



BLACKHALL  
ST. COLUMBA'S  
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

**STATED ANNUAL MEETING  
SUNDAY 22 MARCH 2020**

*'To glorify God...to proclaim Christ...to serve others'*



Dear Member,

As the congregational Treasurer, I am writing to ask you to review your offerings to our Church. This is something that the Kirk Session has asked me to do each year at this time. I would also like to say a sincere thank you if you increased your offering following my letter last year.

Our accounts for 2019 show a small surplus of just over £1,000 but only because of three exceptional circumstances. Without those three exceptional items, we would have shown that we spent £18,100 more than our income. An unsustainable position. When preparing our budget for 2020, I have to assume we will not receive any legacies as we cannot expect or predict them.

A copy of our 2020 Budget will be handed out as you come into Church prior to the SAM. The Finance Working Team had to be tight in the budget made available for such things as fabric expenditure. Much of our expenditure is pre-determined and essential, such as staff salaries and heating & lighting. These known costs rise year by year through inflation.

The Budget is a sobering document. Unless we receive legacies to bridge the gap, we are estimating that we will spend £25,742 more than we will receive as income. This can only come out of our reserves which at that rate will run out in just a few years.

To meet our annually increasing expenditure, we need an annually increasing income. The only way that can happen is if our faithful members review the amount they give to our Church and if it is possible, increase their giving, to meet our increasing costs.

The majority of our members now give by standing orders and an increasing number have completed a Gift Aid declaration. Both of these actions are hugely beneficial in that standing orders give the Church a regular monthly income which helps with the cash flow and Gift Aid increases the value of your offering by a quarter if you are a tax payer. Gift Aid cannot be used by non-tax payers.

For St Columba's Church to be an effective witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Blackhall community and for it to carry out its mission in the parish, we rely on your support and commitment as a member of our church. The vast majority of St Columba's income comes from the giving of our members. With this in mind, I would ask you to respond to this reminder.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adrian Johnston".

**Adrian Johnston**  
Treasurer

**BLACKHALL ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND EDINBURGH**  
**STATED ANNUAL MEETING - SUNDAY 22 MARCH 2020**

This year's stated Annual Meeting of the Congregation will take place after a shortened morning service at 10.30am on Sunday 22 March. In this connection the following papers are attached.

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of the Stated Annual Meeting of Sunday 17 March 2019 (excluding the Appendix)
3. Reports on the Agenda (except the Annual Accounts which will be available at the meeting)

We hope you will be able to attend. These papers should be brought to the meeting.

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**AGENDA**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the Stated Annual Meeting held on Sunday 17 March 2019
3. Matters Arising from the Minutes
4. (Interim) Moderator's Report
5. Session Clerk's Report
6. Congregational Treasurer's Report and Annual Accounts
7. Freewill Offering Convener's Report
8. Gift Aid Convener's Report
9. Fabric Convener's Report
10. Premises and Staff Convener's Report
11. Any Other Competent Business
12. Benediction

**BLACKHALL ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, EDINBURGH**  
**MINUTE OF THE STATED ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION**  
**HELD ON SUNDAY 17 MARCH 2019 AT 12.00pm IN THE CHURCH**

The Reverend Benjamin J A Abeledo constituted the Meeting with prayer and welcomed the members of the Congregation. The Stated Annual Meeting papers had previously been distributed to members and copies of the summary Financial Report at 31 December 2018 were provided before the meeting. The Reports contained in the Meeting papers and referred to below are copied at the Appendix to this Minute.

**Sederunt:** The Reverend Benjamin J A Abeledo and 124 members of the Congregation were present. There were 5 apologies for absence.

**Minutes:** The Minutes of the Stated Annual Meeting held on Sunday 18 March 2018, which had been circulated prior to the Meeting, were approved  
They were proposed by Bob Barker and seconded by Eddie Thorn.

**Matters Arising:** There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

**Minister's Report:** The Minister's Report had been circulated before the Meeting and there were no questions.

**Session Clerk's Report:** The report of Eddie Thorn, Session Clerk, had been circulated before the Meeting and there were no questions.

