

IONA COMMUNITY
ASSOCIATES ADVISORY GROUP REPORT
REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL MEETING – SATURDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2017

1. Welcome and apologies

Present: Alison Adam, Simon Barrow, John Dale, Mary Duncanson, Marlene Finlayson (convener), Jan Maasen, Isabel Sarle, Caro Smyth, Carla Roth

In attendance: Wendy Goodson, Rachel Hockey, Sandra Kramer, Jenie Lismore, Michael Marten, Abbi Mason, Bénédicte Scholefield, Natalie Smith (minutes)

Apologies: Pat Bennett, Christine Jones, Rosie Magee, Angus Matterson, Richard Sharples,

It was noted that this would be Abbi's last Council meeting, due to her resignation as Camas Coordinator. She was warmly thanked for all that she has done in her role.

2. Office

This was led by Alison and Isabel.

3. AOCB items

These were noted.

4. Minutes of meeting June 2nd 2017

John proposed approval of the minutes, and Isabel seconded him. The minutes were therefore signed by the Convener of Council.

5. Matters arising

6a) Bénédicte had not yet circulated the request of increased financial contributions to Family Groups, as she wished to clarify the case for this with Council.

6g) Rachel had not yet circulated her survey to Associates about induction, as she is awaiting final approval and support with circulation. It was agreed that, due to the delay, the recommendations would be brought to Council in March 2018.

9b) Michael and Bénédicte had not been able to arrange a meeting with all Committee Convenors to discuss how committees relate to staff. This issue was picked up under item 7.a.

6. Induction of members of Council (Leader/Business Director)

Michael gave a presentation on the role of Council and Committees, stressing the need to differentiate between Governance, which is the responsibility of Council and Committees, and operational matters, which are entrusted to Staff.

7. Reports from Council appointees

a. Leader

Michael introduced his report by explaining that the purpose was to strengthen transparency and nurture good communication.

The content of the report was noted. One aspect that was discussed at some length is the current work being done on a new Iona Community website.

- Structure: Following the decision made at the June meeting to review Council structures and address how Committees and Staff interact, It was decided to create a small group to examine the Community's governance and committee structure, with the aim of bringing a proposal for any changes to Council in March 2018. This should have the following adjustments:
 - The ratio of Members and Staff should be 50:50;

- Michael would ask a Member to chair the group (possibly Angus)
- The committees should be engaged during the review process
- The review needs to lead to structures that enable the development of a coherent strategic direction,
- Guidance should be provided to committees on how to operate in the interim period
- It is important that someone external with relevant expertise be involved
- Appointments to the group should be made from a wider spectrum of the Membership, to avoid the same Members being involved in multiple groups

Any suggestions for Members who could be approached for involvement would be sent to Michael by Friday.22nd September.

b. Business Director

Bénédicte explained it had been difficult to write a report closely related to her job description, as her first four months in office had mostly involved learning the ropes and becoming involved in new projects (i.e. relaunch of the Capital Appeal and the Iona Interim Operations Group). Her report therefore focused on outlining initial observations as a newcomer to the Community. The Committee recorded gratitude to Bénédicte for joining the staff team, and to Bonnie for taking on increased responsibilities after Robert Swinfen left.

8. **Reports from Committees and Appeal:**

a. Camas Committee

Abbi presented her report. It was noted that she has submitted her resignation, and the committee expressed warm thanks for the work she had done.

The proposed changes to the pattern of the week were discussed. It was noted that one of the benefits would be to make working hours more sustainable for the staff. The Crear Fund could be used to support an increase in charges in the short-term. She also noted that more work needed to be done regarding the calculation of living wage.

It was agreed that Council would support a new pricing and policy strategy for Camas, and that it would also support a change to the pattern of the week. Council was not able to offer guidance at this stage as to how the Camas Programme Worker can be used in Glasgow in the winter months, but intended to in future.

b. Iona Committee

Neil Squires' paper on 'Our Future Work on Iona' was presented for information, and contained a summary of how the Iona Strategic Planning Group is planning to proceed.

It was reported that the Committee would bring a review of the Common Life Day to Council in December.

The Interim Iona Operations Group would be overseeing all operations on Iona in 2018 and 2019. Finance subgroup will look at the issue of the oversight of the shop.

It was noted that many resident staff would be leaving Iona soon, and Council expressed its thanks to them. Marlene recorded warm thanks to Alison for the excellent work she has done in her role.

c. Programme Committee

It was noted that Pat will be taking on a significantly bigger role in programme organisation on Iona for 2018, following changes in the staffing model. It was also noted that Pat's role in relation to committees still needs clarification.

Regarding the work with young adults, it was noted that the plan is for Michael and Pat to organise a weekend gathering in the spring to discuss how to best take their ideas forward.

The main concern for the Programme Committee was and how to take the work with Young People forward, following the sad news of Chris Long's resignation. Programme Committee stressed that, although the shape of the involvement will inevitably be changing, the Committee and the Community at large remain committed to working with young people.

