

Perth North Church Kirk Session
Approved Minute of the Meeting held on Tuesday 19 September 2023
at 1900 hrs in Perth North Church Sanctuary

1. Opening – Worship and Constitution

The Moderator [REDACTED], offered a general welcome to all and a particular welcome to [REDACTED], our OLM Probationer, who was attending his first Kirk Session meeting with us. The Moderator had selected a reading somewhat out of context as it was from Acts Chapter 2 – The Day of Pentecost. He had been struck lately by the use of language and was interested in the contrast between native speaking and the use of common language. Should we seek to impose our culture on others or allow them to be dynamic? He then constituted the meeting in prayer.

2. Attendance and Apologies (as per Attendance Register)

Elders	23
Apologies	8
Visitors	3
Total Attendance	26

3. Agree Agenda and Declarations of Interest

The Moderator indicated that the following items would be added to Agenda Item 18 under AOCB:

18.2 Possible date for our next Communion Service

18.3 Request from AA to hold a meeting on our premises on a Sunday morning.

There were no Declarations of Interest expressed.

4. Minute of previous meeting - Tuesday 30 May 2023 - P01

4.1 Accuracy

The draft Minute was duly approved as presented.

4.2 Matters Arising, not covered by Agenda Items

4.2.1 Network meeting of elders / representatives held on 23 August 2023 – feedback

PNC had been represented by the Moderator, [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. It had been left with the respective Kirk Sessions of Bankfoot (Auchtergaven and Moneydie) and Luncarty to discuss what a Covenant might look like to each of them after which there was an intent to hold another meeting of the Network Churches to review matters.

4.2.2 Stagecoach buses – update

██████████ reported upon receipt, on 6 July 2023, of a response from ██████████, Area Manager of Stagecoach, to his e-mailed letter of 6 April 2023. ██████████ had already forwarded this to those elders with a particular interest. ██████████ had set out in context the restraints/pressures under which the Stagecoach buses were operating with a particular focus on the minimum laying over time (five minutes) in Mill Street. ██████████ did, however, take some encouragement, on two counts, from ██████████'s response:

- (a) there was an acknowledgement of the ongoing issues we have experienced in gaining access onto Mill Street from the church grounds; and
- (b) there was an offer to meet with us to discuss further.

We were minded to take ██████████ up on his offer. ██████████ confirmed that, subject to the Kirk Session's approval, arrangements would be made for a small delegation from the Kirk Session to meet with ██████████ and report back at a future date. The Kirk Session duly approved.

5. Pastoral Care – update

The Moderator confirmed that at a meeting on 18 July 2023, various housing areas/complexes in Perth had been identified where one or two PNC members were living and where some of whom were already being visited. A social get-together for visitors, etc., is planned for 3 November 2023 at 1400 hrs. He acknowledged that a bigger challenge lay ahead when we come to look at visiting arrangements for folk in their own homes as, amongst other things, PVG compliance remains an issue.

6. Architect's plans for re-development of church / halls (re-visit) - P02

██████████ along with ██████████ were spokesmen in the absence of ██████████. It was considered that perhaps the biggest issue facing us was the escalating costs of the project. The benefits gained by any development would have to be balanced against the loss of income from the funds currently invested by the Church of Scotland at 121. Whilst one or two elders indicated a preference for either Option 2 or 3 on P02 there was no collective view expressed or thereby recorded. The Moderator had however taken great encouragement from the mission and outreach with which the City Centre group, in particular, were engaged and, with that in mind, as part of the decision making process, it was accepted that we would really need to be conducting a comprehensive review of our current/future needs. That notwithstanding, the Moderator speculated that, in the present climate, given that we are already lagging behind both St Matthew's Church and St John's Kirk in terms of seeking finances for projects, there is a distinct possibility that the General Trustees would not approve of our project going ahead.

On a non-related topic, ██████████ had asked it to be noted that new 2-year gas and electricity contracts had been negotiated by the General Trustees. These would come into effect on 1 October 2023 (electricity) and 24 April 2024 (gas). So far as PNC is concerned this would result in our electricity bill doubling and our gas bill trebling (██████████ put the change in the electricity contract into context). The Finance group had recommended acceptance. The Kirk Session approved.

7. Presbytery

7.1 Report - P03

In speaking to his report, [REDACTED] focussed on two examples of Pioneering Ministry which had been mentioned by the [REDACTED] during the afternoon Presentation:

- (a) work going on in Dunblane to minister to the 40's age group; and
- (b) an embryonic church group which had started from someone's garage at home.

The Moderator confirmed that the new Presbytery was still wrestling with how to conduct its business and what the best format for future meetings should be.