**Finance Convener's Report:** The Summary Financial Report, prepared by Adrian Johnston, Treasurer, had been provided before the meeting. Adrian expressed thanks to Sandy Weir, Gift Aid Convener, and Roderick Dee, Freewill Offering Convener, for all the work they carried out in their respective roles. He also thanked the Church Secretary for all her assistance to him. Adrian summarised his report and thanked the members of the Congregation for the increase in Offerings over the past year. He also provided a summary of the "Building for the Future" accounts. Adrian remarked that the setting of the budget had been challenging and despite the assumptions made he could not make it balance. As a result, £12,500 would be required to be transferred to make it balance unless legacies came to our rescue once again. Wendy Pratt asked if the roofing above the organ is adequate as there is nothing in the accounts for this. Jim Bishop confirmed that this work has already been carried out. Donald Stirling asked a question re presentation and agreed to discuss it with Adrian off line. Jim Bishop alerted Adrian re date inaccuracies and these were immediately altered. There were no further questions and the Minister thanked Adrian for all his work in a difficult balancing position.

**Freewill Offering Convener's Report**

The report of Roderick Dee had been circulated before the Meeting and there were no questions.

**Gift Aid Convener's Report**

The report of Sandy Weir had been circulated before the Meeting and there were no questions.

**Fabric Convener's Report**

The report of Jim Bishop had been circulated before the meeting and there were no questions.

**Premises and Staff Convener's Report**

The report of Frances Douglas had been circulated before the Meeting and there were no questions.

The Minister thanked all the Conveners.

**Any Other Competent Business**

There were no points raised.

The Session Clerk, Mr Eddie Thorn read a statement in response to the Reverend Benjamin Abeledo's announcement regarding his decision to demit his charge of Blackhall Saint Columba's Church. He thanked Benjamin and his wife Marie for all their work and went on to explain briefly the first steps i.e. appointment of an Interim Moderator. The Minister thanked all the Office Bearers for all their work.

**Benediction**

The Reverend Benjamin Abeledo closed the Meeting with the Benediction.

# **Blackhall St. Columba's Church, Edinburgh Stated Annual Meeting – 22 March 2020**

## **REPORT FOR STATED ANNUAL MEETING FROM THE MODERATOR - VERY REV DR RUSSELL BARR**

With the ongoing life and activities of the congregation being described in the other reports, this brief report will focus on my role as interim moderator

Since my appointment in May 2019 it has been my pleasure to chair the meetings of the Kirk Session and guide the congregation through the vacancy process.

The process is set out in the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act V111 2003) as amended by the General Assembly in 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 – no, I am not making this up – the document runs to 27 pages and is unlikely to win any prizes for outstanding literature.

However it does provide the legal framework for a congregation to gain Presbytery's permission to call a minister, the election of a Nominating Committee and the process which follows in presenting a candidate to the congregation, for the candidate to preach, for the congregation to have the opportunity to vote and elect the candidate as their new minister and for the Call to be signed and presented to Presbytery.

Thankfully everything in the vacancy process went according to plan and on Sunday 16 February 2020 Fergus Cook was elected by 228 – 0 votes, a wonderful outcome and testimony to the good work of the Nominating Committee bringing forward a candidate who met with the congregation's overwhelming approval.

Let me pay tribute to Brian Duffin (Convener), Ruth Laidlaw (Secretary) and to all the members of the Nominating Committee for their diligence and hard work and it was a pleasure to support them through the process.

Let me also pay tribute to Eddie Thorn, Session Clerk, who has been a tower of strength for the Session and congregation during the vacancy and Eddie has made my role as interim moderator as easy as possible.

If you know something of the history of Blackhall St Columba's you will know that it is a daughter church of Cramond Kirk and so with the St Columba's sanctuary being renovated it is fitting that Fergus' ordination and induction will be held at Cramond.

Like everyone else I am looking forward to seeing the new sanctuary being brought into use and contributing to a renewed vitality in the life and worship of the congregation and Fergus, Eddie and the Kirk Session and all the members of the congregation can be assured of my thoughts and prayers in the coming days.

## **SESSION CLERK'S REPORT**

### **Membership**

The annual statistical return as at 31 December 2019 to The Presbytery of Edinburgh shows a fall in the Communion Roll – from 654 to 626. During 2019 we welcomed 2 new members, compared to 9 the year before. Sadly 11 members died during the year and 19 members left us as a consequence of moving to another part of the country.

A census is carried out two or three times each year to ascertain Sunday morning attendance. Prior to the move out of the Sanctuary the average figure was running at circa 205, not unsurprisingly down from the 2018 figure of circa 215. Attendance since the move into the Large Hall has been very good but, understandably, slightly down on that when we were in the Sanctuary. We remain amongst the best attended churches in Edinburgh although with a higher proportion of our regular attendees over the age of 65 than the national average we can never be complacent.

