

Netherlee and Stamperland Church
Kirk Session at Stamperland Parish Church
7.30pm on Monday 13th June 2022

1 CONSTITUTION

Meeting constituted by Rev Scott Blythe with Prayer.

2 SEDERUNT & APOLOGIES

There were 39 Elders present with apologies from 14 Elders as per the Sederunt Sheet.

3 CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

The draft Agenda was agreed with 7 additional items under AOCB.

4 DISCUSSION TOPIC(S) – *An eldership designed to support future mission.*

Scott highlighted 4 issues that are forcing us to critically review how we structure and function as an eldership within our church and our communities.

- **Representation** – having lost 8 Elders over the decision to sell our Stamperland building we no longer have sufficient Elders to cover our already overloaded district structure. Creating ever larger districts is simply not a sustainable option.
- **Access** – while some Elders are welcomed by the majority of the members in their districts, the simple truth is that many are not.
- **Duties** – trying to maintain all we have done with declining numbers is again, not sustainable. e.g. Fewer Elders means having a 6 weekly Sunday Duty Team Rota, not 7 weekly as it is now.
- **Pastoral care** – an increasing proportion of our members are frail, with some permanently at home and unable to attend church. Resourcing this by re-shuffling districts will not work.

Scott asked Session to split into groups and to discuss these 4 points, and have a go at how we could think outside the box and come up with some potential ideas and maybe even solutions,.

Here are the key points raised –

- **Representation**
 - Rethink the number of Elders we need
 - Forget districts – examine what we could / should do – prioritise tasks / resource
 - Ask members of the congregation to help with Duty Team rota
 - Not all jobs need to be done by Elders
 - Central system to coordinate who needs / likes a visit – frequency
 - Offer different types contact – visit / telephone / email / etc – learn from Covid times
 - Write and ask members if they really want a visit
 - Some Elders are gifted and happy re visiting – others have different skill sets
 - Bigger districts covered by Elder Teams coordinating needed / wanted visits
 - Do not feel guilty if after many visits without access or a welcome the member chooses not to come to church!
- **Access**
 - Complete spectrum from being welcomed into house, to the doorbell being ignored!
 - Common theme even with good access – many members choose not to attend
 - Many Elders have a deep desire to keep visiting
 - Now a good time to ensure we have the maximum amount of contact details for whatever solutions we implement – ask for this with the letter to members

- **Duties**

- How many visits could a “visiting” Elders do in a week / month / year
- Learning from Covid times – utilise Zoom / Afternoon Teas – real and virtual / widen the email database for the Newsletter
- Word of caution – we now have a WhatsApp group for the Minibus Drivers, and would like to include the helpers, who do not have to be Elders, although they would have to be put through Safeguarding
- Duty Rota for next Session not quite ready, but for the first time each team will have 2 Elders assigned as fit for Minibus helper duties (only 1 required). If your name is not thus selected please direct any complaints to the Session Clerk ;-)

- **Pastoral Care**

- Existing access / relationships – many Elders wish to retain / continue
- Perhaps the team approach (with tiered choices) needed to cover the others

Scott thanked the Session for their efforts in tackling what for many is a sensitive or difficult area. When you have done something one way for a very long time it becomes part of your DNA which can make change difficult.

ACTION – as a first step Scott asked the Session to think carefully about their districts and inform the Session Clerk how they would “categorise” their members –

- A. ACCESS OK – VISIT REQUIRED – HAPPY TO KEEP VISITING
- B. NO ACCESS – POSSIBLE TO COMMUNICATE BY OTHER MEANS
- C. NO ACCESS – IN REALITY NO COMMUNICATION EXISTS

Once we have done this we will have a better idea of the scale of the issue – the number of members to be visited / size of membership requiring alternative communication. Marjorie Lang reminded us we already have a postal district. Stuart Buchanan commented that another consequence of losing Elders is that the Pastoral Care Team now consists of only Scott and Marie Wilson, so when we re-visit this next session it will undoubtedly mean some change to our Group and Committee structure.

5 WRITTEN REPORTS

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

Rollkeeper – Mabel Bell – nothing to add. Stuart Buchanan – since the circulation of the June report Fraser & Elspeth Mackintosh have asked to lift their lines.

