

**MAXWELL MEARNS CASTLE PARISH CHURCH
STATED ANNUAL MEETING 26th March 2023**

The Stated Annual Meeting of the Congregation was held in the Sanctuary on Sunday 26th March 2023. It was chaired by Rev Dr Scott Kirkland who opened the meeting with a prayer.

1. OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and welcomed them to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Graeme and Kaye Lipsett, Andrew Little

3. MINUTES OF MEETING 20th March 2022

Scott noted that the draft minutes had been made available for correction shortly after the 2022 meeting. Following two minor changes highlighted last year, the minutes were approved and accepted as a true record: Proposer – Jack Geddes; Seconder – Robert Campbell.

4. FINANCE REPORT FOR 2022 presented by Ken Taggart (Treasurer)

The Financial Statements for 2022 have been considered by the Finance Committee, approved by the Congregational Board, reviewed by an Independent Examiner, sent to Church of Scotland and are now ready to be submitted to the Scottish Charity Regulator.

Extending to some 24 pages in length, the statements contain much detail about the financial position of the Church during and at the end of the year. The numbers capture the various activities that the Church undertakes under the guidance of the Kirk Session and the Congregational Board. Ken encouraged the Congregation to read the Trustees Report (starting at page 1 of the statements) which provides a sense of the very busy life of our Church at Maxwell.

For 2022, the adverse consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Church finances had largely come to an end and groups had restarted their activities as before. This can generally be seen in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 11 through increases in income in the Unrestricted Funds from hire of the Church halls and from the Playgroup, offset by the absence of the Government job retention grants that ended in 2021. Income in the Restricted Funds fell as the amount in the previous year had been particularly high due to the many donations received from the Congregation in response to the National Giving Day initiative.

Expenditure in the Unrestricted Funds remained generally at the same amount with increases in Property costs offset by a reduction in Mission and Outreach costs. This reflects the transfer of our Youth Worker costs out of the General Fund as they are now met by the specific Youth & Family Restricted Fund created with the National Giving Day donations. The main other expenditure increase in the Restricted Funds was on property costs arising from the ongoing refurbishment of the Basement. This project is aimed at making that area of the Church halls complex into a more welcoming and comfortable space for youth outreach activities and is funded by a grant that was received in 2021.

As seen in the movement figures at the foot of page 11, the Unrestricted Funds increased by £22,000 and the restricted funds decreased by £20,000, therefore a combined net increase in total funds of £2,000.

An explanation of the purpose and activities within the categories of Restricted and Unrestricted Funds is given at page 19 and the more detailed monetary amounts of income, expenditure and transfers in each are given at pages 23 and 24.

Turning to the financial position at the end of 2022, this can be seen in the Balance Sheet at page 12. This shows the net increase in funds of £2,000 mentioned before, from £288,000 to £290,000. Two key features of the Balance Sheet are firstly the investment in the Sanctuary heating system of £13,000, included in Fixed Assets, and secondly cash balances increased by £14,000 to £146,000 at the end of 2022.

Amongst all the detailed disclosure notes to the statements, Ken drew attention to one in particular at page 21. Note 15 is a very helpful summary of the efforts of the team who manage the Missionary Fund that is one of the Restricted Funds. This note shows distributions totalling £8,000 to 19 charities, organisations or individuals who are carrying out valuable work and outreach in the advancement of Christ's kingdom, in Scotland and overseas countries including Peru, South Africa, Kosovo, India, the Philippines, Japan and with displaced Ukrainian orphans. The projects in Scotland have included supporting homeless, excluded and vulnerable in Glasgow, people facing financial hardship in East Renfrewshire, a Scripture Union building project as well as helping and encouraging the Christian Unions at St Andrews, Dundee and Edinburgh universities, where young people from our own Congregation are studying. All these projects have been brought to the Missionary team in different ways. They would be glad to hear from the Congregation of any known worthwhile projects that meet the criteria for donations from the fund. The fund income is entirely from the generosity of members of our own Congregation. We should offer our encouragement and prayers for the team and where possible, our financial contributions too. While the team generally keep a modest and low profile, they will welcome the opportunity to present, discuss and seek support for their valuable work in due course.

