

Sukkat Shalom – Edinburgh Liberal Jewish Community
Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 16th February 2020

Present

Nick Silk (chair), Jonathan Broadie, Marjory Broadie, Norman Crane, Wendy Crane, Sue Lieberman, Maureen MacKinnon, Maurice Naftalin, Charles Raab, Gillian Raab, Miriam Vickers

Apologies

Lisa Barcan, Gordon Barclay, Sue Bard, Helen Ford, Stefano Giossi, Liz Goring, Stewart Green, Rebekah Gronowski, Ricky Hogg, Isobel King, Paul McPhail, Rebecca Wober

1 Approval of Minutes of 2019 AGM

Action

There was one correction to the 2019 minutes – the third line from the bottom of page 2, where “resenting” should be “presenting”. Subject to that correction, the minutes of the 2019 AGM were accepted as a true record. (Proposed by G Raab, seconded by M Naftalin.)

2 Chairman’s Report (N Silk)

N Silk noted that his report had been circulated prior to the meeting and highlighted several points:

- The report sent out with the call to the AGM should be read in conjunction with his last “Word from the Chair” article in Etrog, as was noted in the report itself
- We should continue to remember all the good things we do as a community, such as cheder, the services and interfaith events like the recent tu b’svat seder
- The areas we need to continue to look at are fundraising and ongoing involvement of people, albeit don’t forget that we do have new and recent members involved including our treasurer Stefano Giossi

In concluding, NS thanked everyone who had helped him during his time as Chair and in particular thanks were due to Kate for all her support.

G Raab thanked NS for his time as Chair.

Acceptance of the Chairman’s report was proposed by N Crane, seconded by G Raab and accepted unanimously by the meeting.

3 Treasurer's Report and Approval of Accounts

In S Giossi's absence, G Raab presented the account to the meeting and made the following points:

- The income from subscriptions was marginally lower in 2018/19 than in 2017/18 despite the increase in membership fees
- The income from donations was down substantially, primarily due to a large one-off donation in 2017/18. G Raab suggested that the increase in membership fees may have discouraged some from making donations

In response to a question about donations for High Holyday tickets, G Raab noted that while we do have a record of how much we receive, this is not separated out in the formal accounts – as opposed to the Kol Nidrei appeal donations which are shown in the 'restricted funds' column of the donations. G Raab agreed to find out how much we received from High Holyday tickets for the last three years.

GR

J Broadie asked about the increase in levies to other organisations compared to the previous year. It was explained that this was because in 2017/18 we received two Gift Aid reclaims; these reclaims are assessed as part of our affiliation fee to Liberal Judaism and the affiliation fees in the current year are based on the membership fees in the previous year. Also, in 2018 we paid the affiliation fee in monthly instalments – normally they are paid in full at the start of the year - which meant some of the 2018 affiliation fee was paid during the 2018/19 financial year.

In response to a question about the slight difference between the income received from the Kol Nidrei appeal and the amount paid, G Raab explained that this was correcting an error in the payments we paid in the previous year.

It was noted that the Rabbi's fees are a combination of Rabbi Mark's monthly payments, which are mutually agreed, and the payment for High Holydays services which are the fees recommended by Liberal Judaism. It was also noted that Rabbi Mark's monthly payments are reviewed every year.

Acceptance of the Treasurer's report and accounts was proposed by C Raab, seconded by G Raab and accepted unanimously by the meeting.

4 Religious Affairs Report (M Naftalin)

M Naftalin summarised his report. There were no questions on the report.

5 Cheder Report (A Budd)

A Budd was not at the meeting to present his report. There were no questions or comments on the report.

6 Burials Group Report (R Hogg)

R Hogg was not at the meeting to present his report. There were no questions or comments on the report.

7 Membership (S Giossi)

S Giossi was not at the meeting to present his report. G Raab noted that we now have a number of Associate members following the adoption of this category of membership at the last AGM.

8 Interfaith (N Silk)

After N Silk summarised his report, there was some discussion on the recent tu b'shvat seder and how it would have been better if more of our members were available to meet and greet those from other faiths who attended the seder. It was also noted that there is a new Haggadah available which we might use next year.

9 Newsletter (S Bard)

S Bard was not at the meeting to present her report. N Crane said that thanks are due to S Bard for her work in producing such a good newsletter, a sentiment which was echoed by all those present.

10 Adult Education (N Crane)

N Crane summarised his report. There were no questions on the report.

11 Service Logistics & Security (G Raab & S Bard)

After G Raab presented the report, there was a brief discussion on the logistics & security rota, during which G Raab reported that the rota had recently been relaunched. The names of those helping at each service are held on an open spreadsheet and S Bard now contacts those who have volunteered before each service.

After the meeting had considered this report, N Silk suggested that all the reports, covered in items 4 – 11 above, be accepted. This was proposed by J Broadie, seconded by N Crane and agreed unanimously.

12 Proposed Subscription Level for 2020

N Silk noted that over the last three years the membership fees have risen from £200 - £250. He also noted that it is clear from the accounts that we need to maximise income, and that at previous AGMs there has been general agreement that we should increase our fees each year. Council had discussed this prior to the AGM and propose that the membership fees be increased to £260 per adult member for 2020. NS also noted that, as has always be the case, we never refuse membership to anyone who is unable to pay.

There being no questions or discussion, N Silk formally proposed the increase of the membership fee to £260, G Raab seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

13 Election of Office Bearers & Council Members for 2020

Chair

N Silk confirmed that he was standing down at the AGM. There being no nominations for Chair, the position was not filled.

M Naftalin noted that, in the absence of anyone becoming Chair, it was proposed that four members of Council – himself, G Raab, S Bard and N Silk - would cover the duties of the Chair until such time as the position was filled. S Lieberman noted that three of the four are past Chairs and so have a high level of experience and in the absence of any other proposal this appears to be the best option.

Treasurer

S Giossi had indicated that he was prepared to continue as Treasurer. His nomination was formally proposed by M Naftalin, seconded by G Raab and unanimously approved.

Secretary

G Raab confirmed that she would be prepared to continue as Secretary. Her nomination was proposed by M Broadie, seconded by M Vickers and unanimously approved.

Council

The following members had indicated they wished to be considered for Council:

M Naftalin, R Hogg, H Ford, S Bard, N Crane, W Crane, L Hershon, M Broadie, J Broadie, N Silk. There being no need for a vote, S Lieberman proposed that these members be appointed to Council, this was seconded by M MacKinnon and unanimously approved.

14 AOB

C Raab stated that our current scroll will soon need restitching and that the scroll that used to belong to the Dundee congregation, and which we now have, will cost at least £10,000 to repair. He also noted the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation had also expressed an interest in the Dundee scroll but that they now didn't appear to be so interested in it. There then followed some general discussion where it was noted that S Bard is looking into whether we might be able to obtain a grant to repair the Dundee scroll, and that if we do need to get our current scroll restitched, we may be able to borrow another scroll during the time when it is being repaired.

N Crane noted that there are a good number of examples of shuls which do not have a scroll and that we would be able to do without one if our current scroll does need repairing. The discussion concluded by noting that we should discuss any options with Rabbi Mark before making any decisions.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to N Silk both for chairing the meeting and for his time as Chair of the community.