



Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 10th October 2023 at 121 George Street

Present	Convener	Andrew McLellan	
	Secretary	Carol Miller	
	Minutes Secretary	Jacky Harkness (on Teams)	
	Faith Action Forum	Kenny Roger	Ian Alexander
	Members	Alison Jack	Carol Morton
		Tom Watson	Maureen Jack
Online	Vice-convener	Jamie Erskine	
	Members	Douglas Simpson	Calum MacSween
		Rev Jim Francis	Trish Archibald
	Ministers	Rev Muriel Pearson	Rev Dr Stewart Gillan
	Recent scholar	Joe Nockels	

	Item	Comments	Action
1	Opening	<p>Andrew welcomed everyone present and started the meeting with a lesson and a prayer.</p> <p>In light of the Hamas attack from Gaza on 7th October, the meeting started with updates from Muriel and Stewart on the current situation in Israel and OPT. They are both relocating to the Guest House in Jerusalem. Tourism has stopped, so the Scots Hotel and Guest House have closed and the focus now is to keep the local Arab staff safe. There is widespread rage and fear that the situation could escalate into a regional war and there will be a humanitarian disaster in Gaza. (<i>Muriel and Stewart returned to the UK via Jordan three days later.</i>)</p> <p>It was agreed the key role for The Friends is to circulate information to members' communities and to encourage people to join The Friends and donate. New brochures are available from Carol Miller, who will also send an electronic version to Tom to put on church newsletters.</p>	All Secretary Tom
2	Apologies	Apologies were received from David Coulter, Rebecca McGonigle and Elaine Macadie.	
3	Minutes	The Minutes from the Committee Meeting held on 22 nd June 2023 had been pre-circulated and were agreed by the Committee. There were no matters arising from the Minutes.	

4	Convener's comments	<p>Marc Falconer has resigned from the Committee because of his increasing commitments. Andrew thanked him for his contribution and expressed good wishes on the Committee's behalf.</p> <p>Andrew thanked committee members for their positive responses to the Christian Aid event supporting B'tselem on 27th November. He will be co-hosting the meeting.</p>	
5	Ministers' updates	<p>Muriel's report was pre-circulated.</p> <p>Stewart reported that the number of worshipers has increased to the mid/high 20s with some young Russians and Ukrainians joining and more families with small children.</p>	
6	Finance	<p>The budget and statement of accounts from the Treasurer was pre-circulated, along with the report from Muriel relating to the funds held in Jerusalem. There were no questions arising.</p> <p>The Finance Group, composed of Andrew, Tom, Jamie, Douglas and Carol met in September. The importance of the existence of The Friends was underlined. However, the recommendation is that the award of scholarships should be conditional on there being enough funds; alternative sources of funds are being explored.</p> <p>There was a discussion on the way forward for the scholarship scheme, the main points of which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the churches' work through St Andrews and the Church of Scotland. • Tighter specification on scholarships The Friends are willing to grant. • Encourage students to look elsewhere for funds. • In the future, the ministers might suggest pieces of work that scholars could do (eg research/archives). • How would that relate to the scholars and their course/PhD? • An industry partner for PhD students – could this model be accessed for funding? • Andrew will continue to look at alternative sources of funding. • Carol Miller is requested to amend the website and application form to reflect the discussion. 	<p>Andrew Secretary</p>

		Trish and Joe re-iterated the importance of their experiences and how grateful they were for the support of The Friends' scholarships.	
7	Membership/ Subscriptions	<p>There has not been a great increase in the membership numbers. People need to know about The Friends and to be reminded about us. Suggestions on how this could be achieved are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there are up to date information brochures in the St Andrews churches, Guest House and Scots Hotel. Promote these to visitors. • Contact presbyteries involved in the original construction and whose plaques are on the chairs in St Andrews Jerusalem. Invite them to join The Friends. • A communication will be sent to all members thanking them for their support, outlining the current financial difficulties and inviting them to contribute and 'bring a friend'. Life members will be asked to change to annual membership. Douglas will draft a letter for Andrew. • Andrew is following up contact with the editor of Presbyterian Outlook (an American church publication), regarding the inclusion of an article about The Friends. • The possibility of a further article in Life and Work. 	<p>Calum Douglas</p> <p>Douglas Andrew</p> <p>Andrew</p>
8	Scholarship	<p>Joseph Nockels' report was pre-circulated. The Committee agreed it was excellent and suggested a wider circulation of the report, for example in academic articles.</p> <p>It was requested Joe acknowledges The Friends' financial support in his paper.</p> <p>Joe thanked The Friends for their support, both financially and also during his preparation and actual visit.</p>	Joe
9	Communication	<p>Maureen has continued to post articles on The Friends' Facebook page, with a continuing number of followers.</p> <p>The website is now live. The content and photos can be changed. It will need to be kept updated with blogs/links. Trish has agreed to be more involved in writing blogs.</p> <p>Andrew thanked Carol Miller for all her hard work in setting up the website.</p> <p>The newsletter is almost ready to be sent, but Calum suggested the need to think about the last 4 days of conflict.</p>	<p>Trish</p> <p>Muriel Stewart</p>

		Muriel and Stewart are requested to write about 150 words and Andrew a prayer to reflect the current situation.	Andrew
10	Storyboards	<p>It was agreed that the storyboard proposal for the two churches is too expensive. However, it was felt that there is still a need to give visitors information to read. This could take the form of laminated sheets and/or QR codes.</p> <p>It was suggested the historical content could be written by AK Miller, who has an excellent knowledge of both the history of Israel and the two churches. Carol is requested to ask AK if he would be prepared to do this.</p> <p>Collaboration would be needed from the Ministers: Stewart and Muriel were asked to think about who and what St Andrew's church is now.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Stewart Muriel</p>
11	St Andrew's Day Service	<p>It will no longer be possible to hold a St Andrew's Day service in Jerusalem.</p> <p>The service in Edinburgh is at 2pm on 30th November in St Cuthbert's church. Following suggestions submitted by Stewart and Muriel, it was agreed the offering should go to EAPPI (the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel).</p>	
12	Date of next meeting	<p>The date of the next Committee Meetings are:</p> <p>Tuesday 20th February 2023 at 11am Monday 8th April 2023 at 2pm</p> <p>AGM – Friday 17th May 2023</p>	All