



Scottish Council of  
Jewish Communities

**Annual General Meeting**  
**Sunday 11th June 2017 at 1.30pm**  
**at Edinburgh Jewish Community Centre,**  
**4 Salisbury Rd, Edinburgh EH16 5AB**

*Lunch will be available from 12.45 pm.*

**Agenda:**

Guest speaker: Deputy Chief Constable Johnny Gwynn.

1. Welcome, sederunt, apologies
2. Minutes of AGM of 5 June 2016 and Council of 12 March 2017
3. Matters arising from minutes
4. Cooptions and confirmation of membership:

Micheline Brannan (Edinburgh)	Frank House (Highlands)
Joe Goldblatt (Edinburgh)	Henry Lovat (Glasgow)
Judith Sischy (Edinburgh)	Debby Taylor (Aberdeen)
5. Report from the Chair
6. Financial Report and adoption of accounts
7. Appointment of Independent Examiner
8. Reports from Director
9. Election of office-bearers
10. Reports from Communities
11. Dates of next Council meetings:

Sunday 3 September – Glasgow
Sunday 10 December – location tbc.
12. AOCB



# Minute of Annual General Meeting

## Sunday 5th June 2016

### at the JCC Giffnock

**Present:** Hilary Rifkind (Chair), Ephraim Borowski (Director), Micheline Brannan, Fiona Brodie, Nicola Livingston, Philip Mendelsohn, Itamar Nitzan, Raymond Taylor, Evy Yedd

**Observers:** John Danzig, Jackie Taylor

**Apologies:** Simon Dover, Fiona Frank, Joe Goldblatt, Frank House, Edward Isaacs, Zoe Jacobs, Neil Livingstone, Linda Martin, Paul Morron, Gillian Raab, Michael Samuels, Judith Sischy, Debby Taylor

#### 1. Welcome, sederunt, apologies

Hilary opened the meeting and welcomed everyone who had attended. Joe, Fiona (Frank) and Zoe were in Edinburgh for an event at the Edinburgh JCC. Good wishes were expressed for the speedy recovery of Debby and Gillian.

#### 2. Minutes of AGM of 14th June 2015 and Council of 6th March 2016

The minutes of the AGM had already been approved and were noted. The minutes of the last Council were approved without discussion (proposed by Evy, seconded by Raymond).

#### 3. Matters arising from minutes

There were none.

#### 4. Co-options

The co-options of Evy, Frank, Judith, Micheline and Neil were confirmed. Edward Green had indicated that he wished to step down. The AGM expressed sincere appreciation for Edward's assistance to SCoJeC over a number of years and hoped that he would continue to support the organisation.

#### 5. Reports from the Chair

Hilary asked the AGM to take her report as read. She commented that a huge amount has been achieved and continues to be achieved by SCoJeC, but that the organisation is precarious because of the dwindling staff base, funding reductions, and the uncertainty of future resources stopping us from recruiting. She emphasised that fund-raising and appointing a new staff team is the top priority for SCoJeC.

Ephraim thanked Hilary for her most generous and reliable support over the last 4+ years and for providing 'air cover' for the initiatives of the Director at times of controversy.

#### 6. Financial report and adoption of accounts

The accounts had already been approved and signed by the Chair and the Treasurer. Ephraim explained that the presentation followed the new Statement of Recommended (Accounting) Practice (SORP). After discussion, the AGM asked Ephraim to ask the Independent Examiner to insert a more detailed analysis of the cash flow in the restricted funds as between different funds, by way of additional Notes to the accounts. The accounts were then moved by Philip and seconded by Nicola.

[The additional analysis is now at [http://www.scojec.org/scojec/annual\\_reports/reports.html](http://www.scojec.org/scojec/annual_reports/reports.html) ]

There was a lengthy discussion about the funding position. There was a £14K cash flow deficit in the year 2015. Ephraim explained that the Board of Deputies has not made any contribution for 18 months (formerly £2.5K a year) and that the JLC is about to withdraw its contract for the production of PAB (£10K a year). The loss of £12.5K would theoretically increase the deficit still further in 2016. However, as Nicola is no longer working for us, and Zoe's contract is about to end, there will be a reduction in staffing expenditure which will reduce the cash flow deficit – and also curtail significant aspects of SCoJeC's activities.

Ephraim has put in a bid for £100K to the Scottish Government's Equality and Cohesion Fund, which is administered by the Voluntary Action Fund (VAF) and this includes funding for a paid CEO post which would subsume the Public Affairs portfolio. It would also cover an education / outreach officer and administrative support. In 2014, VAF allocated £39K, and in 2015 this was increased to £49K. There is no indication how much will be allocated this year but the outcome is expected this month. Once the result is known the Executive will take stock of what appointments we can afford and prioritise our activities accordingly.