Norrie Bolton asked whether those present had any views on the loss of so many former members of Stamperland, many of whom were elders, what might be learned and what might be done to prevent any further losses. Marie Wilson said from conversations it was clear folk were sharing disappointment about a process they felt was not done well and also seemed unfair. Stuart Buchanan said from the resignations unhappiness at the speed of change was the main factor, only a minority stating they felt it was unfair.

A discussion followed covering many differing viewpoints, many spoken with high emotion and deep feeling.

- The Union is a disaster, awful, I feel a stranger in my own church
- As a Christian community going forward we have to focus on the people
- The process has been brutal; tonight’s agenda has no mention of the imminent closure of one of our two churches
- Covid has pushed the church to where it would ended up in 5/10years time
- We should take care in making sure our communications are sensitive to the situation
- An open morning is being planned for October to start re-engaging ourselves with community

- Perhaps we should have a June Newsletter (we normally don't) to acknowledge the change
- An acknowledgement would be a good thing – we know perception is not reality
- Clearly I'm upset at the closure of this building, but I'm very upset at the members who decided to go elsewhere and wouldn't give the Netherlee building a chance

During this period of discussion the inspirational sermon by Alastair Cherry at yesterday's service – former minister of Stamperland Parish Church celebrating 40 years of ministry – was mentioned by several people as being worthy of inclusion in the June Newsletter, or perhaps sending to all our members, not forgetting the districts currently without an Elder. By consensus it was agreed that the sermon captured very well the situation we are currently in. Rather than spend a fortune posting Dagmar Kerr suggested Elders could deliver – meeting agreed.

ACTION – Scott to obtain sermon / Diane Levey production in Newsletter and/or separate handout / Stuart Buchanan contact details of vacant districts.

Finance – nothing to add. There were no questions.

Fabric – nothing to add. There being no questions Scott asked Iain Alexander (Fabric Convener) to present an update on the Netherlee roof project. Iain began by putting record our thanks to Tony Ireland for the tremendous work he has done to date on this project. Tony is currently enjoying a holiday in Crete.

- We have received 3 which have been checked by our Quantity Surveyor to ensure they are compliant and all offer the same –
 - A. £732,370.82 John Fulton
 - B. £763,328.40 CBC Stone
 - C. £831,460.96 Ashwood Scotland
- All contractors have good reputations, and as all tenders offer the same, then option A. would be our preferred choice.
- There was a two week delay in receiving the tenders which meant we were unable to get the paperwork in front of Presbytery Property Committee meeting on time – we hope it will be presented at the next full Presbytery meeting on 21st June.
- Initial timescale problem was a lead time of 26 weeks for the slates, however, our architect and our preferred contractor have worked with the quarry and if we get the contract signed off by the end of June, 50% of the slate will be available in September, with the other 50% available 3/4 weeks later; which could see a July/August start and the job completed by year end
- Are we comfortable with £730k compared to the original estimate of £600k?
 - Anyone watching the news will know about the cost of living crisis
 - Energy, materials, fuel, etc – all rising – not happy but we understand
 - If we delay the work it will only become ever more expensive
 - We have funds and will raise others from the sale of our surplus manse and the Stamperland building
 - So the answer is yes we would recommend option A. for your approval.
- Managing the process of paying for the work – it does not have to be paid for in one go, after every month our QS will check what has been done, issue a certificate and advise us what to pay the contractor.
- To minimise the impact on our unrestricted funds (and to allow mission work) there are options we can consider –
 - Use the proceeds from the sale of the surplus manse
 - Use the proceeds from the sale of the Stamperland building

- Use Grants already received
- Use money raised by congregation, some of the Grants are dependent on us doing this
- Members will wish to give (as our predecessors did) one very generous donation of £10,000 already
- The General Trustees offer short notice bridging finance should the timelines with other options make it sensible option
- What happens next – approval to proceed is required from
 - Kirk Session tonight 13/06/22.
 - Glasgow Presbytery either on 21/06/22 or by end June.

Scott asked the Trustees if they had any questions:

1. Will we have full access to our buildings during the works – yes.
2. What is the scope of the works – the roof Netherlee sanctuary and the flat roof of the Vestry.
3. Is it a fixed price contract – yes.
4. Are the two sandstone crosses included – yes.
5. Are there allowances for work uncovered as the job progresses – yes.
6. What timescale – if approved by end of June 2022 should be completed by year end 2022.

There being no further questions Scott asked the Kirk Session by raising hands to show their intention on the proposal presented, namely to approve option A. above or not.

