

BRIGHTONS PARISH CHURCH - MINUTE OF DEACONS' COURT – 10.9.24

On which date the Court met and was constituted with a reading from Ecclesiastes 3, and prayer.

PRESENT: - Rev. S. Burton, Chair; and Elders I. Baillie, J. Dick, J. Falconer, A. Gillespie, J. Glass, C. McEwan, A. McDonald, H. McManus, G. Mann, J. Meek, J. Norton, P. Paterson, W. Rankine, M. Scott, W. Tomlinson, K. Wansbrough.

Deacons G. Bell, M. Dick, K. Fulton, M. Stirling. Attending - S. Glass.

APOLOGIES: were tendered for J. Callahan, R. Callahan, T. Nimmo, J. Wallace, H. O'Neill, R. Wilson E. Hope, G. Scott.

MINUTES/MATTERS ARISING: the minutes of 25.6.24 were approved as issued. As part of matters arising, it was noted that policy documents in the areas of Building Security and Health and Safety have been updated and posted on the Church website with paper copies made available; for Harassment, amendments have been made and it should be on the website soon with paper copies; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is under review to include feedback from the Court; Motor Vehicle policy is also under review, especially with regard to the position of volunteers, following Court feedback. The Chair thanked J. Norton, K. Wansbrough, J. Falconer and any others involved for their help in preparing/circulating/reviewing these documents.

FINANCE: a financial update paper had been circulated to the Court. Income to 31.8.24 was around £12K behind expenditure. Income is largely in line with the expected budget. Expenditure was largely up in the area of energy use and W. Rankine agreed to help analyse energy use to address this increased cost. 2023 accounts are with Presbytery for attestation and will be submitted to OSCR thereafter - the deadline is 30.9.24. 2022 & 2023 gift-aid claims are still being processed. The Court approved that I. Baillie, who had kindly offered, would help process gift-aid for 2022 and 2023. A volunteer will be needed to help take this gift-aid submission process forward long-term. P. Paterson has now been set up to view our online banking but work is still needed in the area of authorising payments by her. A meeting has been organised on 24.9.24, involving finance team members to consider action needed prior to the forthcoming union. The possible use of a handheld contactless payment device is still being progressed. The Court, following explanation and detailed discussion, agreed, 15 in favour/2 against/3 abstentions, to a "Giving Sunday" towards the end of September to help fund-raising by Wallacestone Primary School to upgrade the smart screen systems in classrooms by replacing the failed screen projectors. With regard to the Pastoral Assistant roles and, bearing in mind that I. Baillie had requested a reduction in hours from 15 to 10 per week, the Court agreed to accept the request from I. Baillie to reduce his weekly hours and fold the 5 hours released into the new MDS Pastoral Assistant role. Given the difference in costs between rate for I. Baillie and the MDS rate, which is higher, the 5 hours will translate into an extra 3 hours per week for the MDS role. The Chair thanked Sharon, Pat and the finance committee for their work in the area of finance.

SAFEGUARDING: a detailed update note had been circulated by E. Hope. The new panel members, J. Bell, G. Scott and W. Rankine, hope to overtake their advance training during the period October/November with 17.9.24 set for the next panel meeting. With regard to bringing our Congregational Safeguarding roll up to date as much as is practically possible has been done to update the roll. Of the 65 identified, SG22 to forms have been sent to 49. Of the 16 left, 3 are deceased and 13 are of unknown location. It remains the individual legal responsibility of those involved to inform the Church of Scotland that they are no longer performing regulated work in the Church. Steps will be taken to ensure that all on the Congregational Safeguarding roll keep their training up to date. The Boys Brigade now carry out their own PVG applications but a signature is still required, on behalf of the Church, to indicate support for the appointment of any new person. The Court agreed that the Safeguarding Coordinator, E. Hope, could help undertake this signature task on behalf of the Church. Louise Munroe and Fraser Tait have both received PVG clearance to work with children since the last Court meeting.

The Chair thanked E. Hope and the members of the Safeguarding team for their help.

PRESBYTERY: it was noted that higher costs levels had been agreed before Property works need to be cleared by Presbytery. The Chair thanked J. Glass for his support as Presbytery Elder.

PROPERTY & SAFETY: A full report covering Property and Health & Safety had been circulated. Works undertaken recently included - in the Church/Halls - replacement of a thermostat/receiver in Church; submersible pump in the basement. Regarding the Manse, a full copy of the annual inspection report had been circulated including works to be undertaken in 2025. The Court approved replacement of necessary dry verge sections and cleaning of guttering for the Manse at an estimated cost, from Cleland Roofing, of £505 + VAT. Forthcoming work includes preparing for the Union; sourcing quotes to clear/install a suitable space in Church for the sound/vision team. The Chair thanked Gordon and his team for their recent work.

HEALTH & HYGIENE: a previous update report to the Court noted that the Church of Scotland recommends that Congregations provide structured training for at least 1 holder of an elementary Food Hygiene Certificate to be present when food, beyond tea/biscuits, is being prepared. Forth Valley College - Stirling Campus - provide the necessary training and our interest has already been registered with them. Options are either a 1 day course or an online option, both £85 per person. The Court approved £255 to provide training for 2 people from the Girls Brigade and 1 from FLAIM.

The Chair thanked Graham for his help in this area.

COMMUNICATIONS/LETS: a full note had been circulated covering the most recent meeting and K. Fulton was thanked for her help in preparing the meeting notes. It was noted that, although meetings are normally more efficient via Zoom, the most recent meeting was face to face allowing for fuller fellowship/interaction. It is planned to have a face to face meeting at least once per year. Mike Ferguson, who has a background in digital advertising and other media, has joined the Communication Team. The use of the "X" platform has been discontinued as it is felt to be unsuitable. The Team have started considering changes necessary for the forthcoming Union including aspects such as names for buildings, Logos, a Welcome Pack, an "Upper Braes" Connect magazine. The Chair thanked J. Falconer and the Group again for their support in this area.

A.O.C.B.: - a) Union update - the Chair noted that this was likely to be the last meeting of the Court. As part of the Union agreement the Court is no longer required with areas covered by the Court being undertaken by the new Kirk Session. It was noted that Health & Hygiene will then be subsumed within the area of Property. The new Kirk Session of the Upper Braes Church plans to meet on 2.11.24 a.m. Work is already underway in the many areas which will be subject to change/review/alteration following the forthcoming Union.

This being all the business the Chair closed the meeting with the joint blessing.

Chairman.

Secretary.

BPC/12.9.24