

Parish of Traprain

Minutes of the Annual Stated Meeting held at Prestonkirk Church on Tuesday 16 April at 7.30pm

1. Sederunt

Present: Rev Douglas Hamilton and 44 members of the congregation.

Apologies: Pat Robinson, Gilbert Meikle, Gill Watson, Chloe Clark, Sue Rhodes, Harry Hamilton, Barbara Wyllie, Catherine Torry, John McDougal.

The Moderator constituted the meeting with prayer and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 30 April 2023 had been circulated prior to the meeting and were approved. There were no matters arising.

3. Annual Accounts for Year Ended 31st December 2023

In the absence of the Treasurer the Session Clerk presented the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2023.

The Clerk reported that the accounts had been independently examined. Total income for the year was £176,929 which included funds from two legacies. After transfers there was an overall surplus of £34,255. Total balances as at the 31st of December were £283,434.

It had been encouraging to see an increase in receipts over the year. £51,000 was drawn down for our new audio-visual screens and equipment in all our churches which has improved communication during our services. Listing of the Minister's expenses will be recorded in more detail in next year's accounts as the 2023 accounts include many items purchased on behalf of the parish. Sales of Whitekirk and Whittingehame churches are going ahead but until these sales are finalised, we are still paying for to insure these buildings. There were no questions regarding the accounts.

The Moderator reported that John McDougall is standing down as Treasurer and that Chris Clark will be taking on the role. Thanks were extended to John McDougall, Winifred Govan, Alan Miller and Lorraine Scott who had all assisted with financial matters over the year.

4. Parish Update

The Session Clerk gave a report on the various activities that had taken place across the parish in the last year, highlighting that it was good to have started the year with our Minister, Rev Douglas Hamilton, in place after the vacancy.

The year began with a successful Kirk Session Away Day which had allowed the session to focus on our mission, governance and the role of trustees and elders. The Session had agreed to take part in the Growing Young Project and that had allowed us to engage with more young people in the Parish. Activities had included Messy Church, the Youth Club and the Holiday Club. The weekly Youth Club, held in the Prestonkirk Stables, has become very popular and is aimed at children and young people.

from P7. A very successful Holiday Club with the theme of Deep Sea Divers took place during the School Summer holidays.

A number of pilgrimages had taken place, and the weekly Friendship Group was now meeting at the Lynton Day Centre. The Guild also had a full programme of speakers and good attendance.

A Resources Committee has been formed and now meets regularly to oversee responsibility for property and safety matters. A Parish Administrator has been appointed to assist with these areas. It is hoped that these changes will allow the Session to devote more time to mission priorities.

The Clerk had visited our friends in the Free Presbyterian Church in Holt, Michigan and it was suggested that a group from Traprain might visit in 2025. We had also been keeping in touch with our Twinning Partners in Naxalbari in Northern India.

4. Presentation to Retiring Elders

During the year a number of elders had decided to step down from being ruling elders. On behalf of the congregation the Minister thanked them for all their devoted service to the church. A small thank you gift was presented to all the retiring elders:-

Emily Armatage, May Dickson, Winifred Govan, Joan Houston, Libby Jeffrey, Jimmy McGuinness, Iain McKenzie, Gilbert Meikle, Tom Middlemas, Alan Miller, Pat Robinson, Nancy Stewart, Thomas Torrance & Sandra Walker.

5. Minister's Remarks

The Moderator introduced his remarks with reference to Church Court's Act which was passed by the General Assembly, this had recommended that church's review their own governance arrangements. Following discussion by the Kirk Session it had been agreed to reduce the number of ruling elders from the 33 after the union. As previously reported several elders have now stepped down from the Kirk Session.

The Minister stressed that Jesus Christ is the centre of the church and that we must go out and make new disciples and be prepared to change the way we do this. Our congregation is actively doing this with our new Growing Young initiatives, listening, responding and trying new things with our young people. We are also developing work in new areas with partnerships with the Day Centre and by hosting the weekly community sessions with The Ridge, the East Lothian Food Bank and Dunbar Debt Advice Service.

6. Any other business

Fiona Byrnes thanked all the Elders, Session Clerk and the Minister for all they have done over the last year. There was no other business, and the meeting was closed by saying the grace together.

Signed: _____

Moderator

Signed: _____

Session Clerk