The Moderator encouraged us to pray for the Presbytery Clerk, [REDACTED], as he tries to cope with the huge and often thankless task of organising and running the new Presbytery.

8. Roll Keeper and Data Protection

8.1 Report - P04

[REDACTED], Roll Keeper, spoke to his report. He expressed gratitude to all volunteers who had recently conducted visits as a result of which, there were now only 20 households for whom no reply had been forthcoming. He had been minded to make the following changes to previous practice : (a) to give members an option to opt out of receiving the Prayer Diary; and (b) two Pastoral Visitors for supported accommodation.

As a result of issues which had arisen in his journey to become an Interim Moderator, [REDACTED] had now decided to enrol on a non-church based Initiative. He informed Session that, consequently, he intended to demit office both as Roll Keeper and Data Protection Officer with effect from 19 January 2024 (final date). In expressing gratitude to [REDACTED] for all he had done in this role, the Moderator suggested that he would be a hard act to follow. Encouragingly, [REDACTED] offered to assist with the distribution of future editions of *North News* given that she had previously been involved in that operation.

9. Break-Out Groups (show of DVDs)

In place of our Break-Out Groups two DVDs were shown publicising the great work which is ongoing both at Bertha Park and InTogether. These were the same DVDs which should have been shown during (rather than at the end of) the last Presbytery meeting but for a glitch with the technology [REDACTED] mentioned that the InTogether DVD had also been shown at last night's Guild Together meeting – this had been the first time that some members had heard about this Initiative and, such was the enthusiasm, there had been a tentative suggestion that this could be taken up as one of the Guild's future Projects.

At this point it seemed appropriate to bring forward Agenda Item 15 and so [REDACTED] gave a verbal report based on a written report (post-meeting report, S01), which it had not been possible to circulate ahead of tonight's meeting (it is noted, in passing, that this deals, or is intended to deal, *inter alia* with the prospects for securing additional staff). Dot specifically mentioned the various funding applications to which she refers in her Report. No objections in respect thereof were raised.

The Moderator indicated that [REDACTED] wanted to come to our next Kirk Session meeting to provide a further up-date in person. The Kirk Session readily agreed.

10. Proposed forthcoming Worship services

10.1 Memorial Service for bereaved

Given the favourable response to the Memorial Service which the Moderator held in December 2022, he was keen to repeat the exercise this year. The Kirk Session agreed to a similar service being held on Wednesday 6 December 2023 (probably at 1900 hrs).

10.2 Hosting of PACT Service in December 2023

This is to be held in PNC on Friday 22 December 2023 (noting that we are not to be involved in organising the service merely to be the host venue). The Moderator of the Church of Scotland is due to be speaking at this service.

10.3 Range of Christmas Services at PNC

The Moderator has been in touch with his counterparts in Letham St Mark's, Riverside and Luncarty Churches. It appears that each is organising their own services over the Christmas period. In the absence of any communal worship in the Network, it was agreed that we would go ahead and hold an "All age" service at 1030 hrs on Christmas Eve followed by a Watchnight service later in the evening. There would also be a service here on Christmas morning.

At this point, the Moderator brought forward (the new) Agenda Item 18.2. The Kirk Session agreed to Communion being celebrated here on Sunday 3 December 2023 to correspond with the first Sunday in Advent.

A query was raised as to whether we were intending to hold a Harvest Thanksgiving Service this year. After discussion it was agreed that on Sunday 8 October 2023 (when [REDACTED] is to be preaching) an opportunity would be given for members to make a financial donation specifically towards Blythswood. The intention is to give advance notice of this (co-incidentally, covered shoeboxes would be available from this date from the church vestibule and also from the church office Monday-Friday 1000-1200 hrs).

11. Reports from Session Groups

11.1 Discipleship - no report

11.2 Fellowship

[REDACTED] reported on a highly successful, and very well attended, Fish & Chip tea on 26 August 2023. The "4Cs" continued to go well.

[REDACTED] publicised the Silent Auction which is to be held in our Main Hall on Saturday 14 October 2023 between 1000-1200 hrs. She explained what Lots would be acceptable. All funds raised are to go to Blythswood, specifically to support the cost of items to be included in the shoeboxes.

11.3 City Centre /

11.3 City Centre - P05

No questions were raised in [REDACTED] absence. The Kirk Session agreed to the proposal in her report to hold Open Church on Saturday 23 December 2023 between 1000-1600 hrs.

