

MAXWELL MEARNS CASTLE PARISH CHURCH
STATED ANNUAL MEETING 20th March 2022

The Stated Annual Meeting of the Congregation was held in the Sanctuary on Sunday 20th March 2022. It was chaired by Rev Dr Scott Kirkland who opened the meeting with a prayer.

1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and welcomed them to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Kate Campbell, Andrew Smith, Bill and Marlene Smith, Brian Waugh

3. MINUTES OF MEETING 21st March 2021

Scott reminded the meeting that the draft minutes had been made available for correction shortly after the 2021 meeting. The minutes were approved and accepted as a true record: Proposer – Graeme Lipsett; Seconder – Calum McPhail.

4. FINANCE REPORT FOR 2021 presented by Ken Taggart (Treasurer)

Ken thanked the team in the congregation which help him with finance - Ian Forgie, Sue Amery-Behr, Christine Peberdy (for managing playgroup billings and staff costs) and also the members of the Finance Committee. The independent examination of the accounts took place thanks to Elspeth Napier at Eaglesham Church. Ken noted that abbreviated statements had been circulated prior to the meeting and that the full accounts will be posted on the Church website, as well as being filed with the Charities Regulator. Ken reported on a few highlights:

- Overall, funds are in good health;
- The main income element was the National Giving Day, which was a boost to income driven by the desire to support youth and family outreach. A separate fund has been set up and the costs will be allocated in the coming years;
- Another new fund set up relates to the Adapt & Thrive grant received from the Scottish Government which has been recognised as income, with the costs to follow;
- Expenditure is mostly fixed and foreseeable. There were no significant variances from budget;
- Property costs continue to need careful planning and management and Ken thanked the Property team for their assistance with that. These also include the rising utility costs; and
- With regard to giving, Ken encouraged everyone to remember the advantages of gift aid and noted that Louise Fisher is supporting on that.

Scott asked for questions on the financial report for 2021 but none were received.

5. BUDGET FOR 2022 presented by Ken Taggart (Treasurer)

Ken stated that the budget for 2022 is shown on the last page of the finance pack. The budget is for the General Fund only and is aiming for break even in 2022. Ken is aware of pressure on household budgets and this may have impact on offerings. Ken concluded that the Congregation is blessed with sufficient resources to allow it to continue in all its activities for our congregation, in our community and all for the glory of God.

No questions were raised on the budget and Scott thanked Ken and Ian for their work on the finances.

6. RETIRALS & ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Scott noted that the Congregational Board comprises elders and directly elected members, who usually complete a term of three years. Scott reported that of the seven Board members due to retire after three years, two are retiring and five have agreed to be re-appointed.

Scott thanked Brian Bell for his service to the Board over a number of years and particularly for his role as Property Convenor. Scott also thanked Stephen Pryce for his service and particularly for his key role in the Sanctuary refurbishment. Two new members have agreed to join the Board and Scott thanked Susan Cunningham and Susan Little. Proposers and seconds were obtained for the continuing members and two new members.

The following, therefore, is a record of the revision of Board members:

NAME	NEW/CONTINUE	PROPOSER	SECONDER
Brian Bell	Retiring	N/A	N/A
Stephen Pryce	Retiring	N/A	N/A
Bruce Adkins	Continuing	Chisholm MacRae	Calum McPhail
Kate Campbell	Continuing	Jack Geddes	Andrew Little
Ken Taggart	Continuing	Ian Forgie	May Arthur
Scott Urquhart	Continuing	Ken Taggart	David Merriman
Brian Waugh	Continuing	Sue Amery Behr	Ian Forgie
Susan Little	New	Robert Campbell	Bruce Adkins

Susan Cunningham	New	Phyl Campbell	Debbie McDougall
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7. PROPERTY REPORT (including Manse) presented by Jack Geddes on behalf of Brian Waugh

During 2021, we finally saw the reopening of our buildings and welcomed back our hall rental partners, old and some new. The Property Convenor role has changed/expanded as we no longer have an onsite church officer. This has resulted in a small team of people working together to enable us to manage ongoing maintenance and upgrades to the buildings. Thanks to Sue Amery-Behr, Jack Geddes, Sandy Halliday and Sandy Leonard for their ongoing time and efforts.