Finally, Ken thanked all those in the Congregation who continue to help with the administration of the Church finances during the year. All are safe hands in supporting the principles and processes to safeguard, invest and spend wisely and prayerfully the financial resources of the Church. In particular, Ken thanked Sue Amery-Behr for looking after the hall letting amongst many other accounting matters, Christine, Fiona and Scott for

supporting on the playgroup finances, Elizabeth for great record keeping on expenses running the Castle Coffee Club, Sandy for keeping a watch on the utility readings, as well as those guiding me on the Finance Committee being Scott, Calum, Murray and Ian. Thanks also to the door teams for keeping watch over the Sunday offerings, passing the records to me and making sure the cash gets safely to the bank. That sounds like a lot of people, but more help would definitely be welcome. In advance of some possible changes in your finance team in 2023, if anyone in the Congregation is interested in helping out with any matter of financial housekeeping, Ken and the Finance Committee would be delighted to hear from you and you will be made very welcome.

Scott asked for questions on the financial statements for 2022 but none were received.

5. BUDGET FOR 2023 presented by Ken Taggart (Treasurer)

Ken stated that the budget for 2023 is shown on a slide on the screen. The Congregational Board has considered and approved the budget for the General Fund for 2023 with a modest surplus of £5,000. This compares to the actual General Fund surplus of £34,000 in 2022. The slide was prepared for the Board approval in January at which time the 2022 surplus was estimated at £32,000, so slightly less than the final statements.

The key features are:

- allowance for possible reduction in income of £29,000, being mainly in recognition of the cost of living pressures on the Congregation affecting offerings and donations, as well as the actual loss of a significant hall hire; and
- expenditure across the mix of categories is expected to be largely unchanged for 2023. One notable feature will be the expiry of the fixed cost electricity contract at the end of September. As before, we expect to participate in the wider scheme arrangement to be negotiated by Church of Scotland. An allowance for an increase in rates is included in the budget and precise details will emerge in the coming months to allow planning for costs into 2024.

No questions were raised and Scott thanked Ken for the huge amount of work done during the year and for the preparation of the budget and financial statements.

6. RETIRALS & ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Scott noted that the Congregational Board comprises elders and directly elected members, who usually complete a term of three years. The three-year term has ended for two members and Scott noted with sadness that Brian Waugh has resigned from the Board. However, the two retiring members have agreed to continue for a further term. A new member has also agreed to join the Board and Scott thanked Anna Clarke. Proposers and seconders were obtained for the continuing members and the new member.

The following, therefore, is a record of the revision of Board members:

NAME	NEW/CONTINUE	PROPOSER	SECONDER
Brian Waugh	Resigned	N/A	N/A
Chris Bell	Continuing	Calum McPhail	Murray McNicol
Lorna Hamilton	Continuing	John McNicol	Ian Forgie
Anna Clarke	New	Debbie McDougall	Sandy McDougall

7. PROPERTY REPORT (including Manse) presented by Calum McPhail

Following two years of upheaval, 2022 saw a return to more normal usage of our premises across the whole year although we did face a number of issues which either originated from or were exacerbated by the disruption to our normal premises occupation during the various lockdown periods.

The year started with Brian Waugh as our Property Convener before he stepped back from the role in the middle of the year. We have so far been unable to appoint a replacement for that role so we have continued to work with a team approach and Calum offered very grateful thanks to Sue Amery-Behr, the three Sandys – Halliday, Leonard and McDougall and to Scott as well.

Following several years (pre-lockdown) where we undertook fairly major maintenance and upgrade works (which obviously included the Sanctuary refurbishment, replacement of doors and windows throughout the Halls complex and preparing the top floor flat for rental purposes) 2022 was in some respects a quieter year in terms of major projects. Nonetheless with premises of the design and age that we have, there was inevitably a fairly constant stream of things which needed to be addressed.

The major area of expenditure was in relation to the installation of new air conditioning heaters in the Sanctuary at a cost of £13,000 equating to just under 70% of the annual fabric and maintenance spend for 2022.

The remaining areas of expenditure came from across the premises including fire extinguisher inspection and replacement at £711.66, various electrical maintenance works, miscellaneous wear and tear repairs through to replacing filters in the kitchen water heaters with no remaining single item attracting major cost.

The number of minor, but time-consuming things which occur on a weekly basis is considerable and largely unseen but the larger and perhaps more noticeable items included:

- Fixing the heating in the Halls building and in particular for the Maxwell Hall and the mid-landing rooms. Calum expressed his thanks to Scott and the three Sandys for many hours of investigation from basement to roof space. Particular thanks to Sandy McDougall were noted for his tenacity which meant that we

were eventually able to recharge the radiator system and get the heating working again without invoiced cost. Cut-out panels have also been installed in the Hall radiator covers to allow greater heat flow although these have suffered some damage and will need repaired;

