

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF ELGIN HIGH CHURCH
CONGREGATIONAL BOARD
HELD IN THE CHURCH HALL ON TUESDAY 13th NOVEMBER 2007**

The Interim Moderator, Rev. Bruce Lawrie was in the chair and opened the meeting with a prayer. He conveyed apologies on behalf of Rev. Julie Woods and passed on a message from her to reassure Board members that rumours about the nature of her illness have been greatly exaggerated.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted on behalf of Rev. Anne Attenburrow, J Cook, H Davidson, W Jeans, G Rae, M Robertson, M Stuart, N Sutherland, D Urquhart, U Urquhart.

ATTENDANCE

There were 48 members in attendance.

MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting incorrectly referred to the Rev. Anne Attenburrow as Assistant Minister instead of Auxiliary Minister. Following this amendment approval of the minutes was proposed by Mike Crossland and seconded by Anne Rae.

CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk intimated that he had been in touch with the Forestry Commission regarding the provision of three Christmas trees for the church. These will be collected on Friday 14th December, 2007 and volunteers will be sought to help with erecting and decorating them.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer gave a report of the transactions that had taken place since the last meeting. Mention was made by Board members of the varying rates of interest available from banks and building societies. A query was raised as to whether the best package on offer was being taken advantage of in relation to the telephone costs for the manse. The Treasurer mentioned two legacies received totalling £660 which will go into the General Fund. A vote of thanks to David Trotter was proposed by Frank Harris and fully endorsed by the Board regarding the impressive tax recovery total of £13,063 achieved this year to date. Gordon Farquhar intimated that he will be raising the matter of payment of organ maintenance costs, paid to Allen Organs, when this is due for renewal next year.

The Treasurer referred to a decrease of 7.4% to be paid to the Ministries and Mission fund for 2008 (reduced from £48,816 to £45,194). This is due to a lower income base over the past three years as a result of reduced congregation numbers. Moray Presbytery has asked permission to apply for a further reduction of 3% (£1,356) and the Interim Moderator intimated that this has been approved.

PROPERTY REPORT

Mr Duncan intimated that external painter work, required at both the church and the manse, had not yet started this year partly due to pressures being placed on our contractor as a result of very wet weather conditions. Board members agreed to allow the Property Committee to consider what arrangements are best for the future.

Mr Duncan referred to correspondence received indicating that responsibility for health & safety, fire precautions and other matters, presently within the Property Committee's remit has been transferred to the Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Andrew Allardyce. This change, which is felt to be entirely sensible, was noted by Board members. It was confirmed that the Property Committee will remain responsible for any remedial work required as a result of failings identified during risk assessments. It was also agreed that Andrew Allardyce will be invited to attend Property Committee meetings if this is felt appropriate.

With regard to the future of our church buildings Mr Duncan presented a report which included reference to correspondence with the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland. Board members were asked to consider three options on a possible way forward. In view of our minister's absence due to illness the Board decided that the report should simply be noted and further consideration of the matter resumed after she has returned to full health and strength (option 3). In the meantime, however, the property Committee will continue to consider suggestions for changes already received and any new ones received in the future.

The minister has asked that the repairs required to the office window be carried out as a priority. It was acknowledged by Mr Duncan that there have been unacceptable delays and this matter will be addressed as soon as possible.

SOCIAL REPORT

Mrs Rae reported on the successful slide show which was held on 27th October 2007. Concern was expressed, however, about the low level of response received to date in respect of the concert evening due to be held on 24th November 2007. Unless

numbers increase significantly there may be no alternative but to cancel the event. The next planned social event is a quiz night on 9th February 2008.

HALL REPORT

Mrs Garrow mentioned a Songs of Praise event due to take place in the church on Sunday 18th November 2007 as part of Church of Scotland Guild Week. A number of bookings and enquiries for the use of the hall during the coming weeks and months were also outlined. A copy of the Conditions of Let referred to at the last Board meeting was made available for information.

FUND-RAISING REPORT

The Clerk read a report provided by Una Urquhart who is on holiday. Four fund-raising events have been held this year with a total of £1,538.28 raised to date. Thanks were conveyed to all those who have helped in a variety of ways at the events held. Ideas are being looked at for next year’s programme but increased income cannot be achieved without the existing fund-raising committee of two people being increased to around eight members. It is felt unreasonable that the minister, with her already heavy workload, should be expected to spend time on fund-raising activities. The Board was asked to consider where the fund-raising committee goes to from here. Libby Mitchell asked why the church appears to have two committees involved in fund-raising. Anne Rae explained that Social Committee events are held purely for fellowship reasons. Any income accrued is however passed onto, for example, the minibus fund. George Hay voiced the opinion that a fund-raising committee wouldn’t be required if increased offerings were received from the congregation. The Interim Moderator made reference to pilot stewardship schemes which had been undertaken in Falkirk and Ardrrossan. Further pilots are due next year and Moray Presbytery members will consider, at their next meeting, whether to apply to be considered as a pilot area. Anyone wishing to become a member of the fund-raising committee should contact Una Urquhart.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

- a) Future of the church minibus – it was intimated that Alex Masson has taken over as the church minibus co-ordinator from Hamish Davidson. There are five drivers at present for the Sunday run and volunteers are required to increase this number.
- b) Disbursement of Sunday school funds – a request has been received from the Sunday school to allow them to donate £250 of their funds to the Al Sharook School for the Blind in Jerusalem. This was approved by Board members. The Treasurer will consider the most cost effective way of making this donation. Mention was made that the church craft group may also be making a donation to this school.
- c) Tea-towels – it was reported that the kitchen tea-towels had reduced in number from around twenty to two. Those who had taken them home for washing etc are asked to return them as soon as possible.
- d) Church security – reference was made to recent, potentially threatening, incidents where individuals came to the church buildings asking for money. In view of this the need for increased security was discussed. Possible options suggested included locks, security chains or hasps on inner doors and external security lighting. It was agreed that this matter will be considered by the Property Committee.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

After announcing that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 12th February, 2008 at 7.30pm the Interim Moderator closed the meeting with the Gloria.

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Chairman

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Clerk to the Board

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Date