



## Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 26th March 2025 at 121 George Street

<b>Present</b>	Convener	Andrew McLellan	
	Vice-Convener	Ian Alexander	
	Secretary	Carol Miller	
	Minutes Secretary	Jacky Harkness	
	Members	Maureen Jack	Tom Watson
		Trish Archibald	Val Brown
		Calum MacSween	Jamie Erskine
Ministers	Rev Dr Stewart Gillan	Rev Muriel Pearson	

	Item	Comments	Action
1	Opening	Andrew welcomed everyone present and started the meeting with a lesson and a prayer.	
2	Apologies	Apologies were received from Alison Jack, Douglas Simpson, Kenny Roger and Rebecca McGonigle.	
3	Minutes	The Minutes from the Committee Meeting held on 23rd January 2025 had been pre-circulated. There was one amendment: paragraph 10, it is members at the AGM who appoint the Vice-Convener (not the Committee) and this will be done at the AGM on 16 <sup>th</sup> May. The Minutes were approved and there were no matters arising from the Minutes.	Carol
4	Convener's Update	This was Andrew's last Committee Meeting as Convener and he took the opportunity to reflect on the past 3 years. The Friends has been re-energised and re-invigorated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The arrival of two new ministers, Stewart and Muriel.</li> <li>• Better communication with the members, with the new website, newsletter and Facebook.</li> <li>• A steady trickle of new members. Although disappointment the numbers have not increased more.</li> <li>• The success of Trish and the impact The Friends' scholarship has had on her.</li> <li>• The successful annual services and visitors' talks.</li> <li>• The flourishing partnership with Christian Aid.</li> </ul> Andrew thanked members of the Committee for their hard work, support and commitment and in particular Carol for all she has done as Secretary and Kenny Roger and Rebecca McMonigle at 121 for their encouragement.	

5	Ministers' Updates	<p><u>Muriel</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Muriel briefed the Committee on the current violent situation in the oPT.</li> <li>• Rebecca and Muriel were included in an Ecumenical Pilgrimage to communities on the West Bank. She will forward the film made of the visit to Carol for use in communications and publicity.</li> <li>• For the past 2 months, EAPPI volunteers have been able to use the flat at Tiberias for a break.</li> <li>• Tabeetha School is currently fund raising and a video for the campaign is in production. Muriel will send this to Carol once it is finished. It is hoped the profile for this unique school will be raised.</li> <li>• The proposal for the Galilee Garden is presently held up over cost concerns for the Church of Scotland. It is hoped some version will get the go ahead.</li> <li>• Muriel would like to develop the idea of mini pilgrim groups with Stewart and Ian. "Come and see" is very effective in developing support and advocacy from the wider community.</li> </ul> <p><u>Stewart</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stewart thanked Val, Carol and Maureen for their help with his visit and talk in Perth, when on deputation in February.</li> <li>• During his recent visit to Um al Khair he was able to take the £2k donated by The Friends, in the form of food parcels.</li> <li>• He reflected on the recent breakdown of the ceasefire in Gaza and the events in the West Bank.</li> <li>• Both Stewart and Muriel met with the Israel/Palestine Committee in September.</li> <li>• Current events at St Andrew's Jerusalem include bible studies, concerts and inter-faith forums.</li> <li>• Stewart is now able to enter Bethlehem and visits have included Wi'am and the Tent of Nations. Wi'am have requested financial support for their summer camp.</li> <li>• Maureen will shortly be visiting Israel/oPT and will be in St Andrew's on Palm Sunday.</li> </ul>	<p>Muriel</p> <p>Muriel</p> <p>Muriel Stewart Ian</p>
6	Strategy	<p>Ian took the opportunity of thanking Andrew for his energy, commitment and leadership as Convener the last 3 years.</p> <p>The strategy paper, drawn up by Ian, Val, Tom and Stewart was circulated before the meeting. It was suggested that a few sentences should be added to the paper relating to the Churches.</p> <p>It was agreed the document will be shared with Members at the AGM.</p>	<p>Ian</p> <p>Carol</p>