- For many years, we have had issues with water and dampness ingress problems in the Church vestibule and at the balcony level in the upper corridor and toilet. Two primary causes were identified in 2022 and thanks again to Sandy McDougall, Scott and Cyprian Nestor (our flat tenant) for clearing leaf blockages from the top-level roof valley gutters which had been causing back up and overflow problems. The other areas causing problems are the two walkway corridors between the Church and the castle itself. We've started work to put a protective covering over the lower section but are being hampered by a lack of dry weather at present. It is hoped this work will stop the dampness coming in and we can then refurbish the upper level toilet and make the areas generally presentable again;
- There is probably further work to be done at the upper roof level to prevent accumulation of leaves and also to redirect drainage of the water from the main Church roof to take pressure off the gutters and downpipes in that area;
- Rewiring works were required on the top level of the Halls building following a supply failure to lighting and the fire alarm system. Huge thanks go to Sandy Leonard for coming out on a Sunday evening to investigate and fix that and for all the other electrical work which he does across the premises for us;
- The Basement refurbishment has proceeded more slowly than we would have liked mainly due to problems identifying contractors who will work on the stainless-steel pipes in that area. We think we now have a solution and with the first window being installed last week we are hopeful to have the Basement open again in the very near future.

Just another few things to mention:

- Heating the Sanctuary especially over the winter months is always a challenge not least due to our exposed position, leaky cladding and less than conducive ceiling height but thanks go to Charles Amery-Behr for his constant attention to the heating programmes and watching the electricity usage at the same time;
- Also, thanks to Finance/Board predecessors who had the foresight to enter into long-term fixed price arrangements with our energy suppliers so that we have not been subjected to the impact of huge price increases over the last year.

Scott asked for any questions on the property report and responses were given as follows:

- With regard to a rough timeframe for the renovation of the Basement, making it available again for youth work, Calum noted that it should hopefully be finished within the next few weeks to a month. The roller shutters are still to be fitted to the windows but are currently being built. There is also some internal work to complete. Scott noted that the delays have resulted from difficulties getting contractors and much of the work being bespoke so wanted to thank Calum and Sue Amery-Behr for trying to keep it moving.
- Regarding the cleaning of the stained-glass windows, Calum agreed that this can be investigated by the Board.
- As to whether alternative energy sources such as solar and a heat pump been considered, Calum replied that Sue Amery-Behr has been looking into this, particularly given the age of the current boilers. At least one contractor has visited to do a feasibility study. However, Calum noted that there is uncertainty regarding the future of the properties under the Presbytery Plan. Scott added that the Board had been insightful in separating the heating on different levels so that there is less strain on the main boilers.
- Regarding the situation and legal position with the Castle, David Merriman stated that the Castle is now locked with no entry for anyone, other than some restricted access to the ground floor. A few years ago, it was cleaned internally by a pest control contractor and barriers added to the windows to prevent access by birds. We are responsible for trying to keep the Castle wind and watertight on behalf of the General Trustees. We are reluctant to spend Congregational money on the Castle and the ultimate responsibility lies with the General Trustees.
- In response to a question regarding any plans to improve the state of the car park, Scott replied that there are no plans at the moment but this can be discussed by the Board, bearing in mind the outstanding outcomes on property from the Presbytery Plan.

Scott thanked Calum for all his work on property on top of his role as Board Chairman.

8. GROUNDS REPORT presented by Bruce Adkins (Grounds Convener)

The Church ground maintenance is carried out every year by a lawn service company called Warnock Ground Maintenance and they are contracted on a yearly basis to cut the grass, trim the path edges on a fortnightly basis from April to October.

Twice over the summer period they will spray weed killer and additionally will trim the hedges on each side of the road leading to the Church. We usually require a second cut over the summer to the fast growth of the hedges. Warnock Ground Maintenance will also respond to any additional or urgent work requests promptly.

In addition this year, Warnock Ground Maintenance have been requested to relay the bark in the toddlers play area and to clean up in and around the area.

Furthermore, the Board have requested a tree surgeon visit the Church site to inspect the trees. The surgeon will identify all the trees, estimate age and the health of each tree and submit a comprehensive report. We last carried out a surveillance three years ago.

No questions were received in respect of the grounds report.

Scott provided a report on the maintenance of the Broomburn steps on behalf of Stewart Martin:

Many thanks once again to the dedicated team of volunteers who keep the steps leading from Broomburn Drive up to the Church swept and kept neat and tidy for worship each Sunday. We are delighted to report an increase in our numbers from last year but the numbers remain small and still appeal to the Congregation for new volunteers to reduce the burden on the current team.

Scott thanked the team for their work on the steps and noted that the work takes place once a week so there is plenty of opportunity to become part of the team.

9. MEARNS CASTLE PROJECT

David Merriman provided the update on the castle above in response to the question received.