A proposal on how to continue youth work in the upcoming year was presented by the Committee. The aim is two-fold. The first one is to retain some capacity to sustain over the next 12 months the relationships built by Chris over the years with a number of young people, through the organisation of a Youth Festival on Iona and continuing work with IGLOW in Glasgow. The second aim is to carry out research on what makes the Community's youth work different from the work done by other organisations, with a view of developing a sustainable youth work strategy and securing funding for it. Council was asked to underwrite a commitment of £8,000 in next year's budget to appoint one or two part-time youth workers to carry out the planned work. This was approved by Council. Simon noted that 2018 would be the "Year of Young People", and that there may be government funding we could apply for.

d. Communication and Fundraising Committee

The Committee asked Council for a decision regarding Coracle. It was decided that Coracle be continued as a published publication but that its frequency be reduced from 4 to 3 per year, and its size reduced from 24 pages to 12 (not including the cover). It was estimated that this would save £5,814 per year in printing and postage, and also reduce the editing time by one day a week, thus releasing the editor to spend more time on writing and editing books for publication by WGP.

e. IAPG (Iona Abbey Project Group)

The minutes of the IAPG meeting on 31st August were noted. Marlene stressed the importance of Family Groups actively supporting the Appeal's re-launch and to commit to one fundraising activity for every year of the Appeal. IAPG would provide a list of ideas and suggestions. Emphasis was placed on the importance of involving and inspiring as many people as possible.

Rachel noted the importance of involving Associates too, and will discuss this further with Michael. Michael noted that Alex O'Neill would be making an online calendar of fundraising events, which will allow for an overview and ensure that events are evenly spread throughout the year.

Rachel suggested that there be an "Abbey Angel" (using a similar idea to the Greenbelt marketing strategy) and that "perks" be available in exchange for donations in order to engage more people. The successful crowd funding done by Camas was an excellent illustration of this.

It was agreed that a final decision on Phase 1 would need to be taken at a meeting on the 10th of November.

9. **Updates:**

a. Finance sub-group (*nb: this section was not held in the order recorded by the minutes, but is presented this way for ease of understanding*).

The finance report was discussed at length. John noted that the budget figures for the year needed to be amended to (£24,523), meaning that the projected deficit of £44,900 is considerably more than had been budgeted. Furthermore, he noted that the Community's unrestricted reserves had been depleted, following several years of deficit and some large one-off expenditure in 2016, and that ongoing deficits were not sustainable. He therefore stressed the imperative of having a balanced budget in place in 2018.

Concern was also expressed about the lack of up-to-date and detailed management accounts information necessary to provide an accurate financial overview at all times and support tight financial control across all activities.

It was suggested that a simplified version of the financial report be sent to Family Groups in order to highlight the upcoming problems.

Bénédicte recorded her thanks to Robert Swinfen for putting the figures together, despite no longer being on the staff team. She also noted some positives: Membership contributions had risen considerably, and the shop has made £14,000 more than it had this time last year.

There was a request for the committees to cut their spending.

Council moved on to discussing salaries' increases in 2018.

It was agreed that staff should be given a 1.5% rise from 1.1.18. Council expressed its appreciation for all the work that the staff do.

It was noted that the Community's policy that the highest paid person should earn no more than twice the lowest paid person may necessitate adjusting the pay scales to ensure that this policy continues.

b. Staffing sub-group

The paper on staffing models was presented. Model 1, which was favoured by the staff, would be tried out, and then reviewed in September 2018. Depending on the outcome of this review, a move to Model 3 might be considered.

10. Cost of attending plenaries and AGM

There was a request from Cumbria Family Group regarding ways of easing the cost of attending plenaries and AGM's. One way this could be done would be through the creation of "hospitality lists", which would consist of Members who are prepared to offer accommodation to other visiting Members. It was noted that the Dutch group already have a list of hospitality, which includes Members and AAG reps. It was decided that if Cumbria Family Group compiles such a list, the Glasgow office can take charge of circulating it as appropriate.

11. Hallowing meal concessionary rate (for information)

It was noted that a concessionary rate for the Hallowing meal does exist. It needed, however, to be publicised more actively, as very few members seem to be aware of it.

12. Members' Week 2018

It was noted that the Autumn 2018 Gathering would be in the Netherlands.

A paper was circulated on the need to decide where the 2018 Members' Week will take place. Alison, on behalf of Martin, suggested that there be a Member's "city-based" Weekend, with the optional possibility of going to Iona for a "Member's Holiday Week" in the preceding week.

The importance of meeting off Island was noted, but it was also recognised that those on the New Members Programme felt strongly about wanting to be hallowed on Iona.

There was a discussion about possible alternatives, but Martin's suggestion was ultimately accepted by Council, with the additional proposal that the AGM, if legally allowed, be scheduled for that weekend as well. This would mean the AGM would take place on Friday evening and Saturday, and the Hallowing and celebration meal on Sunday. Michael will check whether there is a legal requirement for the AGM to be held earlier in the year. If there is not, the above proposal will be implemented. It was also noted that it would be dependent on finding a suitable venue.

13. New worship book omission (query from John Harvey and reply from the editors of the book)

It was noted that the omission highlighted by John Harvey was a mistake, and will be corrected in the reprint. Leaders' copies will be amended in the meantime.

14. Eurig Scandrett – report and request from I/P Working Group (attached)

The Israel/Palestine Working Group had submitted a request for a further two years' funding. It was decided that they would be given a provisional budget of £800 for one year, and that the matter be reviewed again in a year's time.

15. AOCB

- Alison asked if there were any planned events to mark the departure of Iona staff. Michael reported that he will be present for it, but beyond that, there will not be any events.
- There was a request for a summary of all decisions made at Council to be sent out within a few days of each Council meeting. Michael noted that this would not be possible, as it would create

more work for Glasgow staff, but that he will be introducing something similar to his blog in the future.

- Marlene thanked the members of Council for their contributions.
- Minutes of Council meetings to be circulated as soon as possible after the meeting and again with Council papers prior to the subsequent meeting.

16. Dates of next meetings:

Friday 10th November 2017 (Tendering Process meeting)

Saturday 9th December 2017

Friday 16th March 2018

Saturday 12th May 2018