

The Session met in the Session House following the Board Meeting on Monday 8 February 2016 at 6.45pm **ACTION**

APOLOGIES: All apologies and attendances are recorded on the Meeting Sheet.

PREVIOUS MINUTES:

No corrections noted. Main minutes (7 Dec 2015) approved by Rita Inglis and seconded by Shena Burgon

Roll and Safeguarding ratification minutes (10 Jan 2016) approved by Alan Irving and seconded by Anne Legge

MATTERS ARISING:

None

ROLL: *removed from noticeboard and website copies*

PRESBYTERY REPORT (2 February 2016):

This was a very long meeting so have only included edited highlights that I think you may be interested in – the full report is in my hands and is available if anyone suffers from insomnia and requires bedside reading.

The Presbytery dues have been set for this year. They have been increased to £5/member of the congregation. The levy for the Duns Show costs have increased from £15 to £20 per Congregation.

Presbytery Planning Group

This committee was created because the Presbytery is aware that with depleting congregations and reduced number of available ministers, that the whole question of buildings within the Presbytery needs to be looked at. They have divided all churches in the Presbytery into 3 groups:

Group A – Essential Buildings with a probable long term future. - Berwick, Coldstream, Duns, Eyemouth

Group B – Buildings with a medium future probably in excess of fifteen years – Ayton, Greenlaw, Westruther, Gordon, Eccles, Coldingham, Chirnside, Langton, Paxton, Swinton, Reston.

Group C – Buildings with limited need and whose continuing viability needs to be looked at every 2 years – Bonkyl, Burnmouth, Cranshaws, Foulden, Edrom, Hutton, Ledgerwood, Leitholm, Ladykirk, Fogo.

With the imminent retiral of their Minister they will be looking at transferring Ladykirk and Fogo out of the Churches' ownership and into trust ownership. During the Fabric and Glebes report Ladykirk were given permission to spend £118,180 to repair the roof and this was deemed necessary if they were to successfully transfer the building to a Trust.

Business Committee

Rev Dane Sherrard was much to everyone's approval appointed as Presbytery Clerk.

General Assembly – any Elder who would like to take up an Elders commission to the General Assembly to contact the Clerk.

Duns and District looking to purchase a building to house an assistant minister and as office/storage space for its community and congregational projects.

Mission and Discipleship

Elders get together - 3pm Gavinton Village Hall at 3pm with coffee/tea followed by a conference titled "hearts to God: Through the psalms with prayer and cake" this will be followed with a meal and then by the Presbytery elders service in Fogo at 7pm.

All elders will shortly receive a letter from Christine in their pigeon holes – so please complete slip and return to Christine.

Superintendence Committee

Annual inspection of records for us will be Wednesday 27th April in Reston Village Hall at 7pm. We are asked to ensure that the individuals attending are sufficiently familiar with the documents they are presenting and therefore it is suggested that Property Convenors should also attend.

We are reminded that the Congregational Safeguarding Register should have been duly attested at the first Kirk Session of the year. Document SG07 and SG11 (obtained from the CoS website) need to have been completed and be in the records.

World mission

Encourage us to support the "Let us build a house" project for Nepal

Ask congregations to suggest events for Malcolm and Cati Ramsay who will be in the Presbytery in June.

MINISTER'S ITEMS:

Minister clarified the intent of the new unitary constitution. Control will rest with Session but with the proposed sub-committees, it is hoped that more members of the congregation will become involved, without them needing to make a long-term commitment. We should also welcome non-elders to become involved in other areas e.g. door duties, district visiting etc.

A copy of the proposed programme is attached (Appendix 1). The sub-committees would have limited financial and decision making powers so some decisions would need to be referred to Session.

Question: If a sub-committee needs an urgent decision, do they have to wait for the next programmed Session meeting? Answer: If necessary, a short un-programmed Session meeting could be called for this purpose.

Question: Is there a minimum or maximum number of members for a sub-committee?

