

Netherlee and Stamperland Church

Kirk Session met at 7.30pm on Monday 22nd August 2022

1 CONSTITUTION

Meeting constituted by Rev Scott Blythe with Prayer.

2 SEDERUNT & APOLOGIES

There were 34 Elders present with apologies from 6 Elders as per the Sederunt sheet.

3 DISCUSSION TOPIC – *Cluster 4D Mission Plan pro forma*

Scott explained we were here to review and consider the Cluster Mission Plan for approval. After his introduction he would ask the Elders involved in the meetings; namely Sheena Wurthmann, Alistair Gow and John Montgomery; if they had any comments to add. Thereafter the floor would be open to questions and comments.

We know the Church of Scotland is undergoing a major readjustment. A restructuring that will reduce the number of parishes from around 1200 to around 500 by January 2027. The Presbytery of Glasgow is achieving this change by the following steps –

- 18/24months ago they started with an in depth 48 question questionnaire
- Presbytery was then divided into 5 Zones – we are in Zone 4
- Churches were encouraged to form “clusters” related to a geographical area that made sense
- Cluster 4D has three parishes Busby, Greenbank plus Netherlee and Stamperland
- St Aiden’s is also included – explanation provided by Scott
- Our facilitator is Rev Ian Galloway (recently retired from Gorbals Parish Church)
- Williamwood opted to join the Giffnock cluster – Busby, Greenbank plus Netherlee and Stamperland all wrote and said they would be welcomed back to our cluster if they changed their mind, they haven’t; and Carmunnock is involved with the Castlemilk cluster

This is designed to be a “bottom up” planning process, and this document is the result of 5 cluster meetings. While it does contain some historical and current focus, it also suggests future plans. If we go ahead with this plan the next step will be for it to be approved by the Presbytery of Glasgow, become part of its plan, which will then go to the General Trustees for approval by the Faith Nurture Forum. The timeline for all of this is by Christmas 2022. By agreeing to this plan we are agreeing to the trajectory for ministry in this place.

Scott asked the participating Elders if they wished to add any comments.

Alistair Gow commented that all involved at the cluster meetings showed a willingness to work together and an understanding that carrying on without this plan will only ensure our decline will continue and probably worsen. There is an appetite to see what we can do better together, e.g. the Monday Lunch Club, sharing resources to become stronger together. He admitted there was some nervousness from Busby regarding buildings, but said they were keenest to move forward quickly. Team ministry was discussed (but rejected for complex legal reasons) so a deferred linkage between Busby and Greenbank is seen as the way forward.

John Montgomery echoed the above comments and added he was encouraged by the concept of a “parish grouping” representing all the parishes and working on how to take our mission forward by feeding ideas back to the Kirk Sessions. A good way to progress rather than trying to work with up to 140 Elders in a room!

Scott thanked Alistair and John, and then opened the floor for comments and questions.

Niall Illingworth asked with such a readjustment when would we get clarification re which buildings would remain and which would close, and commented that surely only having 2 posts was a clue.

Scott answered that the cluster was a method of thinking about community. We currently have 3 ministers in tenure, and with this plan it is expected that 3 will reduce to 2 by January 2027. As in all such circumstances it is hoped that retirement will be a common solution. With the deferred linkage of Busby and Greenbank, and ultimately union, it is likely the General Trustees will advise on a reduction in the number of buildings. As mentioned by Alistair, we should avoid working in isolation; rather look to doing better together and sharing resources. e.g. Monday Lunch Club would remain where it is, however, the search for clients and volunteers would extend to Busby and Greenbank. The same approach would apply to other initiatives we chose to run in the other congregations.

Alan Fairlie felt the plan protected our spirituality but did not contain enough about trying to get new members. **Diane Levey** said the plan was good strategically and philosophically, but said the operational part needs to happen pretty quickly. For an average church member – what does this look like for me on a Sunday? **Jim Ferguson** wondered are we going too fast and we'll suffer loss as a result. How do we reach across the spaces in our geography that are being created? What happens to Marie Wilson our Pastoral Assistant?

Scott started with Marie, who is an MDS appointment, which across the Presbytery exists in varied roles such as Foodbank, Interfaith as well as Pastoral Assistant. Marie has been our part-time Pastoral Assistant for nearly 4yrs, and for those of you who know your employment law, this means she is treated as a full time employee. Nothing will change for Marie, unless either she wishes it or the demands at Netherlee and Stamperland change dramatically. While the plan is about mission with the linkage between Busby and Greenbank worship was looked at. We recognise that with 2 posts the General Trustees will eventually say 1 building. The 2 posts will be installed in their churches but will work together across the parish.

Alistair Gow stated that this plan is not the final solution; rather this is the start of a process. Already the idea of the "parish grouping" can be seen as a body to help with ideas to solve issues, review progress regularly and get the operational side going a bit sooner. He also commented that we empathise with the Busby, but started that's why the plan stops at deferred linkage, i.e. reflecting the feeling in Busby. **Russell Brown** felt we need to try harder to keep Busby open by attracting new members.

Scott responded by saying that Presbytery will monitor cluster progress and probably offer help via facilitators. This is vital support because we cannot kick this can any further down the road. We have been trying to attract new members for very many years. We are where we are, and there are no easy solutions.

Scott asked if Session had any more comments or questions, there were none; so was Session willing to vote on the Cluster Mission Plan? The majority if those present agreed.

Cluster (4D) Mission Plan

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| Approval | 31 |
| Rejection | 1 |
| Abstention | 0 |

The Kirk Session therefore overwhelmingly approved the Cluster (4D) Mission Plan.

Scott asked if there were any other matters to discuss. There were none.

4 CLOSE

The meeting was closed with all present saying the Grace.

5 DATE OF NEXT MEETING(S)

- Kirk Session at 7:30pm on Monday 5th September 2022 at Netherlee
- Group and Committee meetings as per schedules issued

6 APPENDIX – Cluster 4D Mission Plan pro forma

Scott Blythe
Minister

Stuart Buchanan
Session Clerk