

Scottish Justices' Association

Executive Meeting

19th November 2017 starting at 2:30 p.m.
Golden Jubilee Hotel and Conference Centre, Clydebank.

Minutes

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

	<u>A genda Item</u>	<u>Action</u>
1.	<p>Appointment of Temporary Chairman</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>John Lawless proposed the previous Vice-Chairman, Gordon Hunter as Temporary Chairman for this first item on the agenda for this meeting and this was seconded by David Ferguson. As there no other nominations Gordon Hunter was appointed.</p>	Gordon Hunter
2.	<p>Election of the SJA Chairman and Office Bearers 2017/18</p> <p>(a) Chairman – Gordon Hunter proposed that Mr Tom Finnigan be re-appointed for Chairman. This was seconded by Dennis Barr. As there were no other nominations and as Mr Tom Finnigan was prepared to accept the nomination it was unanimously agreed to re-appoint him. Tom Finnigan did thank the Committee for their ongoing support. He also believed that the SJA was now firmly established as the representative voice for JPs in Scotland. Mr Tom Finnigan thereafter assumed the role of Chairman of the meeting.</p> <p>(b) Vice-Chair – Marella O'Neill proposed the re-appointment of Mr. Gordon Hunter as Vice-Chairman. This was seconded by John Whyte. As there were no other nominations and as Mr Gordon Hunter was prepared to accept the nomination it was unanimously agreed to re-appoint him.</p> <p>(c) Secretary – Gordon Hunter proposed that Mr. Dennis Barr be re-appointed as Secretary of the Association. This was seconded by</p>	

	<p>Grace MacLeod. As there were no other nominations and as Mr Dennis Barr was prepared to accept the nomination it was unanimously agreed to re-appoint him.</p> <p>(d) Treasurer – Marella O’Neill proposed that Mr John Whyte be reappointed as Treasurer of the Association. This was seconded by Grace MacLeod. As there were no other nominations and as Mr John Whyte was prepared to accept the nomination it was unanimously agreed to re-appoint him.</p>	
3.	<p>Appointment of Other Post Holders</p> <p>(a) Membership Secretary:- David Ferguson proposed that Mr John Lawless be re-appointed as Membership Secretary. This was seconded by Marella O’Neill. 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:- Gordon Hunter proposed that Mr John Lawless should also be re-appointed as the SJA Representative on the Information and Communication Technology Judicial Committee. This was seconded by David Ferguson. 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 John Whyte. 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:- It was noted that Mr John Burns was absent from the meeting, but the Secretary advised the meeting that Mr Burns had indicated his intention to attend the next meeting of the Conduct Committee of the Judicial Council. This was due to be held on Tuesday 21st November 2017. It was assumed therefore that he would be prepared to accept the nomination for his re-appointment to be the SJA Representative on the Conduct Committee of the Judicial Council. The nomination was made by Tom Finnigan and seconded by Dennis Barr. As there were no further nominations John Burns was appointed as the SJA Representative on the Conduct Committee.</p> <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 continue be Tom Finnigan and Gordon Hunter. This was unanimously agreed.</p>	

	<p>(f) Judicial Council :- Tom Finnigan advised that the normal JP representatives on the Judicial Council for Scotland were the Chairman and the Secretary of the Association, accordingly it was proposed to that this arrangement continue and our representatives on the Judicial Council would therefore continue to be Tom Finnigan and Dennis Barr. This was unanimously agreed.</p> <p>(g) ‘<i>Scottish Justice</i>’ Sub-Committee:- David Ferguson confirmed that he was prepared to continue on the Sub-Committee and to co-ordinate the work of the Sub-Committee. In addition the three other members of the Sub-Committee, namely, Marella O’Neill, Brian Wood and Grace MacLeod agreed to remain on the Sub-Committee. All members of the Sub-Committee were thanked for their work in producing the electronic newsletter and were unanimously appointed to continue in their role.</p> <p>(h) Web-Master:- John Lawless agreed to continue in the role of Web-Master for the SJA website. John did note that he had fulfilled this role for a number of years, and would seek to step down from the role after this year. John Whyte noted that there was a potential candidate for this role from the recently appointed JPs in Tayside, Central & Fife Sherifffdom, and that he would seek to encourage this potential candidate to stand for election to the SJA Executive Committee at the next election.</p>	
4.	<p>Matters Arising from the AGM</p> <p>It was agreed that the Financial Statements produced and issued by the Committee would require to be re-titled as a Financial Statement with an independent Auditors Statement. Confirmation should also be sought from SCTS that the independent auditors review and Statement to our accounts met their financial requirements.</p>	Treasurer
5.	<p>Urgent Issues Arising from the Executive Meeting on 2nd October 2017</p> <p>The Secretary advised that he had written again to Ofgem regarding progress with a meeting with the Energy Association to progress a standardised approach to utility warrants, but to date no reply had been received. He would advise the Committee of any response from Ofgem.</p> <p>Other than this item it was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd October 2017 would be considered in detail at the next full meeting of the Committee.</p>	
6.	<p>Scottish Government’s Consultation on the COPFS Budget</p> <p>The Secretary advised that the Scottish Government had issued a consultation document requesting comments from interested parties on the COPFS draft budget for 2018-19. It was noted that written submissions had to be made by 5th December 2017. The Secretary enquired whether it would be appropriate for the SJA to respond to this Consultation.</p> <p>There were some comments about the overall reduction in cases brought before the JP courts which would have the impact of reducing costs. There was also comments about the training costs incurred by COPFS through their constant recruitment of trainees, and the fact that only a relatively few</p>	