10. MINISTER'S REPORT presented by Rev Dr Scott Kirkland

Scott noted that the Annual Report contained within the financial statements gives a lengthy review of congregational life last year written by him. Scott highlighted the aim of Maxwell Mearns Castle Church as a Congregation of Christ's people is to "glorify God and enjoy him forever". Our desire is to "make" disciples of Jesus Christ and to be mature disciples of Jesus. We share in the incredible privilege of worshipping our Triune God together each week with our lips in praise and with our lives daily. We delight to see older and younger from our community come into a saving faith in Jesus Christ and finding the blessing of walking by His light and love. Scott noted this has been working out post covid with a desire to see covid restrictions end and Church life building again. Some encouragements in this include the running of an Alpha Group and Hope Explored course in 2022, followed by a showing of the film "A Case for Christ". In addition, Christy Ringrose/Campbell held a concert and we held Easter in the Light and a Christmas Musical Night. The Playgroup Fun Day was very well attended. We have continued the partnership with East Renfrewshire Good Causes which involves the distribution of goods from the Basement by some in the Congregation, and through this we try to build relationships with those receiving the donations. We were able to resume the Blythswood Boxes ministry from the Basement. We continued to support various missions from the Missionary Fund and special offerings. A Messy Church was also held at Christmas.

The report does not mention the rental of the Church flat for approximately £550 per month to very good tenants who have been looking out for the premises and their children are also involved in some of our children/youth groups.

However, energy and enthusiasm has been somewhat drained by the Presbytery Plan which is impacting across the whole of the Church of Scotland. For the last year, there has been a suspension of the appointment of any ministers and other positions across the country. This has reduced the number of positions which can currently be filled, with special permission, to six. Although it's called a mission plan, the aim is to reduce ministry posts and positions and overall financial costs.

Five elders including Scott attend the local meetings and are trying to engage sensitively with the discussions on the Presbytery Plan. We have secured that Maxwell will not be united with another congregation but discussions regarding the division of ministry posts across the cluster are ongoing. Also, as noted already, nothing has been resolved on the buildings. Much prayer is required for these discussions and the elders grappling with the local impact of a national position being taken by the Church of Scotland.

No questions or comments were received.

11. VOTE OF THANKS

Concentrating on more specific Board and related activities, on behalf of the Congregation, Scott thanked:

- All Board members for their participation at Board and for regular door duties;
- New member – Anna Clarke;
- Those agreeing to continue for a further 3 years – Lorna Hamilton and Chris Bell;
- Brian Waugh who resigned last month, most especially for his time as property convener across a very busy period property-wise;
- Ken Taggart for his work as Treasurer – managing the finances of a modern Church with so many activities and involvements is no easy or light task and we owe a big thank you to Ken and indeed to Elaine for putting up with the very many hours Ken has to commit to this;
- Ann Best for organising the Freewill offering envelopes which are continuing to reduced in number. Scott suggested that anyone wishing to change to another means of offering should alert Ken or Calum;
- Lorna Hamilton for her continued dedication and service as Secretary to the Board and for her wider more general service;
- Sandy MacDougall, Sandy Halliday, Sandy Leonard and Calum McPhail for assisting with various property related matters throughout the year;
- Bruce Adkins for his continued work as Grounds Convener;
- Stewart Martin and his volunteers for keeping the Broomburn steps clear and tidy;
- Everyone involved with our Audio-Visual team whether that be in technical set-up and solutions or for operating the desks and technology week by week. Our set-up really is quite comprehensive and very effective for a Congregation of our size and we should not take for granted the effort and commitment it takes to maintain and operate it

- The band and singers for leading us each week;
- Sue Anderson, Stewart Martin and Elaine Taggart for their essential work as our Safeguarding Team;
- Sue Amery-Behr – our Administrator, Halls Convener, sometimes contract manager, and everything else she does;
- Graeme Lipsett our Eco-Coordinator;
- Margo McNicol, Sheila McLellan and Tom Brown for their work with the Maxwell Mearns Christian Support Fund;
- Wanda Bell and Sue Anderson for looking after our Missionary Fund and occasional offerings;
- Leadership teams looking after our young people of all ages.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who takes part in all our activities, many vital and often unnoticed, in a period where there may be uncertainty, we continue to focus on doing the Lord's work and we have to thank Him for the gifts and enthusiasm He has given us to do that.

Scott encouraged anyone who would like to get involved in any way in our Church life to speak to Scott or Calum.

12. CLOSING BENEDICTION

The meeting was closed with the Benediction.

Chairman.....

Clerk.....