

Parish of Ceres, Kemback, and Springfield. Minutes of the Annual Stated Meeting held on Sunday 24th April at Kemback Church, commencing at 1215 pm

The meeting was constituted with a prayer, by the Rev. Jane Barron

1. Sederunt and Apologies for absence

Present: The Rev. Jane Barron, and 31 members of the congregation. Apologies had been received from Barbara Elder, Pat Fraser, Colin Johnson, Peter Milne.

2. Minutes of previous meetings

The Session Clerk explained that no ASM had been held for the past two years owing to Covid restrictions. The most recent minutes to hand were those of 2018.

3. Minister's remarks

The Rev. Jane Barron had previously circulated to the whole congregation the Draft Presbytery Plan, together with a covering letter. She further explained the Plan's implications and invited questions. These included how long it would be before Kemback Church actually closed; what would happen to certain items in the building including the stained glass windows which Ruth Walker had designed; would people travel from CKS parish to attend Church in Cupar; could a trust take over responsibility for Kemback Church building; what economies had been made at Church of Scotland headquarters in Edinburgh; what consultations had been held with Ministers whose livelihoods would be affected by the Plan. Jane confirmed that meetings had already taken place with our Cupar cluster colleagues and we would continue to work with them on our response to the Plan. Mention was also made of the idea to create a Pilgrim Church at Ceres.

4. Session Clerk's remarks

David Hughes Hallett had been appointed Session Clerk less than three weeks ago. He paid tribute to Simon Weller, his predecessor. He said that there was a great deal going on in the parish at present, especially with the Draft Presbytery Plan, and proposals for the Ceres Glebe. There is an excellent team of Elders, but more help is always welcome.

5. Annual Trustees' Report and Finance report

The Treasurer, Sarah Wood, reported:

It is my privilege to report on the Trustees Report and Accounts for 2021 which were approved by the Kirk Session at their meeting on 19th April 2022.

The Trustees Report consists of three main parts – The Session Clerk Report, The Ministers Report and the Financial Review.

The Session Clerk's report focusses on the appointment of our Locum Minister and then subsequent Minister along with the impact of Covid on the life of the Parish. All three churches were allowed to reopen in September 2021 and Sunday services have been held in each church in rotation over the past months.

The Minister's report talks of how the parish with the assistance of Rev Bill Hunter, Interim Moderator, transferred worship in all its forms, prayer groups and meetings to on line events. Lots of different ways were explored to keep in touch with all the congregation and the wider community during those difficult times. The ease in restrictions meant that as a congregation

we could come back to worship in Springfield Church and eventually in Ceres and Kemback as well. The report highlights many of the initiatives that have happened during the year despite all the difficulties and thanks to all who have worked so hard in 2021.

The Financial Review part of the report comments on the financial performance of the church during 2021, the investment policy of the church and the risks facing the church going forward.

Before going into the figures can I start with a thanks to the congregation for their determination to find ways of making their donations to the church; it was very much appreciated.

A copy of the accounts will go up on the website so that you can read through them at your leisure. I am just going to concentrate on three pages of the accounts Pages 10, 11 and Appendix 1 copies of which have been circulated.

The total income for 2021 was £107,378 and expenditure was £124,576 giving a deficit of £17,196. The deficit was reduced by the gains on investments so the final deficit was £7,681. The Church continues to struggle to raise enough money to cover its direct expenses and the deficit would be of the order of £30,000 if it were not for the investment income and the Springfield Bequest. On Page 11 you will find the Balance Sheet which details the total net assets of the Church which stand at £163,735. However in addition to the monies on the Balance Sheet the Church has substantial funds held by the Church of Scotland on behalf of the Congregation. The church remains revenue poor and asset rich.

6. Coffee Club at Springfield and Church Manager

June Smeaton reported:

On Thursday, 25th April 2022 a meeting was organised to talk with John McCurrach, Manager of Springfield Community Church, to discuss his role and talk about the Springfield Community Café. Attending was Rev Jane Barron, Sarah Wood, Jeanette Guy, Myra Todd and June Smeaton.

Since being employed as the manager at Springfield, John's role has changed over the past few years. His working hours have been increased and his duties extended to cover Kemback and Ceres buildings. He continues to enjoy his work and doesn't feel overwhelmed by the extra demands required of him. He has coped tremendously well during the pandemic months by implementing Covid regulations and guidance in all the buildings and making it safe for the Springfield Community Café and other church activities.