Ephraim also thanked the Glasgow Jewish Community Trust and Netherlee and Clarkston, for their support. He reported an unsolicited donation of £500 from a reader of Four Corners, who welcomed the way it made her feel part of the Jewish community, after having lost her husband and living in an isolated place.

Various fund-raising proposals were made:

- Approach the donors who had supported the Photography project to repeat their generosity on an annual basis;
- Approach ordinary Jewish people who appreciate what SCoJeC does to donate monthly by Standing Order. One thousand people donating £5 a month would yield £60K a year;
- Send appeal letters out with Four Corners, whether by email or by post;
- Market PAB to the individual organisations that are members of JLC, since the JLC itself no longer wishes to purchase it;
- Invite significant people to become patrons of SCoJeC in return for receiving daily briefings and having their names put on PAB as patrons (eg 20 patrons at £500 a year would continue to pay for PAB).

It was agreed that each approach had benefits and disadvantages (eg taking a lot of effort to administer) and that they were not mutually exclusive. There was a case for trying all the relevant approaches, but someone is needed to take this on.

Different approaches were also suggested to doing more for less – for example taking on interns or students on placements to carry out administrative tasks; however this would not be possible without permanent staff to supervise them. Another suggestion was to expand our use of social media as this is thought to be the most effective way of reaching large numbers of people. It was suggested that SCoJeC could send out daily bulletins (other than the Media Digest) but there were also fears that people would be swamped and alienated, but that weekly or fortnightly might be worthwhile.

## **7. Appointment of Independent Examiner**

Lewis Osborne was willing to continue and this was agreed *nem con*.

## 8. Reports from Director

Ephraim asked for his reports to be taken as read but he commented particularly about relations with the JLC and with the SNP. The JLC has a Political Oversight Group (POG) which consists of the leaders of the key Jewish organisations such as UJIA, Jewish Care, JNF etc, and the regional Representative Councils, but no representative of Scotland. Its awareness of Scotland had been raised by the outcome of the 2015 General Election and Ephraim had been twice invited to come to London to brief the POG about the SNP. It was after one of these meetings that Simon Johnstone, CEO of the JLC, had informed Ephraim that the JLC would no longer purchase PAB but would obtain its Parliamentary briefings from Dods. He had agreed to give them access to Dods' material to compare and Leah and he had tried to demonstrate that it was missing information that PAB included, but to no avail, and SJ said that Dods are also supplying other services.

Ephraim had more recently been invited to meet Angus Robertson MP the Leader of the SNP Westminster group as part of group arranged by the JLC. He had been invited to speak first and had spoken about the demography of the Scottish Jewish Community, what "Being Jewish in Scotland" revealed about what matters to Jewish people in Scotland, and on the role of SCoJeC. Angus Robertson already knew Ephraim and was very interested in what he had to say. Kirsten Oswald, the MP for East Renfrewshire, has now also met with Ephraim and with the GJRC.

Moving on to relations with the Church of Scotland, Ephraim said that, while he was in Israel, he was invited to meet a visiting group who have been tasked with preparing a response to the Kairos document (a declaration in 2009 by Palestinian Christians to the effect that the 'Occupation' constitutes a sin against God and humanity). It was explained that this was partly because the Church is finding it embarrassing that it has never responded, and also because they feel unable to ignore the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. Ephraim met them with Alick Isaacs, and Kenneth Collins and Neville Lamdan met them separately. The impression is that, while we might not agree with everything they say, they have learned from the "Inheritance" debacle, and it has been suggested that the document may run to 80 pages and not have a definitive conclusion. Their Middle East Manager, Kenny Rodger, who is returning to Edinburgh and will be in charge of this process, does appear to be genuinely committed to promoting positive messages, and took on board Alick's admonition that whatever they say, it should not do any harm.

The Church has appointed an Interfaith Officer, Mirella Yandoli, who has previously worked for SCoJeC. She is not located in Church and Society, but in the Assembly secretariat.

Fiona asked about progress on setting up the Joint Theological Commission following a meeting with of the Dialogue Group with the Church of Scotland on 4 November 2015. It had been agreed at this meeting to bring together two representatives from each side to consider membership and terms of reference of the Commission. Ephraim said that he had written on several occasions to Sally Foster-Fulton (Convener of Church and Society), written and spoken to both the Moderator and the Principal Clerk, and most recently to the new Interfaith Officer to try to move this forward. The most he had received was that they "have not lost sight of this", but most of his messages went unanswered.

Fiona was disappointed that no progress had been made and it was agreed that SCoJeC should try again to get this project back on track. At the latest Executive meeting it was

agreed that Hilary and Micheline should work on a letter to be sent to the incoming Moderator (Revd Dr Russell Barr of Cramond Kirk). It had been proposed that the Jewish Community representatives should be Nicola Livingston and Fiona Brodie, and the AGM noted these intentions. The time was right to move on this as, following the General Assembly, SCoJeC would normally ask for a meeting with the incoming Moderator and there is a new Convenor of Church and Society.

