

Minutes of Stated Annual Meeting of Crieff Parish Church held in St Andrews building following the morning service on Sunday 23rd April 2023.

Copies of the Trustees' Report and Receipts and Payments Account for the Year Ended 31 December 2022 had been distributed, along with the minutes of the previous Stated Annual Meeting.

SEDERUNT – Rev Andrew Philip, Moderator, along with 24 members and adherents on the accompanying Sederunt List.

APOLOGIES – Rosemary Campbell, Moira Kerr, Ian Roy, Hazel Roy

In the absence of a clerk, Mrs Diane Jack offered and was appointed to take the minute.

The meeting was opened with prayer.

Welcome and Introduction:

The Moderator welcomed those present.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Sunday 24th April 2022 were presented and proposed as correct by Ian Hunter and seconded by Frances Wishart.

The Moderator explained that the new Unitary Constitution, having been approved at the last meeting, had now been issued. Unfortunately, due to the work required on the report for the Presbytery Plan and due to the Moderator's sick leave, only the Resources Action Group had been in action. There were five areas agreed on by the Kirk Session and meetings will be called over the next five weeks. The Moderator expressed a hope that the congregation would support this and join the groups.

Over the year the Kirk Session has appointed the following:

Graeme Addison - Data Protection Officer

Ronnie Robb - Fire Officer

Elizabeth Philip had previously been appointed Safeguarding Coordinator and had organised a training weekend for all involved in activities involving vulnerable persons along with all Elders. This had been held in conjunction with the Mid Strathearn churches.

Anne Ross is stepping down as an active elder after 41 years and the Moderator expressed his thanks for all her work.

The deaths of Alan Meakin (66 years an Elder) and Bob Lauchlan (45 years an Elder) were recorded and thanks were expressed for their role in the church.

The new Presbytery of Perth was formed on 1st January 2023, combining various "old" presbyteries. It will meet four times a year, twice in person, twice online, and will hold other meetings as necessary.

The Presbytery Plan has been prepared and includes the proposed future linkage of Crieff Parish with Mid Strathearn. Eventually, these parishes, along with Comrie and Dundurn will be allocated 1.7 ministers but the Moderator pointed out that this will not be any time soon. As part of the Plan, the St Andrews and the St Michaels buildings were assessed by Presbytery, as directed by General

Trustees and the outcome will be discussed at the Congregational Meeting to be held at the completion of the Stated Annual Meeting.

Congregational Accounts:

The Moderator presented the accounts. He explained that they are outsourced to Ian Roy, who is no longer a trustee, and that he has kept the Kirk Session informed throughout the year on all finance matters. The accounts have already been approved by the Kirk Session and independently examined by Derek Grant CA.

The moderator explained the format of the accounts, being Legal and administrative information, a Trustees report, a Receipts and Payments Accounts, a Statement of Balances and various notes.

It was noted that income had, again, fallen and that this was of concern, with the church not in a strong financial position. The Resources Action Group will be tasked with trying to turn this around.

Questions on the accounts were invited. With none forthcoming, the accounts were presented and received.

The meeting was closed with prayer at 12.25pm.

Congregational Meeting held in St Andrews building on Sunday 23rd April 2023 at 12.30pm

The meeting was opened in prayer by Rev Andrew Philip, the Moderator.

As intimated previously, this meeting was called to discuss the closure of the St Michael's building. The Kirk Session has determined that we only require one building. A review was carried out externally by the Presbytery, using the same process as is being carried out nationally. The review outcome was that we need to rationalize our buildings and the inspection recommended the St Andrews building should be retained for worship and other congregational activities, partly due to this building having more flexibility. St Michael's building should be closed as it failed on various points, including the fact that significant money would need to be spent on upgrading it for current needs.

The Moderator explained that there was a well laid out process to properly close down St Michael's building. An inventory would be carried out by ourselves to catalogue what we might use, what may be used by other congregations and what should be disposed of. There would be a change to a different type of insurance, provided by Church of Scotland, and this would involve water, gas and electric supplies all being removed. The General Trustees would be responsible for selling the building and we would be responsible for keeping the grounds tidy and the building secure.