### **Kirk Session**

During 2019 Fay Stirling was ordained as an Elder and Dianne Fulton admitted. Sally Foster and Andrew Walls resigned as Elders and John Crombie and Phyllis King were both re-admitted and welcomed back to the Kirk Session. As at 31 December there were 64 members of Kirk Session.

Jack Burton, a long standing Elder and former Session Clerk, sadly passed away in October. Jack carried out many other roles, all with great dedication and commitment, during his time as a member of this Congregation.

### **Achievements and Performance**

The Watch Committee continued to raise funds for deserving charities and in 2019 the creditable sum of £8,220 was raised and donated equally between Kindred and Beach Wheelchairs Portobello. This Committee started supporting local charities in 1992 and so far, has raised the superb sum of over £280,000.

The proceeds from retiring collections at Christmas, Easter and the three Communion Services were passed to a number of charities thereby continuing our proud record of charitable giving and the fact that we can look out beyond our own walls.

The refurbishment of the Sanctuary commenced in August following extensive preparatory work undertaken by the Building for The Future Steering Group. John Dennis & Company (Scotland) Limited was appointed as the contractor. Costs are in line with the budget of £1.1m and while there have been some unexpected costs for boiler replacement, lead piping removal and other items, these have been funded from the contingency allowed for in the aforementioned budget figure. The contractor is due to complete the works on 24 April and there will then be a period of 3 / 4 weeks of activity by the BFTF team before the Sanctuary is ready for worship. Fay Stirling has done an excellent job as our Project Manager and we are grateful to her for the time and commitment given to looking after our interests.

As a result of the work being undertaken in the Sanctuary it was necessary to have Sunday morning worship in the Large Hall. At the same time the Kirk Session agreed that the start time be brought forward to 10.30am initially for the Summer period but later it was agreed to keep that start time for the foreseeable future. It would be fair to say that the temporary move has been successful in terms of attendance and appreciation by the members.

Simultaneously with the move out of the Sanctuary the opportunity was taken to redecorate the two downstairs halls and corridor and upgrade the toilet facilities off the Large Hall.

We continue to publish and distribute two fine magazines, namely Kirk News and Blackhall Bulletin which allow us to reach out and communicate across the Parish and to our members. Christine Denham and Barbara Wilson, respective Editors, both do an excellent job in producing these publications. Again, with the benefit of a generous donation from a member of the Congregation we were able to have the Blackhall Bulletin delivered by a distribution company.

Late in the year the Kirk Session agreed to support an Alpha Course to be run by our Director of Music, Donald Cameron. This mission initiative started in January 2020.

Our Congregation is no different to others in depending upon an army of loyal volunteers who continue to play a vitally important role in the smooth running of Church life and the many activities carried on for the members and the Parish community. While there are too many individuals to name in person I should wish to record grateful and sincere thanks to those who directly support me in my role:-Sheila Mackintosh (Roll Keeper), Jacquie Lowe ( Safeguarding Officer), Jim Laing (Communion Convener), Jim Logan and Frank Morrice (Minute Secretaries for Session meetings), Julie Nicol for the efficient distribution of Session papers and maintenance of minutes. I am particularly grateful to Jim Logan, who readily stands in for me when I am on holiday.

There has been a great deal of work on Sunday mornings following the move into the Large Hall in terms of laying out the chairs and the team of volunteers organised by Ian Templeton have discharged their responsibilities with great care and dedication. Iain King with his usual dedication did a power of work in setting up the sound system.

Rev Benjamin J A Abeledo

We said farewell to Benjamin on Sunday 7 April and while his ministry at Blackhall St Columba's was a relatively short one, I believe that it would be only fair to say that a good deal had been achieved over his tenure of three years in terms of groundwork done to lay firm foundations for the future of this Congregation. His vision led to the exciting Building for the Future initiative yet throughout the discussion and planning process he was careful not to influence any of the decisions leaving that responsibility to the members of the Steering Group and, ultimately, the Kirk Session. He guided us through the move to the Unitary Constitution and led us through the Local Church Review exercise an all-important piece of planning for the future here at Blackhall St Columba's.

As a result of Benjamin's departure our Pastoral Assistant, Rev Gordon Farquharson, was appointed Locum Minister. We were indeed fortunate to have Gordon in situ and during the period of the vacancy he has been a very popular preacher and greatly assisted in keeping the Congregation together.

