



Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities

Annual General Meeting
Sunday 10th June 2017 at 1.30pm
at the JCC, Giffnock, Glasgow G46 6UE

Lunch will be available from 12.45 pm.

Agenda:

Guest speaker: Sabir Zazai, CEO of Scottish Refugee Council

We are also very pleased to welcome Marie van der Zyl, the newly elected President of the Board of Deputies, who will address the meeting briefly.

1. Welcome, sederunt, apologies
2. Minutes of AGM of 11 June 2017 and Council of 11 March 2018 (circulated)
3. Matters arising from minutes
4. Cooptions and confirmation of membership:
 Micheline Brannan (Edinburgh) Frank House (Highlands)
 Joe Goldblatt (Edinburgh) Henry Lovat (Glasgow)
 Debby Taylor (Aberdeen)
5. Report from the Chair
6. Financial Report and adoption of accounts (circulated)
7. Appointment of Independent Examiner
8. Reports from Director
9. Data Protection and Privacy Policy (draft circulated)
10. Election of office-bearers
11. Reports from Communities
12. Dates of next Council meetings:
 Sunday 2 September and Sunday 2 December – locations tbc.
13. AOCB



1. Welcome, sederunt, apologies

Micheline Brannan (Chair), Fiona Brodie, Nicola Livingston, Raymond Taylor, Gillian Raab, Danielle Bett, Judy Sischy, Ephraim Borowski

Apologies: Evy Yedd, Simon Dover, Debby Taylor, Mark Taylor, Paul Spicker, Hilary Rifkind, Philip Mendelsohn, Joe Goldblatt, Henry Lovat, Alan Kay.

Observers: Rabbi Rose, Nancy Lynner, Alice Goodman, Shimon Goodman, Jackie Taylor

Guest speaker: Micheline welcomed Deputy Chief Constable Johnny Gwynn who has responsibility for national aspects of operational policing, including major and organised crime and counter terrorism, public protection, criminal justice, and operational support. DCC Gwynn spoke about how police had responded to recent terrorist incidents, including enhanced protection for the General Election and the Scotland-England match.

He said that Police Scotland receives around 9000 calls a day, and all are answered by a human being at three call centres in the central belt. However around 80% of calls have nothing to do with crime, so they are introducing new systems to assess the urgency of the call and the vulnerability of the caller in order to prioritise need, and are working jointly with ambulance and mental health services to ensure that callers get the service they require. They have also recently published a 10-year strategy document that looks at new priorities such as cybercrime.

Micheline spoke about the range of incidents that can affect the Community, especially on social media, and Ephraim said the internet makes it easy to identify complainers and asked what the police can do to prevent them being intimidated, as this deters others from reporting incidents. Replying to Judy about terrorist-related material on the internet, DCC Gwynn said the "Prevent" strategy is not only concerned with Islamist extremism. Nicola spoke about the importance of explaining the significance of aspects of an incident that might seem innocuous to police and prosecutors, and asked whether control rooms are able to identify key locations and individuals. DCC Gwynn said their call systems should make this possible and offered to arrange a visit to a control centre. In a discussion about reporting and priorities, he stressed that 101 is not a premium-rate number, and said there is a new e-mail address for reports including attachments. Rabbi Rose asked why there seems to be an increase in far-right activity, and DCC Gwynn replied that it may be the regrouping of pre-existing groups such as Ulster Loyalists. Unfortunately it is not an offence to wear a hood or balaclava, although there may be local by-laws that the police can enforce.

Micheline thanked DCC Gwynn for his briefing and for answering questions frankly. In reply he said it was a privilege to attend and he hoped his presence would give the Community some reassurance.

2. Minutes of AGM of 5 June 2016 and Council of 12 March 2017

The minutes were approved *nem con*.

3. Matters arising from minutes

Fiona asked for clarification about the Pilgrimage fund, and Ephraim said it had been agreed not to change this year's accounts but to reconsider whether to transfer the balance before next year's accounts are prepared. He said this was fortuitous as there are more positive indications of interest from the Church of Scotland about repeating the exercise. Micheline added that it was good to show that we are committed to the exercise.

4. Co-options and confirmation of membership:

The following co-options were proposed by Micheline and Ephraim and agreed *nem con*:

Micheline Brannan (Edinburgh)	Frank House (Highlands)
Joe Goldblatt (Edinburgh)	Henry Lovat (Glasgow)
Debby Taylor (Aberdeen)	

It was noted that the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council had just held its AGM at which it changed its legal status, and they would now be considering their internal structure. The AGM of the EHC would be later in June, after which they would reconsider their nominees. Paul Spicker continues as the representative of Tayside and Fife, and Mark Taylor was re-elected Chair of Aberdeen and would be their representative to Council.

Micheline said that Judy had indicated that she wished to step down and thanked her for her support as a co-opted member. Judy replied that she really admires SCoJeC's work, but has too many other commitments to commit herself as she would like.

5. Report from the Chair

Micheline spoke to her circulated report. She said she wanted to thank the small number of people in our communities who work so hard, often at enormous personal sacrifice, and singled out Debby who does so much in Aberdeen, often in a very hostile atmosphere. After a year in the chair she had learned better the value of our team. She particularly wanted to compliment Leah for her reliability, especially as SCoJeC's corporate memory, and for the quality and quantity of her work. Fiona Frank is working harder than ever, with the support of Shayna helping with communications, Joanne, for all the hours she spends organising, and for being the friendly face that greets you at events, and Lea Balint providing general help. Debby Taylor, Margalit Borowski, and Joe Goldblatt are visiting schools, and Zoe is still with us training new volunteers. The Public Affairs portfolio is well covered by Ephraim and herself in collaboration with the Representative Council and Peter Speirs, the Scottish official of the JLC.