	<p>trainees obtain permanent employment with COPFS. However, it was felt that the management of the budget was primarily an internal issue for COPFS and that it would be inappropriate for the SJA to make any direct comments on budget savings or budget allocation. Accordingly the SJA decided not to make any formal response to the consultation document.</p>	
7.	<p>Scottish Women's Aid</p> <p>The Chairman advised that he had received a letter from Louise Johnston from Scottish Women's Aid requesting that she address a SJA Executive meeting. This was as a direct result of the allocation of some Domestic Abuse cases to JP courts. It is evident that Scottish Women's Aid wish to be closer involved with JP training on these cases. It was agreed that a face-to-face meeting should be arranged with Scottish Women's Aid to progress discussions on what role they could play. Marella O'Neill and Neil McKechnie both volunteered to represent the SJA at this meeting, and the Chairman agreed to facilitate this meeting.</p> <p>The Chairman also advised that Scottish Women's Aid had arranged a conference in Edinburgh on 1st December 2017 on Domestic Abuse and had invited the SJA to send representatives. Notwithstanding the costs of the conference it was felt that it was not directly relevant to JP cases, therefore it was agreed that we would not send any representatives to the conference.</p>	<p>Chairman/ Marella O'Neill/ Neil McKechnie</p>
8.	<p>AOCB</p> <p>(a) Marella O'Neill raised the issue of the reduction in cases being brought to the JP Courts. There had recently been a reduction of two JP courts per week in Kilmarnock and it was increasingly difficult for some JPs to meet the requirement to sit twelve times a year. It was noted that Tim Barraclough the SCTS Chief Executive had addressed the North Strathclyde Annual Training Conference and had expressed the objective of having greater dialogue with the SJA on this type of issue. On this basis it was agreed that Tim Barraclough should be invited to the next SJA Executive Committee.</p> <p>(b) Brian Wood raised concern about the reduction in the training budget in GH&I Sherifffdom coupled with a lack of flexibility in the allocation of the training budget. It was also noted that TC&F Sherifffdom no longer had a weekend training event due to training budget cuts. It was agreed that the Chairman and Brian Wood would discuss this matter and then it would be raised at the next meeting of the SCTS.SJA Liaison Committee.</p> <p>(c) Phil Cropper raised the issue of a more formal and standard recognition being made to JPs on their retirement or on leaving the bench. It was noted that local arrangements are often made to acknowledge the contribution of individual JPs, but it was generally agreed that a standard and more formal process would be widely appreciated amongst the JP community. It was agreed therefore that the Chairman would raise this issue with Tim Barraclough at the next SCTS/SJA Liaison Committee meeting.</p>	<p>Chairman</p> <p>Brian Wood/ Chairman</p> <p>Chairman</p>

9.	Date of the Next Meeting The Secretary was asked to check the availability of the Conference Room in Glasgow Sheriff Court for Monday 15 th January 2018. It was subsequently transpired that this date was available for Conference Room 2.14 in Glasgow Sheriff Court. Accordingly the date of Monday 15 th January 2018 is confirmed for the next meeting, commencing at 10:30am to allow for the meeting to start at 10:45am.	Secretary
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Dennis Barr JP
Secretary
6 December 2017