Answer: Not aware of any limitations beyond practical ones but Bea will check (*post meeting note: see clarification on Appendix*). Minister felt that there needed to be some autonomy for groups to set their own numbers but must avoid the risk of cliques –

similarly, proposals from each sub-committee for their own budgets etc. would be appropriate.

Forthcoming events and services

- 28 February: After church soirée will be a soup & sandwich lunch; entertainment Part 1; tea and cake; entertainment Part 11. Although this is primarily for the congregational members, all are encouraged to bring a friend.
- 18 March: From 10am – 1pm has been set aside to “Spring Clean the Church”. Minister has asked all organisations to check their own belongings and would be good if at least one representative came along to ensure proper disposal or storage. The more hands the better!
- 24 March: Maundy Thursday communion at 7pm preceded by an afternoon service in Lowick. For Berwick, Beth will prepare the elements and undertake door duties with Rita.
- 25 March: Good Friday service at 7pm. Beth and Rita will carry out door duties.
- 27 March: The usual Easter Sunday family service.
- 2 April: Brightons Praise Group concert. Tickets will be available for prior purchase or at the door at £5 each.

Note that the Talents Auction has been deferred to 2017. The Stewardship Group felt that there were enough events already planned.

Five-Year Plan (Local Church Review)

Minister ran through each of the items that the Session had agreed to and considered whether we were on track. In some areas there has been progress but there is still much work to do. Minister asked for help in particular with the Youth Group and Sunday Club. As with many of the actions, we need to identify more people to help. It is difficult to find people who have the gift, calling and time so that these groups can meet more frequently. Session did agree that both were important to the future of the church but were unable to come up with any suggestions. The messy church events had been very successful and minister was very grateful to those who organised and helped ensure that the attending children enjoyed themselves. Christine cited a mid-week equivalent in south-west England which her grandson attends (affectionately known as the “Jesus Club”). This is organised by their own churches together in an early evening and is attended by 100+ enthusiastic youngsters. Minister agreed that this was a good example.

There was very little appetite for adult education as evidenced by the low attendance at the ‘preparing for Christmas’ event. There has been no progress in increasing availability of the church at other times outside of services.

Minister’s absence

Minister will be representing Presbytery at this year’s General Assembly which runs from 21st – 27th May. He is hoping to take a holiday in April.

Other

Minister also advised that the Kirk News will be available earlier than usual to ensure that promotion of the 28th is with every member before the date. Both Kirk News and Communion Cards will be available on Sunday coming (14th February) for pick up.

SESSION CLERK ITEMS:

Minister had received a letter from Allan Rodger advising that he would be retiring from all active elder duties with immediate effect. There was general concurrence that his input to Session would be missed. Bea to write on behalf of Session thanking him for his years of service. Because of the short notice, Session agreed that until the districts can be reviewed, Kirk News and cards would be posted to his district this time. The district review will need to be considered by the pastoral sub-committee under the guidance of the minister.

Data Protection

Further to Allan Rodger's request at the previous full Session meeting, that decisions about those who haven't returned the Data Protection form are deferred until the end of 2016, was agreed. Bea has drafted a simpler letter which elders may like to use, outlining what may need to happen if we still don't hear from members. A copy of this, plus the list of members still outstanding will be included with the Kirk News and communion cards.

E-news

When the upcoming Kirk News is available, Bea will send out the first e-news to gauge reaction. As this will incorporate news from the wider church, hopefully interest will be generated. Very few elders have requested inclusion.

Safeguarding

As mentioned in the Presbytery report, we need to carry out a Safeguarding Audit (SG11) which is ideally carried out by two people who aren't on the Safeguarding Panel. No volunteers were identified so this will be undertaken by Rita.

Other

Three Go for It funded courses were available but no interest shown.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

None

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS:

Annual Stated Meeting on Monday 21st March 2016 at 7.00pm

Session meeting on Monday 13th June 2016 at 7.00pm

There being no further business the Session was discharged with a shared grace.

..... Moderator

..... Session Clerk