Judy asked whether it would be possible for Leah to join meetings by Skype, and it was agreed to explore this with her.

Micheline said she wanted to highlight a number of matters. First she was concerned about the attitude of the SNP, which may get worse as a diminished group of SNP MPs form an alliance with Corbyn's Labour opposition, now strengthened by their increased number of seats. Despite the First Minister's engagement with the Jewish Community and her reassurances, her treatment of the Israeli Ambassador's visit could be seen as contradictory to those reassurances. The connection was subtle, but Micheline thought that the rebuke to the Ambassador, could be seen as signaling more sympathy for the anti-Israel demonstration outside than for the Jewish visitors inside the Parliament. Those Jewish visitors had had to walk a gauntlet of protestors. In addition, the Church of Scotland had debated a report 'Embracing Peace and Working for Justice' at the General Assembly in

May, and a number of key speakers on the day had been even more hostile to Israel than the report itself. However, on the positive side, Micheline welcomed the fact that Police Scotland are willing to listen, but cautioned that we should not underestimate the need to explain to them why certain things are offensive.

In reply to Gillian, she said that the formal dialogue with the Church of Scotland had been delayed because it had seemed premature to commit before the General Assembly. Fiona said she found this very frustrating, and we need to get the show on the road. Micheline replied that some provisional dates have been proposed.

Gillian said that part of problem is that the Jewish Community is identified with Netanyahu, but Fiona said that we do go out of our way to make clear the range of views in the Scottish Community. Danielle said that anyone who distances themselves from his policies is then used as a token, and that attitudes to Israelis, even if not antisemitic are still racist. Judy said we need to separate that from how Jewish people are treated in Scotland, and Nicola replied that we frequently make that point at official meetings. Micheline said that the problem is that others often force the link and give the impression that we will not be not listened to unless we first declare our attitude to matters such as the settlements. Danielle commented that this is a colonialist way of treating minorities.

In reply to Fiona, Micheline said we had met John Swinney to discuss the proposed Education Scotland resource on Israel and Palestine. He had been appalled by some of what he saw and suggested possible ways forward, but we have still had no reply to her letter of 7th December.

Micheline also mentioned the planned International Shalom Festival during the Fringe. Edinburgh Council had now recommended Drummond High School, but there was a move from the Parent Council to have venue withdrawn. There would be a strong presence of Arab Israelis and co-existence projects, but it is expected that there will be demonstrations throughout. Nicola suggested that UJIA support a number of co-existence projects and may be able to assist with contributors.

6. Financial Report and adoption of accounts

The signed accounts had been circulated and were approved *nem con*.

7. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Ephraim proposed the reappointment of Lewis Osborne and this was agreed *nem con*.

8. Reports from Director

Ephraim spoke to his circulated report and reiterated his concern that we lack sufficient resources to respond to everything of relevance to the Community because so much time is taken up with dealing with antisemitic incidents and the issues that Micheline had spoken about. One example is the current inquiry by the Equality and Human Rights Committee of the Parliament into bullying in schools, and he thanked Brittany Rittel, the UJIA youth worker, for taking this on and agreeing to give evidence.

Ephraim also reiterated his thanks to Micheline, the Executive and Council, Fiona and her colleagues, and all our volunteers for their help and support throughout the year. He added that the arrangements for regular coordination meetings with the Glasgow Representative Council and the JLC Scotland Director were working well, and he thanked them all, and in particular Nicola, for their collaboration and support.

Judy asked whether the Board of Deputies have renewed their contribution. Micheline replied that they give us nothing, but had just requested £300 for affiliation, and that this creates work but brings no benefit. After discussion it was agreed to continue affiliation. Nicola suggested convening a meeting of Scottish Deputies to consider the situation.

In reply to Judy, Micheline said she had produced a strategy document that had informed a number of funding applications, but this had not brought any benefit. The Scottish Government is not interested in core funding, only projects, and we are also victims of our own success – funders ask why they should increase support when we achieve so much without! Nicola pointed out that it is not true that we don't have a Chief Executive – we do, but he is doing the job gratis!

Micheline at this point acknowledged the amazing amount of work Ephraim has done for many years for no remuneration and said that she greatly appreciated the way she and he have worked together over the first year of her chairmanship. While a paid CEO was essential for the long term, there appeared to be no immediate prospect of moving in that direction and she thanked Ephraim heartily on behalf of Council for his continuing service, without which SCoJeC would not exist.

9. Election of office-bearers

The following were elected by the AGM:

Chair: Micheline Brannan
Vice-Chair: Fiona Brodie
Secretary: Simon Dover

Despite approaching a number of people, Ephraim said he had been unable to find anyone willing to take on the Treasurership, so this remained vacant.

10. Reports from Communities

Reports received are annexed below.

11. Dates of next Council meetings:

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

12. AOCB

The formal meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair, after which Micheline welcomed Maureen Sier, Director of Interfaith Scotland, who led a brief discussion about priorities for future interfaith activities.