Items of capital expenditure included:

- £3,000 was spent making safe and upgrading the exit route from the fire exit door at the back of the Sanctuary;
- £6,880 was spent on the manse to remove badly damaged roughcasting and re-roughcasting of the whole property as the damage was extensive and risked water ingress to many parts of the property;
- We faced a challenge with a burst pipe in the Church grounds which disrupted use of the halls and the Sanctuary for several weeks. Excavation, repair and replacement of the pipes and installation of a secondary toby closer to the halls buildings resulted in a cost of £9,400 plus another £4,200 to make good the tarmac and grounds. Unfortunately, these costs were not covered by insurance. A huge thanks to Sandy Halliday for the time and effort spent working with the contractors to oversee the entire works.

Maintenance and repair costs included:

- The Sanctuary entrance was subject to water ingress due to a build-up of leaves and foliage in the roof guttering. This was repaired at a cost of £265 and we now have a maintenance agreement in place for gutters to be cleared on a quarterly basis;
- The commercial dishwasher in the main hall kitchen was subject to two repairs during 2021 with costs totaling over £750. The dishwasher is over 20 years old. A quote for a like for like replacement is approx. £10,000. However the supplier believes that, with regular cleaning and maintenance, it should last several years, and therefore the recommendation is not to replace the unit for the time being;
- We are required to have annual gas safety, fire risk assessment, electrical and other certifications. The latest gas safety checks have raised issues with some of our pipes and valves around the main gas boiler which heats the main hall buildings. We await proposed costs to upgrade these in order to be fully compliant ahead of the next safety check. The latest electrical safety certification of the former church officer's flat has flagged that it will need a complete rewire soon. Potential costs for this are around £2,000 to £3,000;
- In the garage, there was an infestation of mice attracted by some of the food/non-food products stored for the ERGC operation. This was addressed at a cost of £80 and new sonic mice deterrents were installed by ERGC to prevent this happening again plus all non-canned products will now be stored securely in cabinets. The inner area of the garage was completely gutted, and a significant amount of junk removed and disposed of to clear a good working space for the Blythswood Boxes team to operate in. Thanks go to Denise Lowson, Lesley Young, Jack Geddes and Fiona Waugh for their help in this clearance;
- Heating costs fall under the property budget and this continues to be a challenge to manage and strike an optimum balance to have a warm Sanctuary for worship and to keep costs low. Charles and Sue Amery-Behr have done a fantastic job to source three quotations to address the failures of the existing heating system and to upgrade/supplement it with a new provider. At the time of writing this, Scott had secured Presbytery approval to proceed with this. Jack noted that we have also now received General Trustee approval;
- We managed to secure a grant from the Scottish Government's "Adapt & Thrive" initiative to the sum of £18,201. A large chunk of this award will be used to upgrade the basement area to accommodate the Off Grid Kids team and our own youth groups. Sourcing trades people and materials has been a challenge, however we now have quotations to present to the Board for approval to hopefully see this work completed before the summer. Other aspects of this award have been used to purchase enhanced AV equipment for the Sanctuary.

Scott asked for any questions on the property report, but none were received.

8. GROUNDS REPORT presented by Bruce Adkins (Grounds Convener)

Bruce gave a flavour of what happens around the grounds on an annual basis. Grass cutting is the responsibility of Warnocks, our contractor for many years. They also apply weedkiller to the pathways and grounds and cut the hedges, at least once per year. In November of last year, additional emergency work was done to clear debris after the storms. There is a good working relationship with Warnocks and they will remain in place, with a slight increase in prices for 2022. No questions were received in respect of Bruce's report.

Scott provided a report on the maintenance of the Broomburn steps on behalf of Stewart Martin:

Many thanks once again to the small but dedicated team of volunteers who keep the steps leading from Broomburn Drive up to the Church swept and kept neat and tidy for worship each Sunday. We appeal to the congregation for new volunteers since this would reduce the burden on the current team, particularly as we are all not getting any younger!

