

Netherlee and Stamperland (Church of Scotland)

Kirk Session via Zoom

7.30pm on Monday 7th June 2021

1 CONSTITUTION

Meeting constituted by Rev Scott Blythe with Prayer.

2 SEDERUNT & APOLOGIES

There were 48 Elders present with apologies from 12 Elders as per the Sederunt Sheet.

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

The draft Agenda was agreed with three additional items under AOCB.

4 DISCUSSION TOPIC(S) – *Our Next Steps – please refer to Appendices (A) and (B)*

Scott reminded us of the comments made by our Interim Treasurer and Independent Examiner at the Trustees Meeting about our “going concern viability”, and the subsequent questions raised at our last Kirk Session. Next he wished to update us on the meeting of the Small Working Group (**SWG**) of Scott plus Norrie Bolton, Jane Curror, John Montgomery and Sheena Wurthmann; that was formed to review this situation.

(A) Slide 2 – 2020 Budget predicted a surplus of £11/12k – unexpectedly income dropped by £49K during 2020, £44k directly due to Covid – the **SWG** suggested that future hall rental income is likely to be lower than expected – projections of the size of our membership over the next 10/15 years are not good – work will be required to get folk back after Covid.

(A) Slide 3 – mission statement from our Elders’ Conference (Feb 2020) was derailed by Covid – when reminded of it, **SWG** felt it was still relevant – Scott commented that in light of information from the General Assembly he had added two further points (**shown in red**) and asked if folk agreed this was still a relevant mission statement, the majority of those present agreed.

We are a church that seeks always to find new ways to love God and our neighbours.

Within this mission we aim to –

- Be a place providing regular worship to God
- Provide a welcoming space for all who are isolated or alone in our parish
- To identify new projects that serve our community with love, e.g. Monday Lunch Club, Heart for Art, etc.
- Provide a space for groups in the Community to meet
- **Develop new ways of working with families throughout the parish**
- **Develop new methods of aiding Pastoral Care within our Community**

(A) Slide 4 – whilst still relevant, **SWG** felt we needed help taking issues from our vision and turning them into actual plans – of the two options from the Presbytery Clerk the preference was to use Designed To Succeed – retired GP, Architect and Quantity Surveyor who offer help to churches in Scotland – cost is a “generous” donation to a project that educates teenagers in Rwanda – they would visit our sites, speak to our folk, and take a detailed look at our fabric and finances; and from this present us with an action plan that would help us deliver our mission statement.

Scott commented that since we last met two other things have happened –

- (1) We have more detailed information regarding the Netherlee roof project.
- (2) Wider work of the whole church as a result of General Assembly 2021.

Scott invited Tony Ireland to present the latest update on the Netherlee roof project – **please refer to Appendix B**

Tony reported that due to work carried out by the several professional firms we have appointed – Conservation Architects / Quantity Surveyors / Structural Engineers – we now have a more accurate costing of this project. The costs are still provisional and are subject, if the project is approved, to a tendering process.

Tony then talked through the costs for the work on the sanctuary roof – **(B) page 2/3** – costs table extracted and shown below. The professional view is that these works are “immediate” and due to the complexity is a significant cost. As a listed place of worship we can reclaim 100% of the VAT, so the figures below do not include VAT.

“Immediate” work		Costs
Principal Roofs		£247,000
Flat Roof		£36,000
Rainwater Goods		£23,000
High level masonry		<u>£34,000</u>
	subtotal	£340,000
Scaffold		£20,000
Preliminaries		<u>£96,000</u>
	subtotal	£456,000
Design Risk	7.5% allowance	<u>£34,200</u>
		<u>£490,200</u>

Regrettably our responsibilities do not stop with the sanctuary and the reports and advice also extends to the halls – **(B) page 3/4** – this work is classified as “necessary”. If the two jobs were done at the same time some cost savings might be made. Sadly these costs do not qualify for VAT relief so the figures shown below are inclusive of VAT. Costs table extracted and shown below.

“Necessary” work (Halls)		Costs
Clerestory		
Windows		£21,000
Halls		£171,000
	subtotal	<u>£192,000</u>
Scaffold		£15,000
Preliminaries		<u>£68,000</u>
	subtotal	<u>£275,000</u>
Design Risk	7.5% allowance	<u>£20,625</u>
		<u>£295,625</u>
	vat	<u>£59,125</u>
		<u><u>£354,750</u></u>

Note:- Allow for professional fees of £31,750 plus vat £6350 to give a global figure for the halls at £392850

An addition of the above immediate and necessary works is a hefty £950,725. Tony emphasised that we are still at an early stage of understanding the final costs, but these are the best indicative costs we have at present.

