar' on an individual basis, where members do look out for each other. There was some discussion on this where most people agreed that we are most effective when individual members do help each

other, but it was also agreed that we should always be thinking about what else we can be doing

NS concluded by thanking everyone for their contribution to the running of our community.

Acceptance of the Chairman's report was proposed by N Crane, seconded by S Bard and accepted unanimously by the meeting.

3 Treasurer's Report (A Yule) & Approval of Accounts

AY presented the accounts to the meeting, noting the following:

- The accounts cover the period August 2017 – August 2018 so they are historical rather than showing the current position
- During the period we received two Gits Aid claims, amounting to just over £7,500. We have also received the Gift Aid claim for the period 2017-18 but this isn't shown in these accounts as it was received after August
- The payments to Trustees are the payments to cheder teachers, or their close relatives, who are on Council
- The increase in subscription income was minimal at £213
- We had income from the NLPS trust for the singing practice sessions and also for the Kol Nidrei appeal, both of which were then shown as outgoings and so cancel each other out
- Rabbinic fees are down from last year – this is most likely due to either phasing or because we had one fewer visit in 2017-18 and not because we are paying any less per visit

During discussion, it was noted that the figure of -£4,731, being the excess of income over expenditure for the last period, is incorrect, and should in fact read -£1,571.

Acceptance of the Treasurer's report and accounts was proposed by S Green, seconded by S Giossi and accepted unanimously by the meeting.

After presenting the reports, AY stated that he was standing down as Treasurer. NS thanked AY for his work as Treasurer during the last year, and this was endorsed by all at the meeting.

4 Religious Affairs Report (M Naftalin)

MN presented his report to the meeting, highlighting the following areas:

- Services continue to be held at our usual frequency. We have started doing some 'different' services such as meditative services but MN wondered if we are providing what different members of the community want. We will continue to explore opportunities to hold different types of services
- While we have a number of dedicated lay readers, we could do with more. The 'easiest' / least formal services are our kabbalat Shabbat services and it would be good to get more people involved in leading these services

MN concluded by thanking all those who have helped in whatever way with the running of our services

During discussion of the report several points were made:

- Cheder holds a short havdalah service during the winter months and it was suggested that this could be opened to members of the community. NS agreed to discuss this with DH
- The Shabbat service in January, led by Rabbi Mark, had been an explanatory service and several members said they had found this very useful and hoped that it could be 'built on'. MN noted that he had already discussed this with Rabbi Mark and suggested we should make this an annual event. It was also suggested that just explaining a short section of the service during the year might be an option too
- CR noted that he sometimes has people saying they are uncomfortable with carrying out a mitzvah as they are not sure what to do. He stated that if anyone has any ideas on what to do about this, they would be gratefully received
- JB noted that there are many reasons why people don't come to services, and doing 'different things' may not necessarily encourage people to come to services. He suggested that getting members involved with the community, even in a small way, is the best way of encouraging involvement

NS

5 Cheder Report (D Hershon)

NS noted that DH had sent his apologies and referred the meeting to DH's full report. There was a brief discussion during which it was agreed that we should try and encourage greater integration between cheder and the rest of the community. It was noted that Rabbi Mark does attend cheder when possible, and it was agreed that we should try and have 'cheder services'.

6 Service Logistics (G Owen)

GO stated that the move to St Marks in 2018 had gone well, and that this has helped with setting up services. GO thanked all those who helped during the year and in particular everyone who helped with the High Holyday services. GO concluded by noting that he is standing down as the service logistics co-ordinator.

NS thanked GO for his time as the service logistics co-ordinator, and this was endorsed by all at the meeting.

7 Burials Group Report (R Hogg)

RH presented his report and stated that he was standing down as burial co-ordinator. RH said that if anyone wished to take over, he would be pleased to go through the responsibilities.

8 Membership (S Giossi)

SG confirmed that he now maintains the membership database, and noted that we currently have 109 members, and increase of 5 since last year.

9 Interfaith (S Bard & G Raab)

It was noted that SG has suggested that we might want to consider having an interfaith co-ordinator position within our community, given that we do hold events where we invite members of other faiths along such as our tu b'shvat seder. The holder of this position would not necessarily be the EIFA (Edinburgh Interfaith Association) interfaith rep for the Jewish community, but s/he could be. SB thought that SG's idea was a good one and endorsed it.

10 Newsletter (S Bard)

SB had nothing to add to her formal report. GR proposed a vote of thanks to SB for the work she puts into the creation of the newsletters.

11 Adult Education (N Crane)

NC noted that both he and Rabbi Mark continue to teach members of the Exploring Judaism class. During discussion it was suggested that Rabbi Mark should be asked to prepare a report for the AGM. NS agreed to discuss this with Rabbi Mark.

