

Netherlee and Stamperland (Church of Scotland)

Kirk Session via Zoom

7.30pm on Monday 1st February 2021

1 CONSTITUTION

Meeting constituted by Rev Scott Blythe with Prayer.

2 SEDERUNT & APOLOGIES

There were 50 Elders present with apologies from 7 Elders as per the Sederunt Sheet.

Scott noted it is good to see John Montgomery back with us and looking well.

Allan Mathieson sadly is poorly and undergoing a new chemo regime which will hopefully give him more energy. Therefore for health reasons Allan has stepped down as our Treasurer, and we ask you to include him in your prayers.

Our congregation has benefited from the joining of Tony and Sheena Ireland. Sheena is a member of the choir and Tony is an active member of the Fabric Committee. Tony is an Elder and has agreed to join our Kirk Session - if this is agreeable - those present agreed. Welcome Tony!

Scott raised a question from Jim Ferguson. Which group in our new structure should the Common Good Fund sit with? As this is to do with helping others it should be the Mission group.

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

The draft Agenda was agreed with no additional items under AOCB.

4 DISCUSSION TOPIC – *Worship schedule post-Covid.*

Scott commented that so much of life has been put on hold for quite some time by the tumultuous coronavirus pandemic that no-one saw coming. Before we were forced into our homes, we had a very good Elder's Conference in which we agreed a timetable for worship to increase the number of services that we shared together. The views at that meeting were that we should proceed with this programme for a year and then move to combined worship services. As the vaccination schedule rolls out we will hopefully reach a time where we can have a worship pattern where we can all be together on a Sunday.

Netherlee & Stamperland church will now be one of the largest in Glasgow Presbytery. The Church of Scotland has a 5 year Radical Plan to reduce the number of parishes from 1250 to 600 in order to reduce the debt it has, and in line with an insufficient number of ministers. We seek to use two buildings with one service needs and to fulfill this pattern everyone will have to make some form of compromise.

To this end Scott has come up with a plan that includes the factors listed below, which were circulated prior to tonight's meeting. As far as possible we use both Worship spaces as equally as possible, in the spirit to the Union that was voted for and agreed

- (a) We recognise that for the choir the acoustic for singing in Netherlee is better than Stamperland, hence the pattern shown in the table below. To change the acoustic at Stamperland might incur a large financial cost.
- (b) We would still like to have two formal communions in each space throughout the year.
- (c) We would like some established periods of time in each building to stop confusion about where worship is; and to prevent those who want to resist worshipping in a different building to have to consider what is more important - worship or building?

- (d) If we are in each other's space more often and for longer we'll get to know each other better to deepen the regular contact of people within the new united congregation. One service allows for one coffee hour after worship each week in which people can meet. It will allow for the resumption of lunches together after worship, etc. In addition it will allow one Sunday School which is how they have been operating through the pandemic.
- (e) It will stop the process of a minister running from one place to the next and not having enough time to see people after worship in a more normal way.

Choosing one worship space I believe would cause pain. The pattern below has large blocs in both spaces resulting in a fair share over a year.

Time period	Worship space
Sep to Nov (Christ the King final week)	Netherlee
Advent to first Sunday after Christmas	Stamperland
Christmas services will be shared between both our spaces	
Christmas Carols & Lessons service	Netherlee
January to April	Netherlee
Easter will rotate annually between both our spaces	
Holy Week evening services (Mon-Thu)	Stamperland
Good Friday Choir service	Netherlee
May to August	Stamperland

In adopting this pattern, we would have 30 of our regular services at Netherlee each year and 29 of our regular services at Stamperland, not counting Easter Sunday as this will rotate each year.

In terms of transport Scott proposed that the minibus be used in the parish that is not holding worship and that those within the parish holding worship needing transport be collected by people willing to provide lifts to worship. He now invited Alan McDonald (minibus rota coordinator) to address this topic. Alan intimated that he had consulted with the BB Trustees and the minibus drivers. Alan endorsed the worship proposal as laid out by Scott but had concerns over his idea re the use of the minibus. The key to its use by our vulnerable members is continuity and simplicity. It is also only one part of the solution as other members drive folk to church and are in settled routines. Removing the minibus from the host worship space did not seem sensible. Sadly as numbers have dropped over the years the reality is that our 17 seat minibus could probably cope with all collections required in both Netherlee and Stamperland.

Once post Covid times are upon us we would need to know (a) what is the demand going to be (b) will all the other car drivers still be operational. Outside of that the minibus would depart 45 minutes before worship and collect our vulnerable members in one trip, the only variable left being the final destination. When asked the majority agreed with Alan's proposal.

Scott invited contributions by question or comment.

