

# Scottish Justices' Association

## Executive Meeting

20<sup>th</sup> November 2016 starting at 2:35 p.m.  
Golden Jubilee Hotel and Conference Centre, Clydebank.

### Minutes

<b>Present:</b>	John Lawless, (G&S)	Tom Finnigan, (NS)
	John Whyte, (TC&F)	Marella O'Neill (NS)
	Dennis Barr (G&S)	Neil McKechnie (G&S)
	Gordon Hunter (SSD&G)	John Burns (L&B)
	Grace MacLeod (NS)	Brian Wood (GH&I)
	David Donaldson (TC&F)	
<b>Apologies:</b>	David Ferguson (SSD&G)	Thomas Davis (GH&I)

	<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Action</u>
1.	<p><b>Appointment of Temporary Chairman</b></p> <p>As this Executive Meeting immediately followed the SJA Annual General Meeting, held at the same location, it was necessary to appoint a temporary Chairman to allow the appointment of the Associations' office Bearers.</p> <p>Tom Finnigan nominated John Lawless, our out-going Chairman as Temporary Chairman for this meeting and this was seconded by Dennis Barr. As there no other nominations John Lawless was appointed.</p>	John Lawless
2.	<p><b>Minutes of the Executive Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2016</b></p> <p>It was agreed that due to time constraints that these minutes would be subject to review at the next full meeting of the SJA Executive which is currently scheduled for Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Election of the SJA Chairman 2015/16</b></p> <p>Dennis Barr proposed that the current Vice-Chairman, Mr Tom Finnigan be appointed as Chairman. This was seconded by Marella O'Neill.</p> <p>There were no further nominations therefore Mr. Tom Finnigan was unanimously elected as Chairman of the SJA for the coming year.</p> <p>Tom Finnigan thereafter took over as Chairman of the meeting.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Election of Vice-Chairman</b></p> <p>John Lawless proposed that Gordon Hunter be appointed as Vice-Chairman. This was seconded by Marella O'Neill.</p>	

	Mr Hunter accepted the nomination and as there were no further nominations Mr Gordon Hunter was unanimously appointed Vice-Chairman for the coming year.	
5.	<p><b>Election of Secretary</b></p> <p>John Whyte proposed Dennis Barr for the role of Secretary, this was seconded by John Lawless.</p> <p>Mr Barr accepted the nomination and as there were no further nominations Mr Dennis Barr was unanimously appointed Secretary of the SJA for the forthcoming year.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Election of Treasurer</b></p> <p>John Lawless nominated John Whyte to remain as Treasurer for a further year and this was seconded by Grace MacLeod. Mr Whyte accepted the nomination and as there were no further nominations Mr John Whyte was unanimously appointed Treasurer for the coming year.</p>	
7.	<p><b>Appointment of Other Post Holders</b></p> <p>(a) Membership Secretary:- Tom Finnigan proposed that Mr John Lawless be re-appointed as Membership Secretary. This was seconded by Dennis Barr. John Lawless accepted the nomination and as there were no further nominations he was unanimously appointed as Membership Secretary.</p> <p>(b) ICT Committee Representative:- Tom Finnigan also proposed that Mr John Lawless be re-appointed as the SJA Representative on the Information and Communication Technology Judicial Committee. This was seconded by Marella O'Neill. John Lawless accepted the nomination and as there were no further nominations he was unanimously appointed as our representative on the ICT Committee.</p> <p>(c) Welfare and Support Committee Representative:- John Lawless proposed that Marella O'Neill be re-appointed as the SJA Representative on the Welfare and Support Committee of the Judicial Council. This was seconded by Gordon Hunter. Marella O'Neill accepted the nomination and as there were no further nominations Marella O'Neill was appointed as the SJA Representative on the Welfare and Support Committee.</p> <p>(d) Conduct Committee:- Mr John Burns accepted the nomination to become the SJA Representative on the Conduct Committee of the Judicial Council. The nomination was made by Tom Finnigan and seconded by John Lawless. As there were no further nominations John Burns was appointed as the SJA Representative on the Conduct Committee.</p> <p>It was noted that both the Welfare and Support Committee and the Conduct Committee had met very infrequently in recent years and therefore Tom Finnigan as a member of the Advisory Council to the Judicial Institute agreed to investigate whether these committees were still viable and whether we should continue to nominate representatives.</p>	Tom Finnigan