Result of the vote: For 38 – Against 0 – Abstention 1. The motion is therefore carried.

Children & Youth Ministry – new plans for the Christmas Tree Festival – scheduled for 10/12/2022.

- Bigger scale by involving community groups and the primary school
- Small charge for entry to fund raise for the “raise the roof” appeal
- Possible sale items plus a tea room

Proposal welcomed and approved.

Mission – omission from report – Alistair Gow (Convener) we are supporting the Blythswood Shoe Box Appeal this year.

Planning & Communication – Diane Levey (Convener) get it in the diary – October 1st – open day – here’s what we do! Involve as many organisations as possible. Advertise worship and events over Christmas.

Pastoral Care – nothing to report.

Transition Working Group – Norrie Bolton presented an update, including seeking approval from the Session on item 2.

- 1) Various items will be transferred to Netherlee
 - Communion silver
 - Cradle Rolls
 - Brass ware
 - Pulpit falls, banners, etc.
 - Half a dozen choir chairs (to the vestry)
 - Portable PA system
 - Various items of kitchen equipment
 - Several folding tables
- 2) Seek approval for the “Empire Exhibition communion table” to be located in the Welcome

Sanctuary at Netherlee and the relocation of the Stamperland font to the Netherlee sanctuary – both agreed by the majority present.

- 3) Seek assistance on Monday, 20th June at 7.00 pm
 - a. To move a piano (idea rejected post-meeting on sensible H&S grounds)
 - b. To move 70 chairs from the basement to the large hall
- 4) There followed a discussion as to whether the digital projector should be transferred free of charge or not. Following a brief discussion the majority agreed it should be transferred free of charge.
- 5) Digital organ surplus to requirements has been sold for £5,000.
- 6) Removal of all other combustible materials from the Stamperland Buildings is a requirement of our closed building insurance. Your help is requested on the following dates between 7.00 and 9.00 pm. With many helpers we may not need all of the dates – Monday 4th / 11th / 18th July 2022.
- 7) Members of the TWG have expressed concern that there has been little apparent progress in rationalising the storage at Netherlee church. Equipment / items are being stored which have not been used for many years. Some groups with access to storage have been disbanded for many years.

Correspondence – Clerk commented on the following –

- Determination for the sale of the Stamperland building from the General Trustees (19/04/22)
- Citation from Glasgow Presbytery meeting for forming of cluster groups (03/05/22)
- Request from David Dundas for the return of his bell from the Stamperland tower – Stuart already spoken to him and discussing how to get it down – call the Fire Brigade surely!
- Citation from Glasgow Presbytery meeting for allocating posts (16/06/22)
- Letter to Glasgow SE Foodbank informing raised £510.70 raised at Retiral Offering (05/06/22)
- Email from Philip Moseley, GSL of 79th (Stamperland) Glasgow Scouts requesting his message be read out and incorporated into the minute of this meeting –

Appreciation from the 79th Scout Group

Like all users of Stamperland Church Halls the 79th Glasgow (Stamperland) Scout Group is not looking forward to leaving what has been our home for the past 82 years.

After forming in early 1940 the 79th Scout Group has delivered a programme of skills, adventure, fun and friendship to a very large number of young members (and their leaders!) that have passed through the group during those 82 years. Life-long friendships have been made and it has been a privilege to see young folk progressing through the group, gaining confidence and skills to take them into adult life. It might be that they learned to tie their show-laces in the group, got to experience their first night away, or conquered a fear by abseiling, the list will be long and different for each individual.

Throughout those 82 years we have had the constant support of the members of Stamperland Church and we are immensely grateful and humbled by the opportunities that has allowed us in providing a place for the young folk of the local area to take part in the hugely benefitting experience of being a member of the Scout Association. We would like that thanks and appreciation to be officially noted by the Kirk Session of Netherlee & Stamperland Church.

While we will leave with a heavy heart, it is also a new opportunity for us. On behalf of all the leaders at the 79th Glasgow (Stamperland) Scout Group I would like to say a massive "Thank You" and wish you all the very best. Hopefully our paths will still continue to cross as we both move forward.

Health & Safety – nothing to report.

Food Hygiene – nothing to report.

Safeguarding – Bruce Young (Convener) reported that following the General Assembly there are now 3 levels with upgraded training that will be required every 5 years. He also commented that there is an opportunity for us to once again host a training event, which of course makes it easier for our Eldership to attend.