PROPOSAL: St Michael's building to be closed with immediate effect.

Questions/comments were invited:

Ian Hunter: Would there be an opportunity for the community to participate in a service of closure as many people will have been christened, married, held funerals etc

Moderator: Agreed that this is something which would be put in place

Alistair Strickland: If St Andrews was going to be our only place of worship then it was not practical to let the building out, especially on a Saturday night, as this puts a burden on people having to put the chairs out on a Sunday morning.

Moderator: Agreed this was an important consideration. Part of the decision on deciding which building to use involved how flexible the space could be. It was a local decision as to whether to let the hall, however, £5917 was raised last year and, given the state of our finances, this was not money we could turn down.

Bayne Shaw: What is the seating capacity of both buildings?

Moderator: St Andrews can seat 250, no figure for St Michaels, but considerably more

Bayne Shaw: There are 450 people on the role, there were four Church of Scotland's in Crieff when he came to Crieff and, whilst the town has increased in size, the churches have reduced. If St Michael's is bigger then surely we should be keeping this as we should be concentrating on outreach and we may need the space.

Moderator: Reality is that we are a smaller congregation and cannot afford both buildings. We are following directives from the General Trustees. If numbers increased beyond the capacity of our building then we could put on more services to accommodate them.

Alistair Strickland: Do the Trustees have any connection with Crieff Connexions

Moderator: No, it is a separate charity

Christine Carter: How long can we keep St Andrews if we are running out of money

Moderator: We don't know this, we can only follow the Presbytery Plan. There will be a full review after five years to see if it is working. Our payments to Church of Scotland will reduce substantially from previous years due to a change in the way they are calculated (used to be based on average of previous three years but now only compared to last year) so we hope this will help. There are some "aid receiving" congregations which receive money from Church of Scotland rather than paying to Church of Scotland. Not aware of any congregation being closed because it has run out of money.

Alastair Jack: I would prefer that the resources I give to the church were used for the benefit of the congregation and not just to keep buildings open. There are other causes in the town eg Foodbank, Logos, CAP and if I had to support both buildings then I would not be able to help these other causes

Frances Wishart: It has been 59 years since coming to Crieff and we were members of St Michaels but we are not emotionally attached to it and, if the time is right to close it, then, so be it.

- Moderator: I did not think, when I first came to Crieff that we would be closing buildings.
- Jim Maxwell: The Presbytery Plan does not take account local needs. The General Trustees will sell the building and keep the money. The Church of Scotland has lost its way. The problems will not be solved by shutting buildings.
- Alistair Strickland: The Church of Scotland track record on disposing of buildings is not good and I fear St Michael's will end up like the South Church (derelict).
Also, we do not know who is renting St Andrews and if they are suitable.
I want to register disappointment in the closure of St Michael's
- Moderator: Account is taken over who is hiring and for what purpose and lets are not granted if unsuitable.
- Susie O'Neill: I have respect for everything previously said, however, I come to church to worship God and it does not matter where "church" is. We share this building with the community as part of outreach e.g Friday Club and if we were to stop all lettings then we are not carrying out outreach. More important that we worship, not where.
- Denis Nicol: Do we know how the Church of Scotland got into this mess. Are we a more secular society
- Moderator: Various studies have been carried out to see how this has happened. The last census seemed to confirm we are more secular.
- Bayne Shaw: This is a house of God, we are not a community centre. Has anyone prayed and asked God what he wants us to do
- Moderator: Our responsibility is mission, outreach etc and we need to get on and do this

PROPOSAL: Kirk Session proposes to close St Michael's building

Proposed: Ian Hunter

Seconded: Anne Jarvie

For: 20

Against: 1

Abstention 1

The decision will be reported to Presbytery and the various resource groups will start the next stage.

The meeting was closed in prayer at 1:10pm