11.4 Parish - P06

[REDACTED] spoke to his part of the report. He confirmed that funds were currently available to meet the proposed extension to [REDACTED] contract to 31 December 2024. The Kirk Session duly agreed this extension. It was noted that the Parish Group were also applying for funds from The Gannochy Trust. In terms of Parish Nursing, a meeting with a Nursing Representative has now been arranged for the afternoon of Thursday 28 September 2023. In answer to a question from [REDACTED], he indicated that, at present, no funds would be available to employ an Assistant to [REDACTED]. If funds were to become available it may be possible to look to employ a Sessional Worker (bearing in mind the need to properly fund the Parish Nursing Initiative). In [REDACTED]'s unavoidable absence from tonight's meeting, [REDACTED] also spoke to [REDACTED] report.

11.5 Facilities - P07

[REDACTED] had nothing to add to her report.

11.6 Fabric - P08

In [REDACTED] absence, [REDACTED] spoke to P08. He confirmed that, thus far, quotes had been received from two contractors for the costs of the accessible toilet. A third quote was awaited. There has been initial consultation with both Perth and Kinross Building Control Department and their Planning Department. Were we to go ahead and instal an Extractor Fan there is a possibility that we may need to obtain Planning Consent. The Fabric Group seem to have another option in mind so as to avoid this.

Under the new RAAC regulations steps are being taken to check the flat roof over the New Hall this being considered the only possible area of concern with our buildings. [REDACTED] also mentioned that, whilst there is lighting, it seems that power has been lost in the Youth Room. This is currently being investigated.

12. Staff Panel - no report

By reference to Item 2 in P09, it had been the intention of the Staff Panel to meet with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to review any issues connected with staff safety, particularly in the light of some recent events in the Pend. As there is to be a meeting on 9 October 2023 with the Open Church volunteers, (at which the issue of safety and protocols will be considered), it may make sense for the Staff Panel to simply join that discussion together with [REDACTED]

13. Health and Safety Panel - P09

No comments / queries were raised in [REDACTED] absence.

14. Safeguarding Panel

[REDACTED] referred to the revised Code of Conduct within which the changes which had been made to the original text were evident. The Kirk Session agreed to adopt this.

14.1 Report

[REDACTED] reported that:

- (a) [REDACTED] had attended Trustee Safeguarding Training at Dumbarney;
- (b) 23 Volunteers from PNC had attended Safeguarding Training here at PNC on 11 September 2023;
- (c) four additional volunteers from PNC were attending Safeguarding Training tonight at Letham St Mark's; and
- (d) safeguarding for both [REDACTED] had been updated.

15. **InTogether** – see Item 9, above

16. Correspondence

16.1 Report on church manse from the [REDACTED]

The Moderator had submitted a report on the PNC manse to Presbytery over the summer and had agreed for his findings to be made known to the Kirk Session. The Session Clerks had been duly sent a copy by the Presbytery Administrator. Within the Report, the Moderator had declared himself "very satisfied" with the ease with which any queries as regards maintenance and upkeep are handled, the prompt response of the Fabric Committee to maintenance requests and the standard/quality of repairs carried out. The Moderator re-iterated that, as a family, he and [REDACTED] felt very well supported and were thankful for an annual decorating programme.

17. **Insurance** – no report

18. AOCB

18.1 **Earn Singers** – request for temporary use of church halls on a Thursday evening

The Kirk Session agreed, in principle, to this request (should it become necessary) in the knowledge that the group would assume responsibility for opening and closing the halls and the locking of the church gates.

18.2 **Possible date for our next Communion** – see Item 10.3, above

18.3 Request from AA to hold a meeting in our premises on a Sunday morning /

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The Moderator read out an e-mail sent to [REDACTED] on 12 September 2023 containing this request. This made clear that the intent was to hold the meetings on a Sunday morning between 1030-1230 hrs, ie. mainly during the morning service. The Moderator expressed the view in support of what was being asked. The Kirk Session agreed. We would, in the first instance, offer AA the use of the Tryst but, if this did not suit their members, we would need to review the position. We would also want to make clear that no parking in the church grounds would be available to them.

18.4 Disabled Parking Bays

The Moderator happened to notice that, on one occasion recently, there were four cars parked at the church on a Sunday morning each displaying blue disabled badges. We only have two marked disabled bays. It was suggested that this may have been a "one-off". We are to remain mindful of the situation.

19. Date of the next Kirk Session meeting

The next Kirk Session meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 31 October 2023 at 1900 hrs in the sanctuary.

The meeting closed with the sharing of Grace together.

Papers apart :

P01 - Draft Minute of 27 June 2023	P06 - Parish
P02 - Architect's Plans	P07 - Facilities
P03 - Presbytery	P08 - Fabric
P04 - Roll Keeper and Data Protection	P09 - Health and Safety
P05 - City Centre	P10 - Safeguarding

Post-meeting reports :

S01 - InTogether