

The Session met in the Session House on Monday 7 December 2015 6.45pm

ACTION

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

PREVIOUS MINUTES:

No corrections noted. Main minutes Approved by Rita Inglis and Seconded by Betty Mathieson

Communion minutes approved by Allan Rodger and Brian Tait

MATTERS ARISING:

Stewardship: The committee met last week and agreed two main after-church events, with a light lunch.

Sunday **28th February** will see a soiree hopefully to include a drama being organised by Dan and Karen Fleming (sign-up sheet available) and other talents being sought by Brian Longbone.

Sunday **17th April** will see a talents auction when folk can offer a skill or help, produce etc.

The church needs a proper spring clean and tidy. Suggestions about the old bibles, and redundant hymn books etc.?

Reminder that the minister will be running a 'Preparing for Christmas' workshop on Wednesday **9th December** at 1.30pm

The Rotary Club of Berwick upon Tweed were very grateful for the donation towards their Christmas lights appeal.

The 10 pin bowling event for the Sunday Club went well.

The Big Christmas Sing was very successful, the church was full and £500 was raised for Christian Aid. The children were very appreciative of the angels which were distributed as folk left. Grateful thanks to all the knitters.

Messy Church on Saturday 5th December went well. Thanks to all the helpers and to Elise for organising the catering.

The proposed change to the pattern of services at Lowick has been brought forward because Lillian Moffatt, who normally prepares the hall for the service, has broken her arm and is unable to do this. After discussion with the folk who go to Lowick it has been agreed that there will be one Sunday service per month on the second Sunday (e.g. **December 13th** and **January 10th**) with additional services where appropriate. In December there will be a Christmas Eve service at 2.30pm. There will also be a monthly Sing-along on the 4th Thursday of the month from 1.30pm (first will be **28th January**). The CofE minister will be contacted and the village will be leafleted. This will be a trial and initially it would be good if folk from Berwick could come along to swell the voices. Summer communion services will continue at 3.00pm (also 2nd Sunday of the month) and winter communion will only be in Berwick. Minister proposed that we have a joint service in Lowick only in the summer.

The community hall in Lowick invoice Brian Tait direct. Rena will be reimbursed for her involvement. Bea to let Presbytery know about the changes.

The Berwick Male Voice Choir will be holding their Christmas concert in the church on Wednesday 9th December from 7.00pm. Brian Longbone will be the responsible elder to ensure the building is secured.

ROLL: Removed from noticeboard and website copies

PRESBYTERY REPORT (1 December 2015):

Unlike the previous meeting this was a lengthy one!!

Overture under the barrier act amending the Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnership.

Last year each Presbytery was asked by the General Assembly to discuss and vote on whether to allow the training and appointment of Ministers and Deacons who were in a same sex civil partnership. At the time it was agreed that this could happen but only where a local congregation were fully supportive of such an appointment.

Since then the Law in Scotland has changed to create same sex marriage and the Church wished to change the wording on the original overture to avoid any potential legal problems so that those in a same sex civil partnership and those in same sex marriage will be treated equally.

This decision in no way changes the church's traditional view of marriage nor should it be thought of as an acceptance of same sex marriage nor does it permit ministers or deacons to solemnize same sex marriages.

After some discussion there was a vote and the Presbytery by a narrow margin approved the Overture.

Business Committee

There was an agreement for the Borders Presbytery's to meet to discuss the Chaplaincy for the BGH and for a conference in April to discuss ways of working together.

The Presbytery are still looking for a youth representative to go to the General Assembly and encourages all congregations to try and find someone.

Service of Union for Ayton & District will be at Ayton 10 January at 2.30pm

Service of Union for Duns & District will be at Langton Church 17 January at 2.30pm

The Presbytery Planning Working Group have finished their annual review and agreed that the current Presbytery plan is appropriate.

They have still to nominate a Presbytery Clerk but have increased the annual honorarium by £500.

Fabric & Glebe

Berwick is one of the churches whose last property inspection was 5 years ago and will be due the next inspection in 2017. So Mr Kay said he would be in touch with the Property Conveners to check the property registers next year against the inspection report to check that all urgent and essential work has been done.

Mission & Discipleship

Andy Haddow is looking for any volunteers for the Thought for the week Rota so anyone

willing/capable of writing 250 words please to get in touch with him.

Next year's Elders service will be in Fogo Church on 24 April and will be preceded by an Elders conference in Gavington village Hall. The theme would be focused on prayer and Alison Adam of the Iona Community has been approached to lead this.

It was agreed to continue the presence at the Duns show but seek some ways of minimizing the cost.

Stewardship & Finance

The Ministry & Mission contributions have been set for 2016 and Berwick's contribution will be £33,363.

Of the £15,471 which The Presbytery can use for local use - £10000 has been reserved to pay for a Mission Development worker for the Presbytery, £3600 for the Berwickshire Youth trust and the balance to be kept for emergencies though there may be a possibility to make a donation to Berwick Youth Project again.

MINISTER'S ITEMS:

Minister advised that Kathleen Gladston's funeral would be on Monday **14th December** at 11.00am.

Minister had received notice from Bea that she wishes to step down from her Session Clerk duties at the AGM. Rita has agreed to take this on. This agreement was received with unanimous approval. Presbytery will be informed.

The 2016 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will follow the same pattern as last year. A joint service in the evening of 17th January in Berwick Parish Church and a joint service in the evening of 24th January in St Andrew's Wallace Green. There will also be a Hymn Sing-Along in the Salvation Army hall on Wednesday 20th January at 7.30pm

Duties: Sunday **13th December** at 3.00pm 'for those who find Christmas difficult'. Duty Rita, Betty & Bea. There will be refreshments available after the service.

Thursday **24th December** at 11.30pm Bea and Alan Irving (if he is unavailable Betty will assist. Bea to coordinate)

Friday **25th December** at 10.00am. Rita and Neil

SESSION CLERK ITEMS:

DATA PROTECTION

Allan Rodger requested that decisions about those who haven't returned the Data Protection form is deferred until the end of 2016. His comment is duly noted and this will be discussed further in March.

Bea voiced concern about the members who had requested assistance to get into church. No volunteers had been forthcoming from the recent appeal in the Kirk News. Attempts to resolve this at the next meeting if not before (8 requests received).

Approximately 40 people showed an interest in e-news. The format of this has yet to be decided – it will not replicate the Kirk News but may include selected items received from the various Church of Scotland councils. It will also be a way of reminding folk about

imminent events which may have bypassed them.

CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

Have received notification that 121 have also approved the change. The official paperwork should be with us shortly.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

Following our offer to the Methodist Church to use our sanctuary for services (for which they were grateful), they are currently looking at alternative venues in the town (possibly a shop?) but are keeping their options open until their current building is sold.

Question raised about the Piggy Banks and whether they could be available all year round. Rita also offered the idea of a house-shaped savings bank which could be customised with our decal plus one for a specific fund-raising initiative – for example the ‘Build a House’ appeal. It was agreed that we would purchase some, and both banks would be available to folk (the piggies would just be for the church funds)

Brief meeting needed to ratify the roll and Safeguarding register. This will take place immediately after the service on **10th January** 2016.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Monday 8th February 2016 after Board at 6.45pm

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

..... Moderator

..... Session Clerk