Next Tony explained the work ongoing seeking Grant Aid for this project. He has already applied to Historic Environment Scotland for £200,000. This was to meet the May 31 2021 deadline for the current round of funding. No dates for future rounds of funding are currently known.

If the project was not to go ahead we would simply withdraw our application. He is currently looking at another 7/8 other potential sources of funding.

Following the union we have a surplus manse and any monies realised by the sale of it can only be used for fabric purposes. Again we are the early stages so the numbers could look like this –

GLOBAL COSTS SANCTUARY AND HALLS		£950,725
HES GRANT	£200,000	
OTHER GRANTS	£57,875	
SURPLUS MANSE SALE	£450,000	
RESERVES	£242,850	£950,725

Tony is convinced as we move ahead and refine the quotes we have the financial capacity assuming we get Grant Aid support.

- Tony is looking for encouragement from the Kirk Session to progress with seeking Grant Aid in support of this project. (see below)
- Tony wishes to spend more investigating the South Aisle to get better clarity on the potential for rot. Dealing with the worst case scenario is included in the costs above, but completion of some exposure work will help with this. (see below)

Scott thanked Tony for his clear and concise report, before moving to questions or comments he wished to highlight one more issue that will impact on our thoughts and decision making.

General Assembly 2021 – refer to Appendix A / slide 7

Scott intimated major decisions have been taken. Presbytery plans are in abeyance as we come to terms with the Assembly proposal to cut the number of ministry posts in Scotland from about 800/850 staffed posts to 600 by 2025. There are not enough ministers and many to retire soon.

This will impact on our ministry in this area as we have a period of adjustment over the next 2 years. Glasgow Presbytery was utterly shocked – their posts reducing from about 160 to 84. Any vacancy not filled by December 2021 will remain vacant.

Assembly announced has a new Mission plan with 5 marks –

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture believers
3. To respond to human need with loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth

We need to ensure that our mission articulates the above. Re-visiting our Mission statement this at this time is therefore timely. The General Trustees are looking for '**well-resourced spaces in the right places**' so our potential plans to review of our fabric/finances would also be timely.

Scott asked for any questions or comments on the **Designed To Succeed** proposal which if we agree in principle will give us a report that will aid our decision making in September.

- Helen Illingworth felt inviting an “outside” resource would be useful.
- Diane Levey agreed with Helen but wasn't sure what the end game was. Scott said it would look at our mission and fabric/finance, and see if there is a good match between them. The report should contain advice and/or suggestions that will help us plan our way forward.
- Pat McKenzie thought “outsiders” might provide too narrow a view.

There being no further questions or comments Scott asked if we could proceed with the work with **Designed To Succeed**. The majority of those present agreed.

Scott asked for any questions or comments on the **Netherlee roof project**, reminding us we are not deciding yes/no this evening as we need to be clear on the direction of our mission first.

- Alastair Graham asked if the global sum for the sanctuary included VAT. Tony replied no as it is 100% recoverable as a listed place of worship.
- Niall Illingworth felt the cost was an enormous figure and it confirmed to him that two buildings are not sustainable with a membership that will only continue to decline. Why spend nearly £1million fixing Netherlee when £150,000 might make Stamperland ideal, is so he would happily worship there. Was there going to be a feasibility study on the Stamperland buildings? Scott replied that the purpose of the Designed to Succeed report is to give us the view of all our fabric/finances matched to our mission and provide advice and suggestions that will aid our decision making.
- Alan Fairlie asked if the Assembly contraction timetable could interfere with the Netherlee roof project. Scott replied that the timetable will be looking at the 4 churches in Clarkston Churches Together. He has already met with Robert Paton (Presbytery – Property) and Stuart McGill (Presbytery – Strategic Planning) to discuss this and they see Netherlee and Stamperland Church as a significant part of CCT and would be supportive if we decide to go ahead with the roof project.

- Marie Wilson had concerns about any timetable as the current Presbytery plan is now in abeyance and the new plan will not be ready until December 2022.
- Tony responded to Niall's point about the sums of money involved by pointing out that the General Trustees are facing a property crisis with listed buildings. Netherlee is B listed and the General Trustees would be supportive. Stamperland as we found in lockdown has core challenges due to the many different levels within. Tony concluded that he thinks both Presbytery and the General Trustees will defer to our local decision.
- Christine McGowan agreed with Niall about the amount of money involved, but felt the Designed To Succeed report will be very helpful in making a difficult decision.
- Scott replied that his hope was the work over the summer months would result in the report being ready for late August or early September.