The Presbytery of Edinburgh appointed The Very Rev Dr Russell Barr, Minister of Cramond Kirk, to be our Interim Moderator throughout the period of the vacancy. We were very fortunate in having a minister of Dr Barr's experience to lead us through the period of vacancy and his counsel has been much appreciated.

In August the Nominating Committee was elected with the remit of nominating one person to the Congregation with a view to the election and appointment of a minister. Brian Duffin and Ruth Laidlaw graciously agreed to be the Convener and Clerk respectively and both discharged their responsibilities with great diligence and dedication.

Last year was a period of some upheaval but with good teamwork and belief in all that we strive to achieve as Christians we finished the year in a relatively good place. As a Congregation, like most other Church of Scotland congregations, we have our challenges and can never afford just to sit still and be complacent in our responsibilities. In May of this year we will be back in the Sanctuary and it is important that we build on the momentum that brings to reach out and bring new people into the fold. The average age of our membership is higher than the national average and it is vitally important that we bring young families into our faith community to secure the future.

Finally, I believe that there is a lot to do this year and beyond but with the leadership of Mr Fergus Cook coupled with the support of the Kirk Session and Congregation, blessed by the Holy Spirit, I am confident that we will get there.

Eddie Thorn  
Session Clerk

### **FINANCE REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2019**

This is the Finance Working Team Leader's report into the financial position of the Church. Our offerings in 2019 were lower than in 2018 and this both continues and more concerningly, accelerates the trend of the last 3 years. Freewill Offerings made through envelopes and standing orders were £5,271 down on 2018. That is a fall of 3.74%.

When other offerings including the Plate and the gift aid recovery are included, our total income from offerings fell £7,908, a fall of 4%.

When we look at Other Ordinary Income, at first sight the picture is brighter with an increase on last year that takes our total income up to where it was last year. However, that is not the true picture.

- Included in the income is a sum of £4,000 that is a grant towards the salary of a family worker. We can only spend it on that and if we do not employ a family worker the grant must be returned.
- Playgroup had outstanding rental payments of £4,297.75 at the end of 2018 and this was received in 2019. When comparing with last year, it makes the 2018 figure lower than it should be and makes the 2019 figure higher than it should be.

When we take these adjustments into account, our income was £12,595 less than in 2018.

Once again, the Church received very welcome legacies totalling £10,850 and this has made the difference between our accounts showing a surplus rather than a deficit.

The accounts show that we had a surplus of £1,047. However, it only arose because of a) the legacies, b) the grant that we cannot use for general expenditure and c) the catch up of rent.

This shortfall in "normal income" against "normal expenditure" is an even bigger concern this year than it was last year. It has made it impossible to produce a balanced budget for 2020. Unless we have the unexpected benefit of legacies, the shortfall can only be resolved by a significant increase in offerings by all of our members or by a considerable reduction in our expenditure which will be painful wherever the cuts fall.

#### **Income**

Income from Congregational Giving (including Gift Aid Tax Recovery) was £187,025, a fall of £7,908 (-4%) against 2018.

Other Ordinary Income, which includes use of premises by outside Organisations, Congregational Organisations, Weddings, Funerals, Interest and Dividends amounted to £43,232 a rise of £7,860 (+22%) on the previous year. **However, note my comments above on the true picture.**

Our Total General Income for 2019 which includes legacies was £241,108, a fall of £20,970 on 2018. The large difference is due to the size of legacies received in 2018.

#### **Expenditure**

Our overall General Expenditure in 2018 was £240,060, a rise of £2,434.96 (+1%).

Within that our Ministry & Mission Charge was £109,293 and our Presbytery Dues were £3,674.

## **Surplus**

Praise God that despite the falling income, we ended the year with a small surplus. However, as has been the case for a number of years, the church's expenditure was greater than its income excluding legacies. If we exclude the legacies and take into account the adjustments I have explained above, then in 2018 our expenditure was £18,100 more than our income. This remains my chief concern with the Church's finances.

## **Legacy Fund**

We received four new legacies in 2018 totalling £10,850. From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019, the legacy fund was amalgamated with the general fund and is not now shown separately in the accounts

## **General & Restricted Funds**

Our total funds including General and Restricted Funds at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 amount to £113,694. That is a rise of £1,047.