When the café reopened for the new year, the initial rules were rather restrictive but the dedicated customers returned and trusted the safe operation of the café although the numbers were quite low and have remained so.

Ideas were discussed on how to promote the café to attract new customers (out with the information being posted on the church website and Facebook page) and it was agreed a bold banner be erected in the church grounds, posters being created and displayed on the community noticeboards in the village and also at the Springfield Village Store. The meeting ended with those who were present expressing their thanks and appreciation of John and for all his involvement in the church activities carried out with his usual friendly, cheery and humorous manner.

7. The Guild

Jeanette Armes reported:

Keeping in touch by phone call, letter, cards and angels was a priority during Covid lockdown. Once meetings resumed, Covid cleansing routines were followed prior to each meeting. A varied programme was achieved by our secretary Sheena using mainly local speakers. Our treasurer Pat has kept us solvent, announcing £335.76 in the bank which will help boost the funds of our chosen charity "Home for good". We did not meet in January/February and are carrying on into the summer months instead. We have thirteen members.

8. Pastoral Care

Barbara Elder was unable to attend the meeting, so the Rev. Jane Barron reported that the pastoral care group had met weekly throughout the year. It had been very helpful as "eyes and ears" to keep in touch with what was going on in the congregation. The daffodil coffee morning, held for the more vulnerable, had been particularly successful.

9. Prayer Group

Margaret Matthews reported:

I find reporting on prayer group very difficult as so much of what we do is confidential, however, this time...

I am greatly encouraged as regards Prayer Group, which continues to meet weekly on Zoom and on the first Monday of the month in person in the three churches in rotation. We are delighted to be joined by three members of the Howe church at our monthly meetings.

We held a meeting recently to assess what we were doing and how to progress. Eleven members attended which was heartening. The feedback was positive and suggestions constructive, leading to a number of members participating in offering prayer as part of the Sunday services.

I am very grateful to Jane for her guidance and giving us a sense of direction at present, by adopting the psalms as our prayer focus. Our weekly prayers are incorporated into the service on Sundays and are also now available on the website, so the onus of prayer is not on this little group, but available for the congregation and anyone else who is interested, to join in. The study of the psalms has opened up our own understanding of God's care for His whole creation and encouraged a deeper trust in God's love and provision for His people.

We are slowly overcoming the belief that prayer is purely a private thing. We are told in scripture how Jesus often withdrew with His disciples to pray, that where two or three are gathered together, He is in the midst of them. And the early church in Acts met together daily to pray, so I am grateful to the group for their dedication and commitment.

Prayer in the coming months will be even more crucial as we discern God's will for His church, and I welcome anyone to join us in this quiet, humbling, challenging, loving, joyful ministry.

10. Property Report

Colin Johnson reported:

It was a busy year for Property reports with two being compiled, one was called an AMBA (Asset Management Building Audit) and this was required by the Church of Scotland . This involved photos being sent of all properties of the roof, walls and inside the Church, Session house and Manse and followed up by personal visit by a Church auditor.

The second report was for Fife Presbytery and involved proving that all legal and Insurance requirements were being complied with such as Fire risk assessments, Fire Extinguishers tests, Fire Alarms, Boiler certificates, Electrical Checks, Portable appliance Tests, and a new one for Lightning Protection (Earthing test). Weekly Insurance checks were done for all CKS properties during the lock down due to COVID and thanks goes to John McCurrach for carrying these out for Springfield and Kemback.

I am pleased to say that all of the CKS properties were found to be satisfactory and a letter was received saying they are all well cared for and maintained.

Access to the Church tower still remains locked off due to the dangerous state of the wooden stairs.

Spending on Churches is currently limited by Fife Presbytery to those repairs required to keep the buildings safe and for all the required safety certificates . Work has been done on Ceres Session house roof following Storm Barra when some cladding was blown off, and work is planned on painting the inside of Kemback Church.

A lot of work has been carried out at the Manse when the last Tenants moved out. A small leak was found in the hall ceiling and so moss from the roof had to be removed. A rotten section of wood was replaced on the patio door, the gas boiler need to be repaired and serviced . The garden did require a major tidy up and hedges were cut down to prevent damaging overhead cables.