Scott invited questions on the upkeep of the Broomburn steps, but none were received. Scott suggested including a request for volunteers in the Church magazine. Scott thanked the team for their work on the steps.

9. MEARNS CASTLE PROJECT

No report was presented by David Merriman and no questions in respect of Mearns Castle were received.

10. MINISTER'S REPORT presented by Rev Dr Scott Kirkland

Scott noted that a full version of the Annual Report will be uploaded to the Church website in due course, and this will contain a lengthy review of congregational life last year, as written by him. This year, Scott wished this report to focus on the Presbytery Plan which is being applied across Scotland to significantly reduce the current number of ministry posts of approx. 600. The reasons behind this are twofold – (i) financial, and (ii) there are fewer new ministers coming through to support the posts.

The impact of this for Glasgow Presbytery is a reduction from 130 posts to 84 posts. After taking out ring-fenced and other posts, 126 parishes in Glasgow will be reduced to 65. Glasgow Presbytery has been divided into zones and we are included in a zone of 28 congregations. Ministry posts are being allocated to zones based on population and our zone will have 13.5 posts. There was a meeting yesterday to discuss this further, and, working on a pro rata basis, if we are clustered traditionally with the other local Churches in Newton Mearns and Eaglesham, the current 5 posts will reduce to 2.4 posts, available to the existing 5 congregations. The elders are being asked to consider whether we agree to being part of this geographical cluster, and decide on this, in conjunction with the congregation. This must be done within a very short timeframe - the elders have two weeks to decide whether to be part of this local cluster. Scott noted that the lack of information has not allowed us to get too far ahead of the decision-making process.

The next step in the process is to decide how we will relate to one another in the cluster and how to reduce to 2.4 ministry posts over a 5-year period. How this will work in practice is completely unknown, but this decision is due to be made by June for review by various committees by the end of 2022. Scott noted that these are incredibly sharp deadlines, and it is a tall order to include the congregation appropriately in making these two decisions.

Scott has raised with Presbytery as to whether we can break out of our geographical cluster to join another congregation or congregations. Presbytery have agreed to this, but this is very difficult in the timescales. The elders have approached a few congregations who are also faced with these decisions. Tomorrow, Scott is meeting with several ministers of congregations who are of a theological fit. If this is taken forward with these congregations based on the theological fit, there is still the question of how this would relate to the reduction in posts and this would be a real challenge for the Presbytery.

Scott noted that the 5 congregations in the local cluster contribute approx. £450,000 to the central Church of Scotland which is equivalent to 9 or 10 ministry posts but under these plans, the congregations would receive 2.4 posts back. MMCP are budgeted to contribute approx. £96,000 to the Church of Scotland in 2022 and under the Presbytery plan, we would receive 0.5 of a minister. Scott provided these figures to help us understand the context as the change from the plan is significant. It is a very real thing that will impact us but exactly how is not yet known. The elders have a set of very challenging decisions to make in a very short timescale as the plan must be put together this year and its implementation will be over a 5-year period ending in 2027.

No minister will be made redundant as it is thought that the reduction will come through retirements and ministers giving up their call. Scott is on unrestricted tenure which is currently a very difficult relationship to break. However, the Church of Scotland are looking at changing the law to change this. There is a troubling atmosphere around these discussions. In our parish, Eaglesham have just called a minister (Jade Ableitner) on unrestricted tenure and Jade could have many years in ministry. Joe Kavangah at Mearnskirk will retire in June 2023. Jim Boag at Broom is also due to retire but his retiral date is not yet set. Stuart Crawford at Mearns Parish is on reviewable tenure.

