

Assembly Trustees Update 2.02

June 2020

- The Trustees met with Thom Riddell and Viv Dickenson of Social Care and were pleased to hear that the work of the staff of CrossReach had resulted in a lesser impact in older peoples' care from the pandemic than had been the experience of many other parts of the care sector. The trustees agreed that a Special Pandemic Payments scheme should be put in place for all front-line staff whose work, in the most challenging of circumstances, had put themselves at risk whilst they selflessly continued with their caring duties.
- The Trustees met separately with the Conveners and Heads of Staff of the two Forums (FNF and FIF) and approved the direction of travel towards final proposals for the respective remits, which were to be the subject of a joint meeting in the ensuing week. With the Faith Nurture Forum, they discussed the overall programme including a specific paper on the need to progress ministries training issues as they were developing as a result of the pandemic. With the Faith Impact Forum, they again looked at the overall remit. This was followed by a discussion on the importance of the Trustees being fully aware of the work of the entities in Israel and the way in which they worked with others towards peace and justice in the Holy Land.
- With the General Treasurer the Trustees considered the latest management accounts to the end of May and were pleased to see that the effects of cost control measures were beginning to be seen. The accounts did not yet reflect the potential reduction in congregational contributions which appears to be holding up reasonably well, but a firmer picture was not expected to emerge until August.
- With the Head of HR, the Trustees noted that line-managers were beginning to request flexible furlough arrangements. It was also noted that in early July, with input from the Employee Council, decisions would be taken as to how to take forward requests made under the Voluntary Exit Scheme. An update was given on the plan for larger scale return to work, which incorporated the outcome of the employee survey. It was noted that substantial work would be required to accommodate safe use of the national offices by a significant number of staff and, at some stage, visitors.
- The Trustees noted that full proposals regarding Ministries Development Staff recruitment would be brought to the August meeting and would require a policy decision on the types of roles that the concept should embrace.
- In light of the clear need for the use of webinars, the Trustees agreed to the creation of a Webinar Project Team to develop a consistent approach and framework within which each webinar could operate efficiently.
- The importance of communications being open and accessible was endorsed by the Trustees. An increase in online events has been broadly welcomed but organisers must take care to ensure that they are as inclusive as possible in terms of those who are invited to join the debate or event. For those not able to join live or online consideration should be given to what options there might be to catch up or find out about the event afterwards.

- The Trustees noted the diversity issues which had arisen following the recent work of the Black Lives Matter movement and will discuss the need properly to approach issues of race, diversity and exclusion at their meeting in August.
- The next meeting of the Trustees will be on 13 August. There will be no formal meeting in July; but the trustees will meet on 9 July both for induction sessions for new trustees and to allow vision time on emerging issues.