Unitarians In Edinburgh: Church Council

*Minutes from Council Meeting held on Monday 3rd July 2023 on Zoom at 7pm*

1. Welcome and Apologies

Present were Julie Finneran [Convenor], Ann Sinclair [Acting Treasurer], Elyse Jacks, and Joan Cook.

Julie welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Elyse Jacks, who along with Mandy Orr were elected to Council at the AGM on 25th June 2023.

Apologies were received from Brian Robertson and Mandy Orr.

1. Opening Words

Julie opened the meeting with words from Amelia Earhart, the aviator, and first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

''In my life I had come to realize that when things were going very well indeed it was just the time to anticipate trouble. And, conversely, I learned from pleasant experience that at the most despairing crisis, when all looked sour beyond words, some delightful "break" was apt to lurk just around the corner''

1. Minutes of 29th May 2023

The minutes were proposed as being a true record of the meeting by Ann Sinclair, and seconded by Julie Finneran.

1. Discussion of AGM of 25th June 2023

It was felt that the AGM had gone well, the revised constitution will be sent to Hazel-Jane for inclusion on the website.

The copy of the Annual Report for OSCR needs to be completed [AS & EJ]

Then signed and sent to OSCR. [AS & JF]

Electronic Signatures are to be collected from members of Council for future use [EJ]

1. Update from Ann on roof repairs

It is expected the work may start on Monday 4th September. In the first week the Tender documents have been sent to four contractors, a return date of 27th July 2023 has been set.

There needs to be access to the neighbours’ gardens for erection of scaffolding, possibly to be done by Hardy’s, Ann will check.

Site visits from firms invited to submit tenders, to assess access, storage etc. should be happening soon, Euan will liaise re: times etc., and be present during the visits.

If there are any difficulties with using the hall for post-service Teas & Coffees, the front of the church may be used.

1. Discussion on safeguarding issues

The inclusion of a requirement for those using our premises to have Safeguarding policies (in line with current best practice) is now being included in all our letting agreements, thanks go to Ann Sinclair for taking this on.

Following the review of best practice, it was decided that self-declaration should be extended to those involved in delivering pastoral care on behalf of St Mark’s.

Members of the Pastoral Care Team will be contacted by Julie.

Forms will be compiled using the same format of the Self-Declaration form for those involved in the children’s programme. [JC]

A section will be added to the Safeguarding policy in time for the review in September [JC] then sent to Hazel-Jane for inclusion on the website. [JF].

It was confirmed that any Minister, Spiritual Leader, or Children’s Programme Co-ordinator, who may be appointed would need PVG checks.

1. Team Updates:

*Management team;*

Routine fire safety checks have been scheduled for September.

More people have volunteered to help at Fringe events this summer.

*Financial team;*

It was pointed out that dealers’ and admin fees are still to be deducted from the current balance, as shown on the Cash book update.

We are expecting a legacy in the near future, amount yet to be confirmed

Ann reminded us the cost of the works may have increased from the expected £170,000,

but that VAT paid on the works is reclaimable, and is expected to be around £27,000.

*Ministry team;*

Services in December and over the Christmas period are currently being planned.

*Pastoral team;*

No report.

1. Set new Smart goals

It was decided we should set time aside at our next meeting to discuss the new SMART goals, when everyone would be able to contribute. Everyone was asked to consider what they may see as priorities for St Mark’s this year.

1. Upcoming social events

There may be a lunch in the gardens, followed by a visit to the Art Gallery following Julie’s service on 20th August, to be finalised nearer the time [JF].

1. AOCB

The possibility of changing the frequency of the bulletin was discussed.

Ways in which we might increase the level of involvement in church activities was discussed.

Photos from our 2 new members, for the website, were requested [EJ, MO, JF]

Copies of St. Mark’s Policies to be sent to our new members [JC].

Access to Google Docs generally was discussed, especially for Elyse & Mandy [JF]

Elyse requested a copy of the Google diary [AS] and lists of members on each of the Financial, Ministry, Pastoral Care & Management teams [JF]

1. Dates of next meetings; Tuesday 8th August, and Monday 4th September at 7pm.

Opening & Closing words; Tues 8th Aug. Elyse, and 4th Sept, to be decided.

Closing Words

Julie closed the meeting with more words from Amelia Earhart;

“No kind action ever stops with itself. One kind action leads to another. Good example is followed. A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees. The greatest work that kindness does to others is that it makes them kind themselves.”