



BOARD MEETING

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

MONDAY 18th JANUARY 2016 at 9:30 AM

THISTLE HOUSE, 91 HAYMARKET TERRACE, EDINBURGH

- Present: Sir Muir Russell, Chairing Member
The Rt Hon Lady Dorrian
Dr Michael Ewart
Mrs Deirdre Fulton
Sheriff Mackie
Mr James McNeill QC
The Hon Lord Minginish
Mrs Alison Mitchell
Mr Alistair Morris
Sheriff Principal Pyle
Professor Stephen Tierney
- In attendance: Mr Michael Garden, Chief Executive
Miss Kerry Love, Secretary to the Board
Mrs Dorothy Smith, Policy Officer
- Apologies: Ms Jeane Freeman
Mr Michael Johns-Perring, Appointments Team Leader

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 The Chairing Member welcomed the Board Members to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Ms Freeman. Sheriff Mackie had some urgent court business to attend and was therefore not present for the first part of the meeting.

2. Minutes of the 14th December Board Meeting

2.1 The minutes of the Board Meeting were approved by the Board, subject to one minor amendment.

Action point: Secretariat to update the December Board Meeting Minutes.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 The Chairing Member informed the Board that a letter had been sent from Dr Ewart to the Rt Hon Lady Smith suggesting a meeting to discuss the future processes for tribunal appointments.

4. Chairing Member and Chief Executive Updates

4.1 The Chairing Member updated the Board on progress with the Lord Justice Clerk appointment round. He also informed the Board that the new Lord President had accepted an invitation to meet with the Board. This was likely to be the April Board meeting.

4.2 The Chief Executive informed the Board that the Cabinet Secretary for Justice had approved the appointment of the new lay member who will replace Ms Jeane Freeman. The formal announcement will be made in due course.

4.3 The Chief Executive updated the Board on the planned agenda for an introductory meeting with the three new Lay Assistants. Mrs Fulton has agreed to mentor them.

4.4 The Chief Executive advised the Board that a letter had been received from the Society of Solicitors in the Supreme Courts of Scotland, inviting a Member to its Spring Meeting on 1st March 2016, at Parliament House. The Board were happy to oblige and the Secretariat will trawl for availability.

4.5 Dr Ewart suggested the Board look at how it can deploy Lay Assistants sooner, now that it has been confirmed the PRS/Lettings exercise has been postponed for one year. The Board noted that it would be discussed by the Quality Assurance Group when it met after the Board meeting.

Action point: Secretariat to acknowledge the invite letter from the Society of Solicitors and trawl Members for their availability.

5. Visit to the Judicial Institute (JABS 2016 01)

5.1 The Board discussed a proposal for a visit to the Judicial Institute for Scotland in 2016. It was agreed that the Board's Chief Executive should contact the Director of the Judicial Institute to discuss.

Action point: Chief Executive to contact Sheriff Duff Director of the Judicial Institute.

6. Draft Summary Sheriff 2016 Timetable (JABS 2016 02)

6.1 The Board discussed the draft timetable. It agreed that further interview slots were required based on the latest vacancies forecast. The Chief Executive will request an update from the Judicial Office for Scotland at a meeting on 20 January. The Board agreed to use Lay Assistants where possible.

Action point: Chief Executive to ask for an updated forecast of summary sheriff vacancies for the 2016 appointment round.

Action point: Secretariat to increase the amount of interview slots available and trawl for availability.

7. Law Society Diversity Conference Response (JABS 2016 03)

7.1 The Board considered the response from the Law Society of Scotland on the outcome report of the 2014 Diversity Conference, and asked that the Diversity Steering Group (DSG) consider it and provide any recommendations to the Board.

Action point: Mrs Smith to respond to the Law Society and advise them of the next course of action, and prepare a paper for discussion at the February DSG Meeting.

8. ISIS Website Proposal (JABS 2016 04)

8.1 The Board considered and approved the proposal from the Scottish Government Information Services and Information Systems for the hosting and support of the JABS website. It will take effect from when the contract with the current provider ends at the end of April 2016.

Action point: Mrs Smith to inform ISIS that the proposal has been approved by the Board.

9. Summary Sheriff Diversity Statistics (JABS 2015 58)

9.1 The Board noted the diversity report for the 2015 Summary Sheriff appointment round. It was encouraged to see that females and solicitors had fared well in the appointment round compared with previous appointment rounds.

10. Any other Business

10.1 There was no other business to discuss.

11. Updated Forward Look (JABS 2016 05)

11.1 The Board noted the updated Forward Look detailing forthcoming business and significant dates up to the end of 2017. It agreed that the Board's Chief Executive should explore with the Scottish Tribunals Service if it wished to bring forward an appointment planned for 2017, to lighten the Board's workload during 2017.

The meeting closed at 11:25