

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities AGM
Garnethill Synagogue, June 2008

Present: Ephraim Borowski, Kenneth Collins (chair), John Cosgrove, Gerald Gordon, Stephen Kliner, Philip Mendelsohn, Walter Sneader, Paul Spicker.

In attendance: Leah Granat.

Observers: several members of the public.

Apologies: Micheline Brannan, Daniel Clapham, Paul Edlin, Frank House, Barry Jackson-Berlow, Miriam Jackson, Catherine Lyons, Hilary Rifkind.

Welcome

Kenneth Collins welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly mentioning guests, Rami Ousta (BEMIS), whom he thanked for giving ongoing support to SCoJeC, Rachel Fletcher (Jewish Chronicle), and Deanna Levine, who had a particular interest in Get legislation. He commented that Garnethill Synagogue was a particularly auspicious venue for the AGM, since the Scottish Jewish Archives Centre would launch their new exhibition, "A New Life in Scotland" the same afternoon, but noted that, whilst SCoJeC has held meetings in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Dundee, it is the first time it has met in a temporary dwelling (the Synagogue succah) in the pouring rain!

Minutes of AGM of 28 October 2007

The minutes were proposed by Stephen Kliner and seconded by Philip Mendelsohn.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

Co-options and confirmation of membership

Walter Sneader's co-option following e-mail circulation was homologated by the AGM.

It was unanimously agreed to renew the following co-options.

Gerald Gordon - Glasgow
Stephen Kliner - Glasgow
Daniel Clapham - Glasgow
John Cosgrove - Edinburgh
Micheline Brannan - Edinburgh

Ellis Simpson, a co-opted member for the last two years, will be standing down as of the AGM, and Kenneth Collins thanked him for his work on behalf of SCoJeC.

Chair's report

There were no questions on the Chair's report which had been circulated in advance. Kenneth Collins gave particular thanks to Ephraim Borowski, Daniel Clapham, Stephen Kliner, John Cosgrove, and Leah Granat for their support during his tenure.

Treasurer's report [in absentia]
and adoption of accounts

There were no questions on the Treasurer's report or the financial accounts, both of which had been circulated in advance. It was noted that no action was required in relation to the financial accounts since these had been adopted at the last Council meeting.

In the absence of the Treasurer, Kenneth Collins stressed that most of the current balance is ringfenced for particular initiatives, such as *Scotland's Jews* and the Outreach project, so additional funding is still required to cover core activities. He thanked organisations that have provided funding during the past year, including, amongst others, BEMIS, the Glasgow Synagogues, the Community Trust, the Board of Deputies, the Scottish Government, and the Clore Foundation, and Edward Green for his fundraising.

On behalf of SCoJeC, Kenneth Collins thanked the Treasurer, Daniel Clapham, and Independent Examiner, Lewis Osborne.

Appointment of Independent Examiner

The re-appointment of Lewis Osborne was proposed by Kenneth Collins, and seconded by Philip Mendelsohn.

Director's and Public Affairs Officer's reports

Ephraim Borowski congratulated Kenneth Collins on his appointment to a visiting professorship at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

He apologised for the late circulation of papers for the AGM, explaining that this was due to last minute problems with the printing of *Scotland's Jews*, and the launch of the first active part of the outreach project. A leaflet has been produced (http://www.scojec.org/events/2008/08_outreach/flyer.pdf) for circulation to libraries, community centres, etc, across Scotland, and it is hoped that it will catch the eye of anyone with any connection to Judaism.

SCoJeC's highest profile activity this year concerned the antisemitic comment pages that have been hosted on the Herald and Scotsman websites. There has been an overwhelming, and very supportive response from MSPs, but SCoJeC is appalled and depressed by the failure of the newspapers to take this matter seriously, and even more appalled at the Kafkaesque response of the Press Complaints Commission, which stated that, so long as the editors do not accept responsibility for the content of these blogs, they are not obliged to exercise any control over them.

Ephraim Borowski thanked Jaqueline Friedman, who continues to act as SCoJeC designer from Jerusalem, for her work on *Scotland's Jews*, the outreach flyers, and *Four Corners*.

He reported that SCoJeC is currently managing a £10,000 grant from the Scottish Government in respect of the Interfaith Pilgrimage, and commented that this funding, which arose from a casual conversation with a civil servant from the Equality Unit, is evidence of the excellent relationship SCoJeC has developed with the Scottish Government. It has always been intended that the Pilgrimage would not be a one-off trip, but rather a rolling project, and, thanks to the generosity of funders there should be sufficient funding for it to be repeated next year.

He thanked BEMIS for its ongoing support to produce MEMO, and Edward Green for raising a significant amount of funding last year, but informed the meeting that, by end of the summer when the grant funded projects are paid for, SCoJeC will once more barely have the funds to function for six months. He proposed contacting donors who assisted in setting up ScoJeC but who have not had any subsequent involvement, to inform them about ScoJeC's many achievements and invite new donations.

From the floor, Kalman Bookman commented that every member of an organisation, including the civil servants, must be capable of soliciting funds, and congratulated Ephraim Borowski on having done so very effectively.

From the floor, Rami Ousta stated that there is an excellent working relationship between himself, Ephraim Borowski, and Leah Granat, and assured the meeting that BEMIS will continue to provide funding support to ScoJeC.

Election of office-bearers

Chair: Walter Sneader
Proposed: Kenneth Collins
Seconded: John Cosgrove

Vice-Chairs: Philip Mendelsohn (ex officio, GJRC)
Hilary Rifkind (ex officio, EHC)
Frank House (JNAH)

Secretary: Paul Spicker
Proposed: Kenneth Collins

Treasurer: Daniel Clapham
Proposed: Kenneth Collins

Before inviting Walter Sneader to take the chair, Kenneth Collins stated that he has enjoyed his time as chair, and has had particular pleasure in working with Ephraim Borowski and Leah Granat, but will be glad to receive fewer e-mails in future!

Walter Sneader assumed the Chair, and thanked Kenneth Collins and his predecessor, John Cosgrove, for the excellent job they have done in enabling ScoJeC to become so successful.

Reports from communities

With the exception of Dundee, no reports had been received from communities, and it was agreed that these would be attached to the Minute once received.

AOCB

There was no other business, so the meeting was closed, and Kenneth Collins was invited to take the chair for the launch of *Scotland's Jews*.