Scott asked for questions or comments and the following questions were raised with their respective answers:

- 1) Given that Scott is on unrestricted tenure and we have the finances to support a minister, is there a possibility for a church to stand alone with the Presbytery Plan? Scott replied that the intention is for no congregation to be allowed not to be impacted in terms of ministry posts but we could continue to fund a youth worker and a children and family worker. Andrew Little added that there is a potential for negotiations which will be entered into with the perspective of what God wants rather than what Presbytery wants. The meeting yesterday focused on properties but creativity is being encouraged here, rather than congregations being encouraged to form unions. Andrew added that the good news is that Scott is on unreviewable tenure. Scott noted that he has asked about how congregations fit into this decision-making process regarding uniting with another congregation or congregations and the reply was that it is creativity that is being encouraged but he added that this is very difficult within Church of Scotland law as formal agreements will be required.
- 2) Are the posts being allocated to zone based on historical population size? Scott confirmed that despite the large number of new houses being built in this area, this is not being factored in.
- 3) Can Maxwell be a standalone church out with the Church of Scotland based on theology? Scott replied that this has been considered by the elders but this would need to be discussed out with this formal meeting where the elders and Board members are acting as charity trustees.
- 4) A comment was made, that in other congregations, elders are trained to lead worship which allows the minister to lead worship elsewhere so there is the potential for creativity in that way. Scott agreed that this is possible but added that the elders are concerned about what lies behind what we do i.e. worship, mission. Also, how does our Session work with other Sessions when we are potentially speaking a different language in terms of the meaning behind some terms e.g. worship, mission.

- 5) Scott confirmed that what happens to our premises is another element being reviewed. This raises the question as to whether we could worship in the same way e.g. music. Scott concluded that we have the decision to make regarding the cluster within the next two weeks and this will be dependent on the meeting tomorrow. This would then be followed in sharp order with how this will work within the cluster. It is a challenging situation and Scott encouraged everyone to please pray about this.

11. VOTE OF THANKS

Concentrating on more specific Board and related activities, on behalf of the Congregation, Scott thanked:

- The Board members for their participation at Board meetings as well as participating in door duties;
- The new members joining the Board – Susan Cunningham and Susan Little;
- The members who have agreed to stay on for another three years – Bruce Adkins, Kate Campbell, Ken Taggart, Scott Urquhart and Brian Waugh;
- Members retiring for their sterling work – Brian Bell (especially his excellent years as Property Convenor) and Stephen Pryce (especially for his project management of the Sanctuary refurbishment);
- Ken Taggart for taking over as Treasurer and his work on the 2021 accounts. Ian Forgie for helping Ken through the transition and aiding Ken with the accounts;
- Ann Best for her work on Freewill Offering and for offering to stay on as Freewill Offering Convenor in the short term;
- Louise Fisher who has just started in her role of Gift Aid Convenor;
- Lorna Hamilton for her excellent and faithful service as Board Secretary;
- Brian Waugh and his extended property team (and Scott encouraged others to get involved in helping this team);
- Bruce Adkins for his work as our Grounds Convenor;
- Stewart Martin and helpers for maintaining the Broomburn steps;
- For our AV team and especially Stuart Clark, Robert Campbell and Charles Amery-Behr for their important work, usually unseen but not unheard;
- Sue Anderson and Stewart Martin as the Safeguarding team;
- Sue Amery-Behr as our administrator and Halls Convenor who is really appreciated for the large amount of work done;
- Graeme Lipsett as Eco Coordinator;
- Sheila McLellan, Margo McNicol and Russell McMillan for their work in the Maxwell Mearns Christian Support Fund;
- The Hizkidz & Primetime leaders;
- Jack for chairing the Board for the last 7 years – he deserves a huge thanks for his service over this period and also thanks to Calum McPhail for agreeing to take over from June this year;
- Finally, thank you to everyone who takes part in all our activities. As a Congregation we are in good heart, and this depends on the enthusiasm of everyone who takes part. They are too many to mention individually and no one, probably, has the complete picture. God, our Father, however, does know and we can see His response in our life here at Maxwell. Thanks to God our Father and Jesus our Saviour for all good things which flow to us through them.

12. CLOSING BENEDICTION

The meeting was closed with the Benediction.

Chairman.....

Clerk.....