Tony Ireland asked between now and whenever normal worship resumes will we hold two services (10am Netherlee and 11.30am Stamperland)? Scott replied yes as social distancing restricts worship to 50 folk. Next he asked about the time of the single service? Scott said that would be discussion and decision for the Kirk Session at a later date. He asked how we would resolve 2 organists and 1 service. Scott replied that Steven is our contracted organist while Duncan is paid on a week by week basis, so Steven would be retained and Duncan may provide occasional cover.

Grace Scott (via email) felt that we were moving too quickly and that folk needed time to get back into the rhythm of going back to church. Scott empathised with her feelings but stated that this was not happening next any time soon, it may be as far away as September, or longer! He feels by then folk will just be desperate (if not already) to get back to worship. Therefore we need to plan for this now. Further delay would not be healthy.

Scott intimated that Norrie Bolton (an amazing man for spread sheets ;-)) had reviewed a 4 year cycle to account for the alternating of certain services, and this concluded a perfect 50/50 share was unachievable. Scott sees his plan as good a "best fit" as we can achieve. Another working group to examine this would simply cause delay in the search for the perfect answer, which does not exist. This plan is for traditional worship, and there is no reason for us to be limited to it. If people wish to think creatively we can always add other forms or types of worship in either space.

The plan shown in the table above allows for a fair distribution of services and establishes a settled pattern of worship in both spaces to minimise confusion. It hopefully brings us together as one worship community that is necessary for moving forward.

That all being said, any further question or comments?

Alastair Graham agreed having sizable blocs of worship was a good idea. However, he was wrestling with accepting the current proposal because he felt the share between the two spaces for the period September 2021 to April 2022 was not proportionate and would need to be addressed. Scott acknowledged this point, but reiterated his beliefs that it was a best fit over a year and looking for the impossible perfect plan is an unhealthy delay.

Scott followed up by asking should we just be choosing one worshipping space, as Cambuslang did when 3 churches formed a union. Scott felt this was not the time for such a decision.

Alan Fairlie asked about the building that would be empty when not being used for a bloc of worship, would there be heating costs (winter) and could we lease it out to increase income? To the first question Scott said yes (to protect our property) but he would leave the details to the Fabric Committee. On the second question he said it would only be the sanctuary space, but it might be possible. With regard to both questions he also pointed out we are only talking about worship in the sanctuary here, other organisations (e.g. BB, Guides, Heart for Art) would still use the buildings.

Christine McGowan commented with regard to the deepening of regular contact of people that they were Netherlee folk who did attend worship between June and September.

Jim Ferguson asked what would happen with regard to the elder Sunday Duty rota, only recently re-issued for the Netherlee sanctuary, if we went to one service on a plan such as Scott's. Stuart Buchanan said it should be quite simple to add all the Elders onto 1 rota and simply use it for which ever space we were in. The number of available elders would dictate the weekly frequency of the rota, or a return to a monthly rota if that was possible/desirable.

Jane Curror felt that making the worship blocs 2 months long would minimise the chances of holiday periods (fewer attending worship) impacting unfairly on one worship space. Scott acknowledged her point but countered that he felt longer blocs would be less confusing.

Bill Paterson suggested 4 periods of 3 months, and that worship in a space would follow communion being served there. Scott acknowledged the evenness of this but commented that it did not suit the needs of the choir and the acoustic limitations of Stamperland. Bill felt making a plan built around the choir was perhaps not the best idea.

Scott concluded that we can talk about this forever and someone will always be able to raise an objection that the plan is not 50/50. We need to try the plan and review it after a year and see how we feel about it. Are there any final questions and comments?

Marie Wilson asked should we take a virtual pause to reflect on this difficult decision. We are still under severe Covid restrictions. We do not know how quickly or slowly these will be removed if the virus is suppressed and the vaccination goes well. Our next Kirk Session is April 19th, by then we will hopefully know more about how we might be coming out of the other side of the pandemic. Then knowing more and having reflected we can make our decision, even by vote if we have to.

Stuart Buchanan concurred with Marie and made two additional points. Firstly he hopes we can make a decision on April 19th and that we should commit to doing so. Secondly, he feels that in looking for a perfect solution we have perhaps lost sight that we are a united congregation.

Evelyn Graham stressed that she was sorry to have to say it, but some Stamperland folk do not go to Netherlee to worship, and with the proposed worship pattern, particularly in the period, September 2021 to April 2022, it would make a strong union that bit more difficult.

Glenda Cook concurred with Stuart Buchanan's first point and felt that having been put off and discussed for a long time, Scott's plan is a good compromise.

Russell Brown commented that our financial position did not match the national picture, so why are we not continuing worship in both spaces. Scott pointed out that as a united congregation we should be worshipping as one, and we have only being doing otherwise recently due to Covid. Alistair Gow interjected to point out the National Church Radical Plan is not just about financial debt, but also about the shortage of ministers.

