

Report of the meeting of the Board of Directors held on at the National Office on 9th June 2015.

Present:

Directors – Martin Birch, Bill Stanley, Alan Till, Ken Dry, Anthony Devonport, Ian Quance, Natasha Bradshaw, Roddy McGinley

Officers – Tim Morris, Trevor Robson

1. Opening of the Meeting

The Chairman, Martin Birch opened the meeting at 10.30am.

2. Apologies for Absence

Julie Dunk and Charles Ward had forwarded apologies.

3. Declarations of Interest

None were made.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 22nd April 2015

The minutes were agreed as a true record

Matters Arising:

a) ICF Membership

It was reported that no invoice for subscriptions had been received from the ICF. The board requested that the Chief Executive writes to the ICF on receipt of an invoice.

5. Report of the Finance & IT Manager

Membership

Professional membership showed a 1% increase whilst Corporate membership remained unchanged.

Recycling

The January 2015 round of requests to share £350,000 – 60 out of 78 cheques had been presented.

A further round of £350,000 to donate will be actioned late June 2015, with a closing date of early September – funds to be distributed prior to convention.

This will take the total funds donated to circa £2.4m

Budget

There were no major variations to the budget.

6. Infant Cremation and Death Certification Scotland - Update

Bill Stanley provided a report covering the numerous group meetings that he had attended on behalf of the Institute. Directors and officer expressed their appreciation for the time and effort provided by Bill.

6.1. Infant Cremation

A report was received on the various groups formed under the National Committee.

The National Committee had agreed a Code of Practice for Infant Cremations that had been drafted by the associated group comprising all organisations.

It was agreed that:

The Code of Practice for Infant Cremations issued by the Scottish Government would be recommended to all Institute members in all parts of the UK.

Directors were reminded that the policy statement issued by the Scottish Government and that it had been recommended for adoption by all Institute members in the UK by the Institute.

6.2 Death Certification Scotland

It was reported that the new death certification process had been implemented in Scotland on 13th May with there being very few problems reported.

Bill Stanley had provided input into all guidance produced, and especially a very helpful document drafted by the NAFD. Bill was also instrumental in drafting a Q&A sheet.

Directors and officers again expressed their thanks to Bill Stanley.

7. Report of the Chief Executive

Diploma in the Management of Natural Burial Grounds

Directors were informed that the Diploma unit is currently being finalised by SBS. A number of members attending the education seminar had commenced assignments.

7.2 BRAMM / NAMM

It was reported that since NAMM's withdrawal from the single register discussions BRAMM had decided to move the register forward.

It was reported that new offices had been located and staff will be appointed.

7.3 ICF Membership

The Chief Executive enquired as to whether a renewal reminder had been received from the ICF. It was reported that no reminder had yet been received. The Chief Executive stated that he will relay the previous decision of the board following receipt of an invoice.

7.5 Law Consultation Scotland

The Chief Executive reported that the Institute's submission, previously circulated, had been forwarded to the Scottish Government prior to the closing date.

8. Learning Convention and Exhibition

Directors were informed that arrangements for this year's event were on course. A number of speakers had already been engaged covering topics of importance to corporate and professional members.

9. Other Business

a) Shrewsbury Investigation Report

Directors discussed the report.

It was agreed that:

The report is posted on the Institute's website.

b) Human Tissue Authority (HTA) Code of Practice

Directors discussed the Code of Practice and expressed disappointment that 'sensitive incineration' is being put forward as an option alongside burial and cremation. It was noted that incineration could be construed as cremation if detailed information is not given to parents, with obvious problems ensuing in the future. It was further noted that incineration is not an option in Scotland.

It was agreed that:

The Chief Executive responds to the HTA informing them of the Institute's opposition to incineration.

c) Death Certification – England & Wales

The Chief Executive reported that the DoH provided an update at a recent BCAG meeting.

Later this year the DoH will apply to central government for funding for local authorities to establish their Medical Examiner service as this cost is not recoverable from certification fees. If this funding is not made available there is uncertainty as to whether any progress will be made. If funding is made available consultation will be carried out at the end of this year with the earliest implementation date being April 2017.

d) DEFRA Letter

The Chief Executive informed directors that he had chased a response to the letter concerning cremations of babies on residual heat. A holding reply had been received stating that a response would be forthcoming after DEFRA had considered the Emstrey crematorium report.

e) Miscarriage at Home Guidance

The guidance drafted by the Institute, Sands and the Miscarriage Association was formally approved by the board.

f) Annual Report 2015

The annual report for inclusion in the AGM handbook that was previously circulated was formally approved.

g) Reuse of Graves

The MoJ reported at the recent BCAG meeting that the reuse of graves is to be taken forward. A paper is currently being prepared for the Minister concerning the shortage of burial space and reuse the proposal that was at an advanced stage prior to being shelved by the previous government. The paper will cover the period from 2004 to the present and will be presented to the Minister before the summer recess.