## **Budget 2019**

Our Ministries & Mission contribution is £101,102 for this year. The Fabric Team Leader has informed me of an estimated £21,000 of work that has to be done at the manse. Of that, £16,000 is exceptional expenditure to bring the manse up to an acceptable condition for a new minister.

I have assumed our giving does not fall again in 2020 and this will require members to increase their giving to offset members who leave or die. We cannot assume we will receive a legacy each year and I sincerely hope that the congregation will respond to my letter on reviewing giving and make that a reality. It would be good if we could generate a small surplus without relying on legacies.

I have excluded the Grant and the catch up of overdue rent but otherwise I have kept most items of income and expenditure close to the actual experience of 2019 with inflation adjustments where I thought appropriate.

The outcome is extremely sobering. I have had to budget for spending £25,742 more than we will take in. Unless we receive legacies to bridge that gap, this can only come out of our reserves. If this situation continues or gets worse, we will eventually use up our reserves. As we cannot spend what we do not have, that would involve some difficult cuts.

## **The James & Jessie Shaw Charitable Trust**

I would like to mention the debt of thanks that the Congregation owes to James & Jessie (Essie) Shaw who during their lifetime, were members of the church. They left their estate to a charitable trust and since 2014, that trust has been increasingly generous to St Columba's. We have received a payment every year that started at £1,000, was £27,000 in 2018, following Essie's death and last year was £8,000. Given the state of our finances, these gifts, which since 2018 I have treated as legacy income in the accounts, have been instrumental in keeping the church in an annual surplus.

## **B4tF Accounts**

You will also receive a copy of the B4tF appeal accounts. They are very simple and should require no explanation so I present them without comment. However, I would be happy to answer any questions at the SAM.

On behalf of the Kirk Session I would like to thank members for their continued support through your giving. The Kirk Session greatly appreciates the many people who give by standing order and who use gift aid which forms such an important part of our income. I would ask all members not using standing orders and / or gift aid to consider doing so if they can.

Our accounts, will be presented under the rules of the charity regulations. The accounts are examined by an independent examiner who will audit the accounts in accordance with the regulations set by the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator, (OSCR). A meeting of the Kirk Session will approve the annual accounts.

***Adrian Johnston***

***Congregational Treasurer***

## **2020 Freewill Offering Convener's Report**

Since the last Stated Annual Meeting, efforts have continued to reduce the number of Freewill Offering envelopes being issued, with considerable savings to Church stationery costs. The initiative has been extremely successful so far, in that we have reduced Freewill Offering numbers over the past 8 years from 215 to 39, resulting in a cost saving of over £200 per annum. Consequently, I would again urge those still using Freewill Offering envelopes, to seriously consider a change to Standing Order, to enable further cost reductions to be made.



However, no matter the form of giving used, for those that are Tax Payers and have not signed a Gift Aid Declaration form, I would strongly ask that they consider doing so, as for every £1 given, the Church is able to reclaim a further 25 pence from the Inland Revenue.

If you would like more information on this or on changing from Freewill Offering envelopes to Standing Order please speak to your Elder or to Sandy Weir (Gift Aid Convener).

**Roderick Dee**  
**Freewill Offering Convener**

### **2020 Gift Aid Convener's Report**

#### **GIFT AID**

For the year to 5<sup>th</sup> April 2019 we claimed on Gift Aided Congregational General giving of £124,075 (previous year- py £119,107) resulting in tax recovery of **£33,046** (py £31,788). Included in this figure again is the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme claim for undocumented small cash donations of £8,000 producing £2000.

The claim also included Building for the Future (BftF) donations of £213,880 producing **£53,470** (py £12,400 and £3,100) **making £86,516 in total!!**

Gift Aid inevitably mirrors the trend in the Congregation's membership numbers and giving as a whole. Our aim must be to have as many of our donors as possible give under the Gift Aid scheme. This currently adds **25%** to such donations. Our last claim was in respect of 251 (previous year 246) but included 14 donations for BftF only.

It is appreciated not everybody can Gift Aid donations and all gifts are very gratefully received. To Gift Aid you must pay income or capital gains taxes and sign a Declaration specifically in favour of Blackhall St Columba's Church of Scotland. To satisfy the scheme audit requirements the giving must be by any one or more of the following three ways:

1. Banker's Standing Orders (our preferred option) which produced £103,274 (py £98,463).
2. Freewill Offering envelopes gave £11915 from 29 donors.
3. Cheques/cash banked by the Finance team gave £8,886.