Scott then asked if it was agreed that we defer this decision to the Kirk Session of April 19th 2021. The majority of those present agreed.

5 WRITTEN REPORTS

5.1 Communion Roll

Bill Paterson updated us on the Stamperland community and Stuart Buchanan did likewise for the Netherlee community.

For clarity going forward the flow of information should be as follows:

- (a) Elders should promptly pass information concerning members details on the Communion Roll (from change of address to sadly passing away) to our Rollkeepers (Stamperland community – Bill Paterson / Netherlee community – Mabel Bell)
- (b) Rollkeepers will update their Communion Roll accordingly.
- (c) Rollkeepers will share the information with the Church Office to allow Elspeth to update the computer database.
- (d) Elspeth will then notify the Kirk Session of these changes by email.

5.2 Finance

Following the earlier update on Allan Mathieson resigning as our Treasurer, Stuart and Scott made the following update:

- (a) Our books were up to date to October 2020, hence the re-issued report for this Kirk Session.
- (b) Allan had completed 1/3 steps for November and December 2020. We are delighted to report that Ronnie Mair (former Treasurer) has volunteered to complete steps 2/3 for us, and with the help of Alex Johnston (Independent Examiner) provide year end accounts for 2020. There was one major condition, Ronnie will not return as our Treasurer.
- (c) Nobody has stepped forward and volunteered to be our next Treasurer.

- (d) Scott has made contact with a book keeper, known to contacts of his, who may be available and willing to become our new Treasurer. Two points worth noting (i) he may not be able to do all that Allan did, so we may also need to resource other support, e.g. doing payroll (ii) talking of resource, this will come at a price, yet to be determined.
- (e) Scott asked for approval for us to continue with this approach to solving the Treasurer situation. The majority of those present agreed.

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

5.3 Fabric

Iain Alexander informed us that a quotation has been received from Loader Monteith (accredited conservation architects) to carry out the design and supervision of the re-slating of Netherlee church and halls, along with other roof-level repairs. The quote comprises £1,920 for carrying out a detailed fabric condition survey, then 7.50% of the contract value for the roofing works when it proceeds (including the cost of the condition survey).

For an estimated works contract of £250,000 (excluding VAT) this would amount to a total of £22,500. Appointment of a conservation architect is a pre-requisite for funding support from the major grant funding bodies such as Historic Environment Scotland, which we intend to approach.

Loader Monteith submitted the second lowest of three quotations by a small margin, however it is felt that their approach and presentation was superior to the lowest quote. They are also based in Battlefield so the view is that they may be more responsive than others. As well as the architect's fee and the main works cost, other professional costs will, in due course, be incurred such as Principle Designer under the CDM regulations, quantity surveyor, and any specialist surveys such as rot surveys. Prices for these will be sought in due course.

Alastair Graham asked what the likely variance would be on the £250,000 Iain has quoted. He replied he honestly had no real idea but that one of the architects agreed with the figure, which could come in higher or lower. Once we know we will have a decision to make.

Scott commented this is only the beginning of a process and at this point the Fabric Committee is only seeking approval for the £1,920 to carry out the required detailed fabric condition survey. The majority of those present agreed.

5.8 Safeguarding

Insertion for the Inspection of Records – ***It is certified that Safeguarding recruitment procedures are being adhered to, an accurate record is being held of all persons doing regulated Work with Children and Protected Adults in organisations under the jurisdiction of the Kirk Session and that the Congregation's Safeguarding Coordinators are appropriately trained to allow these persons to be accredited as authorised signatories for PVG record check.***

Our Safeguarding Panel was formed last year. The Minister cannot be a member as following any situation is likely to be involved in a pastoral role. To date the members are Bruce Young, Glenda Cook and Stuart Buchanan.

Scott asked the Trustees if they had any further 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**

Kirk Session minute of 02/11/2020 was approved.

7 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

No additional items were raised.

8 DATE OF NEXT MEETING(S)

- Kirk Session at 7.30pm on Wednesday 10th March 2021 via Zoom (tbc) for the purpose of approving the Annual Report & Accounts for the Stated Annual Meeting to be held on Sunday 21st March 2021 (details tbc)
 - For information – these dates may move due to Covid as OSCR (charity finance regulation) has already extended the March deadline by 6 months to September.
- Kirk Session at 7.30pm on Monday 19th April 2021 via Zoom (tbc)
- Group and Committee meetings as per schedule issued

9 CLOSE

The meeting was closed with all present saying the Grace.

**APPENDIX
DISCUSSION NOTE – Worship post-Covid**

**ANNEX
WRITTEN REPORTS PRESENTED TO THE MEETING**

Scott Blythe
Minister

Stuart Buchanan
Session Clerk