		<p>The next step is to ensure the points raised in the strategy paper take place in practice and are measurable.</p> <p>The Committee members were asked to think of individuals who might be suitable candidates for leaders of justice pilgrimages.</p>	All
7	Constitution	<p>The proposed updated Constitution was circulated before the Committee Meeting.</p> <p>The Constitution was agreed by the Committee once one amendment is made: in para 5.4 the wording is changed to "and/or online".</p> <p>Ian will send the amended Constitution to Kenny for approval by the appropriate committee. It was requested this is completed before 18th April in order for Carol to include it with the AGM papers.</p>	Ian Ian Kenny
8	Membership Subscriptions	<p>The Committee agreed the annual membership fee should be kept at £20. This will be presented at the AGM for approval.</p> <p>Life Members are to continue to be encouraged to convert to annual membership, and all members to arrange a standing order.</p>	Carol Tom
9	Events	<p>Andrew reminded the Committee of the four very successful events held so far in partnership with Christian Aid.</p> <p>It was suggested there should in future be more events outside of Edinburgh.</p>	
10	Reports	<p><u>Finance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The statement as at 28<sup>th</sup> February, along with the Budget for 2025/2026 was pre-circulated. The budget was agreed and will be presented for approval at the AGM.</li> <li>• All parts of the Church of Scotland that use the central organisation are now charged an annual admin fee. For The Friends this is £1,349.</li> <li>• It was suggested Guild Projects could be a way of fundraising. Tom offered to pitch this idea at the AGM.</li> <li>• There is a need to keep operating funds at a set amount.</li> <li>• At the AGM (and with other formal publicity), it is important to inform members exactly what funds are spent on and what difference it is making on the ground.</li> <li>• The cost of postage for Life Members not on email is too high. Carol was asked to calculate the annual cost per person and present this at the AGM, in order to encourage all Life Members to switch to email.</li> <li>• Following from a suggestion made at the meeting in September 2024, Tom, Muriel and Stewart to agree wording for</li> </ul>	Tom Carol Tom Muriel

		<p>an article for the newsletter / letter to members emphasising the importance of their support, with examples of beneficiaries and encouraging them to make a donation.</p> <p><u>Newsletter</u> Calum thanked all those who had contributed and given him ideas for the newsletter. The deadline for the next newsletter is 30th March.</p> <p><u>Facebook</u> Andrew and Maureen are the only two administrators on The Friends' Facebook. Trish volunteered to be a holding administrator whilst Maureen is travelling in Israel. There will need to be another volunteer to take Andrew's place after he retires as Convener.</p> <p><u>Website</u> It was identified that Carol is the only person with the website password. There is a need for another option, which Carol will investigate. The Friends' website will be linked up with St Andrew's Jerusalem and Tiberias website; the page for The Friends on the churches' new website is almost complete.</p> <p><u>Promotional Video</u> The promotional video is almost finished and will be embedded in both websites, as well as being available for all wishing to talk about The Friends. It will be shown at the start of the AGM.</p> <p><u>Membership</u> The details of the membership was pre-circulated. New members are trickling in.</p>	<p>Stewart</p> <p>Trish</p> <p>All</p> <p>Carol</p>
11	Committee Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retiring at the AGM are Andrew, Jamie, David and Jim, with Jacky to stand down before the year end.</li> <li>Val is to be proposed/elected as Vice-Convener at the AGM.</li> <li>It was agreed the Constitution (para 5.3.2) is amended to "up to 5" in order to enable more members to join the Committee.</li> <li>Calum has agreed to be co-opted as the newsletter editor and Ian will ask Alison to be co-opted as the scholarship representative.</li> </ul>	<p>Ian</p> <p>Ian</p>
12	St Andrew's Day	It was agreed the St Andrew's Day service is held on Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> November at 2pm. Carol has confirmed that this date is available at St Cuthbert's.	<p>All</p> <p>Carol</p>
13	AGM	The AGM is on Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> May at 11pm in Augustine United Church. Muriel has agreed to be the Speaker.	All

		Written annual reports are requested to be sent to Carol by 18 <sup>th</sup> April for distribution on 2 <sup>nd</sup> May.	
14	Dates of next meetings	Following a doodle poll the following dates are confirmed: <b>June - Wednesday 18th at 11.00</b> <b>September - Wednesday 10th at 14.00</b> <b>November - Wednesday 12th at 11.00</b>	All
15	Closing	Andrew thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting with the benediction.	