Insurance – nothing to report.

Presbytery – resignation on Alastair Graham means we have the opportunity for someone to step forward to fulfil this role. Give it some thought and speak to Scott. Alistair Gow (Additional Presbytery Elder) – nothing to report.

Scott asked the Trustees if they had any questions.

Norrie Bolton questioned the closing date of the Stamperland building and after a short discussion it was stated the Sunday 26th June 2022 is both the date of the final service and the closing of the Stamperland building. Norrie asked for this to be put in the minute.

There being no further questions, Scott asked the Trustees if they accepted all the reports as presented. The majority of those present agreed.

6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

Kirk Session minute of 04/04/2022 approved.

7 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

1. Thank you to the volunteers below for agreeing to attend our two clusters meetings (7:30pm) –
 - a. Mon 20 June (Greenbank) – Scott Blythe, Stuart Buchanan & Alistair Gow
 - b. Mon 27 June (Busby) – John Montgomery, Alistair Gow & Sheena Wurthmann
2. Proposal from the Session Clerk to have all our normal Sunday worship at 10:30am –majority of those present agreed. Scott asked when from, July or September? The majority agreed to make the change from July. The majority also agreed to postpone the discussion over the provision of services over Christmas to the next meeting.
3. At this has been a very long meeting the choice of our retiral offerings for next session is delegated to the Finance Committee. Any thoughts to be passed to John Montgomery.
4. Request for fund raising concert (August 2023) raised issues as for individual not a charity. DO we wish to set guidelines and/or avoid precedent? Postpone to next agenda.
5. Scott request additional leave to take family to USA to see Liz's family as it over 5 years since last visit. Majority of those present agreed.
6. General Assembly report from John Montgomery – see Appendix A.
7. Tradition of parties sustained in Stamperland over many years, less so in Netherlee and much

less so in recent years (Covid issues aside). Will the request increase at Netherlee as result of closing Stamperland? We have to balance several issues – community use of our building / who opens and closes / keys / mess / cleaning deposit / income raised – to mention a few. After a short discussion the majority agreed to permit parties and review after a year.

8 FUTURE MEETINGS and our next COMMUNION

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

- Communion at Netherlee at 10:30am on Sunday 4th September 2022
 - Meeting at 9:30am to help David Beckett (Communion Elder) are Alan Fairlie, Vicky Anderson and Elinor Mair

CLOSE

The meeting was closed with all present saying the Grace.

APPENDIX A **Report on General Assembly 2022 by John Montgomery**

Scott Blythe
Minister

Stuart Buchanan
Session Clerk

APPENDIX A
Report on General Assembly 2022 by John Montgomery

GENERAL ASSEMBLY – 2022

Highlights from my attendance on line at the Hybrid General Assembly.

Before I start I can recommend that elders read the June Life and Work at page 16 which will give a detailed round up of the reports and that what follows is just my summarised comments.

Saturday – Opening Address by Lord High Commissioner Lord Hodge, by Zoom as he was recovering from Covid. Very good encouraging us to all to work together at this critical time in the life of the Kirk.

An Overture from Sutherland Presbytery to alter their allocation from 7 ministers to 6 instead of the 4 proposed under the Mission plan was overwhelmingly defeated. Not because there was no sympathy for their position as a Presbytery covering a huge area but because if their appeal had been granted then another Presbytery would have its allocation reduced. More inventive ways of working had to be found per John Chalmers.

Monday – Communion is always uplifting at the GA. Professor Jason Leitch was asked to address the GA and reminded us that Covid was still with us and to protect those around us by following the guidelines and rules and that we needed to think Globally and not Locally.

Arguably the debate on **Same Sex Marriage** was the single most important event of the week. The way it had been handled by the church was exemplary with 29 Presbyteries out of 41 voting in favour of the Overture . The debate was not rancorous but the different views were listened to and when asked to vote on turning the Overture into Church Law it was passed by 274 votes for and 136 votes against . I voted for the motion.

The **Legal Questions Committee**, chaired by Rev Dr Grant Barclay dealt with presbyteries re-structuring with the review to be brought to the GA in 2024 I voted against this proposal as it seemed to me just an example of further delays. However the vote was 297 for and 63 against.

