



Judicial Appointments Board  
for Scotland

## **BOARD MEETING**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON**

**MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2017 at 10:00AM**

**THISTLE HOUSE, 91 HAYMARKET TERRACE, EDINBURGH**

- Present: Mrs Nicola Gordon, Chairing Member  
Dr Michael Ewart  
Mrs Alison Mitchell  
Mrs Deirdre Fulton  
Professor Stephen Tierney  
Ms Neelam Bakshi  
Sheriff Principal Pyle  
Sheriff O'Grady QC
- Apologies: The Hon Lady Wise  
The Hon Lord Minginish  
Mr James McNeill QC  
Mr Alistair Morris
- In attendance: Mr Michael Garden, Chief Executive  
Miss Kerry Love, Board Secretary and Court  
Appointments Manager  
Mr John Wallace, Tribunal Appointments and  
Governance Manager  
Miss Ashleigh Meikle, Appointments Team Leader  
Miss Rachel Craig, Administrator

#### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

1.1 Mrs Gordon welcomed the Board Members to the meeting. Apologies were received from Lady Wise, Lord Minginish, Mr McNeill and Mr Morris.

#### **2. Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 17**

2.1 The minutes of the meetings were approved by the Board.

### **3. Matters arising from the minutes**

3.1 The Board's 2016/17 Annual Report is being finalised and will be circulated to Members by the end of the week.

**Action point: Mr Wallace to circulate a final version of the Annual Report to the Board by the end of the week.**

### **4. Chairing Member and Chief Executive Updates**

4.1 The Chairing Member provided the Board with the following updates:

#### Meeting with the Lord President

- Mrs Gordon had a positive introductory meeting with the Lord President. She was accompanied by Mr McNeill QC. They discussed current issues.
- It was agreed there would be an on-going dialogue and that Mrs Gordon would attend follow up meetings with the Lord Justice Clerk amongst others.

4.2 Whilst discussing this, the Board agreed it might be helpful to include a diversity progress update at future outreach events.

#### Meeting with Lord Neuberger and Lady Hale

- Mrs Gordon and Mr Garden were very privileged to have the opportunity to meet with Lord Neuberger and Lady Hale, who were in Edinburgh because the Supreme Court was sitting.
- Lady Hale had some very interesting views on how to assist with diversifying the judiciary.

4.3 Whilst discussing this Mrs Gordon said that she would like to get a group photo of the Board for the website, to make it appear as a body rather than a group of individuals.

### **5. First-tier Tribunal for Scotland Housing and Property Chamber: Board Decision Meeting (JABS 2017 26)**

5.1 The Board considered the panel report, in compliance with the Judiciary and Courts (Scotland) Act 2008, as amended by the Tribunal (Scotland) Act 2014, with regard to the selection for recommendation of suitable applicants for ordinary member and legal member of the First-tier Tribunal. The Board agreed the applicants to be recommended to the First Minister.

5.2 The Board recorded its thanks to all involved, in particular the Lay Assistants who had done a terrific job chairing the interview panels. It also noted the high number of female applicants who were to be recommended.

**Action point: Secretariat to forward the recommendations to the Scottish Government and inform applicants of the outcome of their applications.**

## **6. Monthly Budget Report (JABS 2017 27)**

6.1 The Board noted its financial position as of 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017. It also noted that it is still awaiting confirmation of its budget for this financial year from the Scottish Government.

## **7. Outreach Events (JABS 2017 28)**

7.1 The Board reviewed the recent outreach events and considered the feedback from attendees. It agreed:

- In future years the Secretariat should organise the outreach events if resources allow.
- It was good practice to invite a judicial office holder – independent of the Board - to attend and talk about their role and their experience of the JABS process.
- To have something more targeted for tribunal appointments in the future.
- Retain the session that provided applicants with the opportunity to talk with the speakers one to one.

**Action point: Secretariat to include in the Sheriff review paper at the end of the exercise, an analysis of how applicants who attended an outreach event progressed.**

## **8. Any other Business**

### Diversity Steering Group (DSG) Follow –Up

8.1 At the last meeting of the DSG, it agreed to write to the various law schools in Scotland, offering to provide information about judicial career paths and also to provide information about the judicial appointments process. The Board considered a request from one of the universities asking a Member of JABS to come and speak to students later this year. The Board agreed that it could not commit to it as it would need to offer the same to other law schools, and it was not adequately resourced to do so. Miss Love will approach the Judicial Office for Scotland and make a request for a judicial member to attend.

**Action point: Miss Love to approach the Judicial Office for Scotland and make a request for a judicial member to attend.**

### Sheriff Exercise

8.2 Miss Love made the Board aware that SP Murray had written to the Chairing Member providing additional information in relation to the sheriff vacancies in his Sherifdom. This information will be shared with applicants in due course.

### Tripartite Meeting

8.3 Mr Garden provided feedback to the Board from a recent tripartite meeting he and Ms Love had attended with the Judicial Office for Scotland and the Scottish Government.

#### QAG Meeting Feedback

8.4 In the absence of Mr McNeill, Dr Ewart provided the Board with some feedback from a recent meeting of the Quality Assurance Group. The minutes will be provided in due course.

#### 50/50 by 2020

8.5 Mrs Gordon informed the Board that she had received a letter from Michael Matheson MSP, providing an update on the government's initiative to achieve a gender balance on Boards by 2020. Looking at JABS members who are brought in via the public appointments process the Board has already achieved a 50/50 gender balance.