Ephraim also praised the work of Fiona Frank and Zoe Jacobs on outreach and education. He said that Zoe would be very much missed. She had run volunteering courses to train ordinary members of the community to take lessons on Judaism in schools, using the materials in the JOES Boxes. However unfortunately the latest course offered in Glasgow had to be cancelled because volunteers would not commit to attending on 4 consecutive Sunday afternoons.

There was considerable discussion about how to deploy volunteers. Some organisations had volunteer co-ordinators and written contracts with volunteers. This was considered to be a good idea (although even that did not prevent last-minute cancellations by volunteers). After discussion, Evy said that she would be willing to be volunteer co-ordinator for SCoJeC following her impending retirement, and she wondered if she could share this role with Dianna Wolfson, who is hoping to step back from direct involvement with interfaith.

Summarising his report, Ephraim said that he was upbeat about what SCoJeC had delivered in 2015, but the future is precarious at least in part because the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council had withdrawn their support for SCoJeC. However, generally brand recognition was good. He welcomed the fact that the Glasgow Jewish Burial Society and West of Scotland Kashrut Commission had recognised the good work of SCoJeC on issues like death certification, by way of a donation. However the Care organisations had not yet got the message.

## **9. Election of office-bearers**

The following were elected by the AGM:

Micheline Brannan, Chair (proposed by Hilary, seconded by Philip, Evy and Itamar)

Fiona Brodie as Vice-Chair (proposed by Hilary, seconded by Micheline)

Simon Dover as Secretary (proposed by Hilary, seconded by Ephraim)

It was noted that Michael Samuel had stepped down after a short tenure as Treasurer, for various personal reasons. It was agreed to leave the position vacant meantime as approaches had been made to possible candidates.

## **10. Reports from Communities**

It was agreed to request reports to circulate with the minutes.

## **11. Date of next meeting**

The suggestion of Sunday 4 September in Edinburgh was agreed.

## **12. AOCB**

The following topics were raised:

- **Scotland Director of the JLC:** Micheline announced the appointment of Peter Spiers as the JLC's Scotland Director, following a selection process in which she had participated with JLC's External Affairs Director, Bernard Hughes and Paul Morron. The JLC has involved the Rep Council and SCoJeC at every stage of the appointment. The appointment of Peter Spiers was a unanimous choice of all three organisations. He will be located in the JCC and will work closely with the organisations already having offices there, especially SCoJeC and the GJRC.

Peter has worked in politics for over six years, both at Westminster and Holyrood. He began his career working for Scottish Labour's parliamentary business manager, before organising campaigns in the 2011 Scottish Parliamentary elections. He then moved to work with Margaret Curran and the Parliamentary Research Service at Westminster, before returning to Scotland as a campaign organiser for the Better Together campaign. He volunteered on Jim Murphy and Liz Kendall's leadership campaigns. Most recently, he worked for Scottish Labour's Justice Spokesperson, Graeme Pearson. He has been passionate about the community for as long as he's been involved in politics, and is looking forward to working with the community on the many issues facing it. Peter will start work on the 20th June. Two of his main issues will be the build up to the Centenary of the Balfour Declaration and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Six Day War.

- **Cross-Party Group on Palestine:** Itamar said that a year ago, he had been present at the Scottish Parliament when the Cross-Party Parliamentary Group on Palestine had discussed a documentary on the Balfour Declaration, which they had wished to distribute on DVDs to all schools. Itamar had been surprised to find that the documentary was quite balanced and gave a good account of how the Jewish pioneers had developed their institutions and infrastructure.
- **Interfaith Glasgow:** Philip reported that a new Glasgow Interfaith Charity has been recognised as a SCIO and he is likely to be the Chair. He said it is a very harmonious group with Roman Catholics, Protestants, Muslims (both Shi-ite and Sunni), Sikhs and Bahai representation.
- **Demographics:** John Danzig asked how the declining demographics of the Scottish Jewish Community feature in SCoJeC's discussions with public authorities. Ephraim said that although Census numbers (which only counts people who tick the box as "belonging" to the Jewish community) were declining in Glasgow, they appeared to be increasing elsewhere, possibly because SCoJeC's outreach activities had brought together people who previously thought they were isolated and encouraged them to self-identify as Jewish. Nonetheless, it was agreed that there is a problem of an ageing community and retaining young people. Rabbi Rubin is carrying out an initiative in Glasgow to try to persuade people to stay, and the plans for the new Calderwood will play a part in this. John commented that attracting and retaining people was more of a problem in places like Edinburgh where there was little Jewish infrastructure. There was brief discussion about the possibility of an East of Scotland Jewish Representative Council that might take a joint approach to such issues.