Ecumenical Relations Committee report by the Rev Sandy Horsburgh promoted the Declaration of Friendship with the Roman Catholic Church - to be known as the St Margaret Declaration was enthusiastically welcomed by the Most Rev Leo Cushley and by the Assembly in a vote of 421 for and 4 against.

Investors Trust Report; Pension Trustees Report (I have a personal interest in this); The Church of Scotland Trust Report; and The CofS Hymnary Trustees Reports were all approved without questions.

Assembly Trustees Report by the Very Rev John Chalmers spelled out the need to re-focus on new ways of Mission. Where we are now with the average number of children attending Church is 3 or 4 (we can identify with that) and so the Trustees are committing to spend up to £20m/£25m over the next 7 years on this under the **“Seeds for Growth”** initiative.

The Trustees also introduced regulations for the new “Giving to Grow” scheme on congregational givings which replaces the current M&M payments It provides for Churches who are doing well to grow their income and retain more of it locally to aid their work in Mission.

Tuesday – The Assembly Trustees Report continued with Dave Kendall the Chief Officer setting out the big picture and the Faith Action Plan with Scott Shackleton masterminding the Programme. Views on the FAP were to be sent by local churches to either Dave or to John Chalmers.

The **Faith Impact Forum** asked us to vote on applying a windfall tax on oil companies and was passed by 288 votes for it and 83 against

The **Faith Nurture Forum** are looking at new ways of doing Church

Wednesday – The Report on Chaplains in HM Forces was presented by Rev. Dr Marjory McLean which resonated with at least one of the on line Commissioners, a minister with 2 young children, whose husband was a sub-mariner and who could not tell her where he was deployed to or when she would next see him. The Rev Fee Reynolds – a former assistant in Netherlee and who was herself attached to the Navy urged us to support the work of the chaplains who were greatly respected by the men and women they served in all the branches of the forces. Very moving.

Crossreach - the report highlighted their work with Care for Old Age; Addiction; Homelessness; Dementia; Poverty; Loneliness and Isolation – and not forgetting the Care Workers.

The Guild Report – The amounts they raised for their projects was awe inspiring and their “Big Sing” the previous night had been a great success and their message was simply “Look Forward in Hope”. Rev Tom Nelson who had a personal interest as Catherine was a former National President, urged us all to support the Guild in their work as they were both innovative and creative.

Iona Report. The Church needed to step up on Ukraine and Climate Change as part of its mission and to note that the voice of young people was not being heard or listened to. The Rev Muriel Pearson on line from Jerusalem spoke on human rights issues which was complex and needed to be kept in the forefront of our minds.

The General Trustees – emphasised that their role was to support churches with help for buildings and land. Comment was made that Ministers had no choice but to live in the manse provided for them by their congregation with some facing incredible fuel bills and with heavy Maintenance and Repair costs on Victorian built properties.

Thursday – Final day – The Moderator's opening address was on Dreams, Visions and Experiences. His mother was told by his Granny that she would become pregnant and have a son who would preach the Gospel . She had a vision but some people say the Church has no vision but that God will transform all things - in other words “Thy Kingdom Come”

The Assembly was then addressed by **Lord Bishop Sentamu** former Archbishop of York prior to his retirement and now head of Christian Aid. He spoke movingly that “Change is a Constant”. Poverty is our Mission. He planned to use his power as Chairman of Christian Aid to improve the lot of the poor. He received a standing ovation.

Donald McCorkindale (a former assistant in Netherlee) as chairman of the Assembly Committee said they planned to facilitate a Hybrid GA in 2023 to improve on what had been done in 2022. In 2022 the GA had saved £67,000 in travel and accommodation costs by offering the Hybrid option. Those of us who attended this year on line were fully supportive of this proposal.

Rev Dr George White retired as principal clerk at the end of the Assembly and his successor will be the **Rev Fiona Smith**. The **Very Rev Dr John Chalmers** also retired at this time. Both were thanked by the Moderator for their time in office and Fiona was welcomed to her new role.

In his closing address the Moderator had a sense of unity as we work together in Mission and Lord Hodge remarked that belief in God gave us hope for the future.

Conclusion.

It was a good General Assembly and again a worthwhile experience which I enjoyed attending on line. I spoke to a number of like minded Commissioners who felt the same. I did miss meeting people face to face but I fully support the Hybrid model as the way forward.

When we are next asked to provide a Commissioner I hope there will be more willing volunteers to represent Netherlee and Stamperland Church.

John Montgomery

9 June 2022