Ceres Church lost Electrical power in April and Scottish Power did react very quickly to fix the problem by initially supplying a generator so that the Church could be used over the weekend and then did a permanent repair the next day.

11. Roll Keeper's report

Robin Bennett reported:

In 2011, two new members were admitted by resolution. During the year 11 of our members died and three members who no longer live locally left to join other Churches. The number of members on the Congregational Roll was 287 at the end of the year compared to 299 at the end of the previous year. The average number of worshippers at Sunday services was estimated at 30. The annual congregational statistical return had been submitted to the Presbytery as required.

12. Stewardship

Peter Milne reported:

A meeting of the Stewardship Group was held on 14th February 2022 with Margot Robertson, Church of Scotland stewardship department. The focus was on time, talents and money and encouraged new ways of thinking for stewardship. The most recent meeting was held on 13th April 2022. Discussion was held on the vision and ideas for transforming Ceres Church into a Pilgrim Church to capitalise on the new Fife Pilgrim Way through Ceres. It was agreed to hold further discussions with the Community Council and Community Trust. A meeting had been held with Ben Tindall Architects to explore options for transforming Ceres Church into, quote “the best Pilgrim Church in Scotland”. The special collection for Ukraine had been really well supported by the village and several loads had been collected. Donations can still be left at Ceres Church. Further meetings to be held and would include discussion on future fundraising events.

13. Youth Team

Anne Hughes Hallett and Myra Todd reported:

CKS Youth Group

As the Session is aware, the club has not been meeting recently. However, Christmas cards and Easter wishes have been delivered to the current members.

Anne Hughes Hallett, Moira Gilruth

Messy Church

Messy Church resumed its monthly face to face sessions in the autumn after having been online during the lockdowns. Unfortunately, a couple of planned events were cancelled due to Covid. One of our most successful events was a dancercise session, themed around the Lord of the Dance. Our recent sessions have had an eco – environmental theme and we plan to sow our wildflower garden on Easter Sunday in the Church grounds. It’s been good to welcome new families to Messy Church.

Our recent Film nights have been very well attended and will resume in the autumn.

Myra Todd

The good news is that a Youth Group and Messy Church Leader is about to be appointed (subject to references). Anja Armstrong has a great deal of experience with young people, and we look forward to working with her.

14. CKS Website

Anne Lumsden reported:

Anne Lumsden and Fiona Gray are the Website Managers

The Church Website was created in January 2021 by MTC Media Ltd, Dundee and they also host it for us.

The basic style of the website is essentially ‘locked in’ and as a result the website managers’ capabilities are controlled/limited/dictated by this website build. A simple example for the Church website is that fonts, font sizes and font colours are pre-set.

We have worked through this year familiarising ourselves with the Administration Section of the website and content management capabilities, trying different ways of presenting the very varied items that are forwarded to us for the website. In some instances, it can be quite a challenge and time-consuming to re-format articles to be website-friendly.

We meet each Tuesday evening on Zoom to discuss how best to format articles, under which headings they should be published, make sure older published articles are up-to-date or not date-specific, and decide when best to remove older articles.

We have recently been in contact with MTC Media Ltd, and are working with them to resolve some known issues that require their input. MTC are currently adding a Statistics section (for Administrators only) which will give us a much clearer picture of the website usage.

The website will continue to evolve through the coming year.

15. Worship

While normal worship had been curtailed by Covid restrictions, services had been resumed when possible at Springfield Community Church, which then lead the way for services in the other Churches once restrictions eased. The Worship Group has met every few months. Messy Church is held at Springfield. Worship content and style is evolving, particularly with regard to Café Church at Springfield. Jane had appreciated meeting with the Group regularly in order to make sure she is in step with how people are feeling and experiencing worship.

16. Any other business

A question was asked about the possibility of a Youth Group at Springfield Community Church. It was confirmed that the newly appointed Youth Group and Messy Church Leader has it in her remit to prepare a feasibility study into the setting up of a Youth Club in Springfield, and to submit a report on that to the Session.

The Rev. Jane Barron concluded by thanking all those who had reported on the many and varied activities of CKS parish over the past year.

The meeting was closed with The Grace