	<p>(e) SCTS/SJA Liaison Committee:- Tom Finnigan advised that the normal representatives on the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service (SCTS) Liaison Committee were the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, accordingly it was proposed that this arrangement continue and our Representatives on the SCTS/SJA Liaison Committee would therefore be Tom Finnigan and Gordon Hunter. This was unanimously agreed. Tom Finnigan agreed to advise Eric McQueen of the SCTS of this change to our representation.</p> <p>(f) ‘<i>Scottish Justice</i>’ Sub-Committee:- Dennis Barr advised that as the role of Secretary took up as much time as he was able to commit to the Committee he would be standing down from the ‘<i>Scottish Justice</i>’ Sub-Committee. It was also noted that Bob Mitchell who also served on the Sub-Committee had retired, accordingly there were two vacancies. Dennis Barr advised that David Ferguson had agreed to remain on the Sub-Committee and at the meeting Marella O’Neill confirmed that she was willing to remain on the Sub-Committee. After some discussion on the role and responsibilities of the Sub-Committee both Brian Wood and Grace MacLeod agreed to join the Sub-Committee. Dennis Barr confirmed that he had sufficient material to produce a December edition of the ‘<i>Scottish Justice</i>’ and that he would ensure that it was published in December thereby allowing time for the new Sub-Committee to get established for the March 2017 edition.</p> <p>(g) Web-Master:- John Lawless agreed to continue in the role of Web-Master for the SJA website. It was acknowledged that John had the necessary expertise and knowledge to fulfil this role. John did confirm that there had been some criticism from members about the delay in SJA Executive Committee meeting minutes appearing on the web, however he asked the Committee to note that minutes only appear on the web after having been approved at the following meeting and that draft minutes do not appear on the website.</p>	<p>Tom Finnigan</p> <p>Dennis Barr</p>
8.	<p><b>SJA Survey Action Plan</b></p> <p>John Lawless confirmed that at the AGM it was agreed that the Executive Committee would produce an Action Plan to address the issues that had been identified as areas for improvement from the SJA Survey of members. He advised that there was not a great deal of data to work from but did agree to draft the Action Plan.</p> <p>Neil McKechnie did request a copy of the full Survey report from John Lawless.</p>	<p>John Lawless</p> <p>John Lawless</p>
9.	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p>(a) The treasurer advised that he would require an additional signature for the SJA Bank Account. It was agreed that the new Chairman, Mr Tom Finnigan was the most appropriate additional signatory, and the Treasurer agreed to pass the appropriate paperwork to the Chairman to complete and submit to the Royal bank of Scotland.</p> <p>(b) Gordon Hunter raised the issue of the recently announced changes to the JP Training Plan, specifically the requirement to attend a Judicial Institute (JI) Training Course at least once every three years. This had caused some consternation amongst some of his</p>	

	<p>fellow JPs, particularly those engaged in farming or were otherwise self-employed. It was noted that the issue had been widely discussed in other Sheriffdoms, but that the general conclusion was that once in three years was a reasonable compromise for the JI to adopt and to ensure a standardisation in training across Scotland. It was also noted that new JPs have this expectation on them from the start of their appointment. It was generally agreed therefore that this was not an issue that we should formally raise with the JI, and that the issue would be resolved over time, even if it did result in the resignation of some JPs.</p> <p>(c) John Whyte asked for it to be noted that a JP had recently been appointed within Tayside, Central and Fife Sheriffdom despite the fact that the candidate was 69 years of age. This did cause some surprise across all Committee members, who were under the belief that any appointment was expected to be for a minimum of 5 years, which would clearly put this JP well beyond the mandatory retirement age.</p>	
10.	<p><b>Date of the Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The Secretary was asked to check the availability of the Conference Room in Glasgow Sheriff Court for either Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017, or Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017. It was agreed that with the exception of John Burns Glasgow was the preferred location for SJA Executive Committee meetings rather than Edinburgh.</p> <p>It subsequently transpired that the only date available for Conference Room 2.14 in Glasgow Sheriff Court was Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017. The next meeting will therefore be held in this location on that date commencing at 10:30am to allow for the meeting to start at 10:45am.</p>	Dennis Barr

Dennis Barr JP  
Secretary  
29 November 2016