NS

12 Security & Data Protection (Y Eisenberg)

Unfortunately YE had sent his apologies due to illness. There was no discussion about YE's report.

After the meeting had considered this report, NS proposed that all the reports, covered in items 4 – 12 above, be accepted. This was agreed unanimously.

13 Proposal for Associate Membership

NS read through the proposal that Associate Membership status be introduced. (A copy of the motion is appended to these minutes.) There then followed some discussion during which the following points were made:

- There is no compulsion for anyone to have Associate Membership status other than those in the Exploring Judaism class. Those who are in the Exploring Judaism class would not have to pay any membership fees for 24 months after formally registering
- During further discussion it was noted that those in the Exploring Judaism class have to pay a fee to Liberal Judaism as part of the conversion process, which is why it is proposed that there is no payment in the first 24 months. However if the process takes significantly longer than expected, it is appropriate that we do ask for a membership fee
- In response to the question about who we might expect to become associate members, it was suggested that spouses of members and others associated with the community may wish to formalise their relationship and hence become associate members
- It was also suggested that those who are ineligible for full membership may wish to become associate members
- It was confirmed that Jews who are members of other synagogues can't become associate members. It was also noted that in such cases, such members could ask whether a reduced full membership rate is possible
- There was some discussion about burial rights. Our position of allowing member and non-member spouses to be buried together was noted

After the discussion, the proposal for associate membership status was put to a vote, and was unanimously approved.

14 Proposed Subscription Level for 2018

NS noted that over the last two years the membership fees have increased by £20 each year, and that at each of the previous AGM's there was general agreement that we should expect to have small rises each year. That being the case, NS stated that Council proposed that the membership fees be increased to £250.

There was no subsequent discussion and the proposal to increase the membership fee to £250/year was unanimously approved.

15 Election of Office Bearers & Council Members for 2018/19

The following were elected unopposed:

Chair – N Silk (proposed by H Ford, seconded by M Broadie)

Treasurer – there were no nominations and this post was not filled

Secretary – G Raab (proposed by S Bard, seconded by S Green)

The following were nominated for Council and, there being enough places available for all nominees, they were all elected:

S Bard, J Broadie, M Broadie, N Crane, Y Eisenberg, H Ford, S Giossi, L Hershon, R Hogg, M Naftalin

K Bromberg, D Hershon and G Owen all stood down from Council. NS thanked all of them for their work on Council.

16 AOB

There was discussion on the role of those who help out prior to the service. It was confirmed that there should be two people on the door as security/greeters and the third person should ensure that the siddurim and kiddush cups are out, chairs set up for erev Shabbat service, the Ark put up for Shabbat services and suchlike.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair

APPENDIX

The formal motion on Associate Membership status (see section 13) was as follows:

The General Meeting notes:

(1) That the constitution of Sukkat Shalom, Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community (SCIO) (hereinafter 'the constitution') provides at 7A for the congregation to 'decide to allow people who are not eligible for membership to have associate status.'

(2) That such a decision must be made at a General Meeting.

(3) That 7A provides that '[a]ssociates would not have the right to vote in General Meetings but might have other rights of membership as approved by the Congregation.'

(4) The constitution at 10-12 establishes an application process for membership, the absolute discretionary right of the Council to refuse to admit a person to membership, and a requirement that the Council consider each application at the first Council Meeting which is held after receipt of the application.

(5) That the constitution at 17 grants the Honorary Treasurer or the Chairman the power to accept from any new or existing member a lower annual subscription on the terms that such a reduction shall be reviewed on an annual basis.

(6) That the constitution at 21 provides for the expulsion of members by way of a resolution passed by a majority vote at a general meeting and establishes conditions for those proceedings.

The General Meeting resolves that:

(1) 'Associate status' shall be established from the date of this resolution subject to the restrictions noted in 7A and shall be subject to the additional requirements below.

(2) The rights granted to those with associate status shall be all the rights enjoyed by members except the right to vote in general meetings, be elected to the council, or to receive certain religious services identified by the Council where such a person is otherwise ineligible to receive them for religious reasons.

(3) An ordinary annual subscription for 'associate status' shall be payable set at a rate of one-half of the sum payable by members.

(4) (a) Associate status shall be mandatory for those participating in the Exploring Judaism programme.

(b) The annual subscription for associate status shall be waived for a period not exceeding 24 months from the date the person is or was admitted to the programme.

(5) The right of the Council to regulate admission to associate status shall be identical to that laid out in the constitution for membership at 10-12.

(6) The power of the Honorary Treasurer or the Chairman noted in the constitution at 17 to accept from new or existing members a lower annual subscription on the terms that such a reduction shall be reviewed on an annual basis shall extend to those being admitted to or those with existing associate status.

(7) That the process established in the constitution at 21 for the expulsion of a member shall be applied identically to those people who have been admitted to associate status.