There being no further questions or comments Scott asked if we could proceed with the works related to the **Netherlee roof project** –

- To proceed to secure sources Grant Aid. The majority of those present agreed.
- To perform exposure work to gain fuller appreciation of South Aisle rot. The majority of those present agreed.

Scott thanked Tony for his work, and for all the constructive question and comments.

5 WRITTEN REPORTS

Scott asked the Conveners if they had motions to propose or highlights to mention:

Finance

- Stuart said the Finance Committee had agreed to increase the hourly hall rental to £16.50 from 1st September 2021. This will apply across both our buildings. Other options for varying rates were rejected to keep it simple.
- A suggestion had been made directly to Stuart that would allow discretion to offer free use if for a charity or a good cause. As the Finance Committee doesn't meet again until next session Stuart asked for this to be approved. The majority of those present agreed

Planning & Communication

- Diane thanked those who had contributed by supplying event information for the proposed church calendar.
- The aim is to help promote events and prevent double booking.
- More contributions are very welcome – hope to publish in August.
- Helen asked if the two Facebook pages were to become one. The answer is yes, but currently delayed with a technical issue.
- Our new website is up and running www.nandschurch.org

Correspondence

- Two communications (1 x letter and 1 x phone call) were received by the Session Clerk stating disappointment that Scott has made to reference to the death of Prince Philip. Scott's explanation was communicated back and no further comments have been made.

Scott asked the Trustees if they had any questions. There were none.

Scott asked the Trustees if they accepted all the reports as presented. The majority of those present agreed.

6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

- Trustees Meeting minute of 14/04/21 was approved.
- Kirk Session minute of 19/04/21 was approved.

7 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

1. Previously we agreed a new pattern of worship for when there are no social distancing mitigations and we start to worship normally as one congregation. However, we forgot to set the time of worship!

Scott proposed that from September to April (block 1, 2 & 3) we worship at 10.30am, and from May to August (block 4) we worship at 10am. As previously agreed this new pattern will be reviewed 12months after it starts. The majority of those present agreed.

Christine McGowan asked what would happen to the Duty Team rota when we move to the new pattern of worship. Stuart replied when we start worshipping as one congregation we will have one Duty Team rota consisting of all Elders that are available. Each team would have two Conveners to ensure knowledge of both buildings.

2. A small number of instances have been reported that Elders were not aware that members of their District had passed away. Clearly this is not good and we all need to do our best to prevent it happening. Stuart suggested the following –

- Scott / Marie – always check with the undertakers and/or family if the deceased is a church member or has a connection to our church.
- Pass the information to Elspeth (Church Office) to –
 - find the District and let the Elder know
 - inform Mabel and/or Bill (Rollkeeper)
 - email the Kirk Session and/or congregation depending on the circumstances and permissions from the family

Marie commented due to Elspeth's part-time hours (more varied during lock down) it wasn't always practical connecting promptly. Diane concurred, and also said that when working at home Elspeth could not send out Group emails. It was agreed an IT solution should be sought to this as these days there is an expectation (need) that we can all connect quickly. **(Scott / Stuart / Diane)** Marie also made a plea to Elders to feed her and Scott with information on the pastoral needs of our congregation.

3. Scott introduced Barbara Cochrane – Social Bite / Break The Cycle – **refer to Appendix C** – which aims to raise a goal of £1 Million to help build two new Social Bite Villages in two new cities in the UK – Glasgow and London – from 10 March 2021 to 30 September 2021 – the idea is to set a challenge for individuals or teams to undertake some form of exercise – which could be combined with other fundraising activities. For example be 60 miles, 60 days, or 60 minutes of exercise; or take part in your own virtual physical challenge.

How can we participate? Organise a cycle event? Park walk with a picnic? Walk to Clarkston and back? Involve community and/or school – set a challenge – walk route round the houses with a challenge at each one – have a card that needs signed / stamped – similar to the Living Advent event.

Whatever we choose to do Barbara felt it would provide a fresh focus for all in our congregation – coming together for a purpose. So shall we form a group and do it?

Scott thought it was a brilliant idea and volunteered, as did Marjorie Lang, Alison McKean, Evelyn Graham, Helen Illingworth and Diane Levey.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING(S)

- Kirk Session at 7:30pm on Monday 6th September 2021 at Netherlee (**tbc**)
- Group and Committee meetings as per schedules issued.

9 CLOSE

The meeting was closed with all present saying the Grace.

APPENDICES A, B & C

**ANNEX
WRITTEN REPORTS PRESENTED TO THE MEETING**

Scott Blythe
Minister

Stuart Buchanan
Session Clerk