Only individuals can gift aid but in practice a "taxed" spouse regularly signs a Declaration to cover their or a partner's giving. If the signatory dies no further tax recoveries are possible, even if donations have continued, until any taxpaying survivor completes a new Declaration in their own name.

If you have any questions at all about Gift Aid or the tax regime please do not hesitate to contact me directly or through the Church Office.

**What cannot be Gift Aided but can carry other tax advantages to the donor's estate and provide increasingly essential income to the Church is a future Gift in your Will. This kindness gives the Church time to recover from your loss. I will be pleased to give general, confidential, unbiased information in this respect if you would like it. Otherwise please arrange now to make a gift in future when you cannot make it yourself by, literally and figuratively, continuing your support of the Church through your Will with a gift for General or Specific purposes.**

All matters concerning individual giving including legacies are always considered personal, private, confidential and strictly honoured as such.

**Sandy Weir**  
**Gift Aid Convener**

### **2020 Fabric Convener's Report for Church Stated Annual Meeting**

#### **Church and Halls**

Works undertaken in the Church in 2019 have been less than normal due to the ongoing upgrading project. However, a considerable amount of works were carried out in the halls both prior to moving out of the Church and throughout the year.

We were required in advance of the Phase 1 project to have a full asbestos management survey, analysis and report prepared by a specialist in respect of the entire Church buildings. Implementation of the report was followed by appointing the specialist contractor to remove, and safely dispose of the asbestos to eliminate the presence of this material which was found in a few areas within the Church and halls. The work involved installation of fully controlled and monitored air tight working areas, a decontamination chamber and changing / washing / toilet facilities for the operatives.

We then embarked on a programme of improvement works to the halls, including fully upgrading the toilet facilities at the rear of the large hall, fitting a full length of new noticeboards in the large hall and additional notice boards in the linking corridor, redecoration of the large, small and upper halls, corridor and main staircase and replacing the curtains in the large hall with roller blinds.

At an early stage of the Phase 1 project, the main contractor's site manager reported that minor signs of roof leaks were apparent on the stonework in the North aisle area. It would appear that this may have been historic and that any minor leaking had previously dried out without being noticed but was more obvious following removal of the heating system. Our roofing maintenance contractors inspected the roof areas above the leaks and could not find any obvious source but carried out some precautionary repointing around the high-level windows and work to the lead flashings which appears to have resolved the issue. The annual routine roof inspection was carried out at the end of 2019 and established that the roofs only required cleaning out of gutters, minor slating repairs and repointing. We experienced problems in the autumn period with both boilers not working. Our heating maintenance contractor was called out and on inspection, established that one of the boilers required a new fan and the other was uneconomic to repair. The fan was renewed which gave us heating in the halls again. However, in the long term, the Steering group decided that, since one of the boilers had to be replaced, it would be prudent to reverse the decision to omit the boiler replacement works previously taken out of the contract as a saving. The work involved renewing both boilers along with full renewal of all piping and associated equipment in the boiler house. As a result of being without heating for several weeks we installed, as a temporary measure, oil filled electric heaters which unfortunately only provided background heat as they were limited in output due to the inadequate power from our outdated electrics. The works were completed on programme and normal heating in the halls was resumed in early December.

An Electrical Inspection was carried out in the autumn which established a number of issues with the hall electrics. As a result, various upgrading works of the hall electrics were undertaken during the latter part of 2019 and continue into the early part of this year. The works include renewal of outdated switchgear and associated wiring, etc, improvements to power sockets and replacement of a number of defective light fittings with LED fittings.

General internal maintenance and repairs in the halls were also carried out throughout the year, including annual servicing of equipment, drain clearing and associated works following blockage and various other minor repair works.

A length of the curved stone boundary wall at the corner of Columba Road was demolished by a vehicle in April. We were required to obtain three competitive quotations for reinstatement. Following several lengthy delays, the rebuilding works were finally completed early in December.

## **Manse**

I would like to thank Les Oliver for easing my workload by taking on the responsibility of dealing with the Fabric works for the Manse.

Work carried out during the year included taking down and capping at roof level one of the rear mutual chimneys which had been in a poor state of repair. The cost was shared equally with the adjoining owner. The garden gate and its frame, which were both rotten, have been renewed, the garage door was re-painted, the cupola on the flat roof over the hall stairwell which had been affected by rot in the timbers was renewed and the roof access hatch repaired and the annual routine roof inspection was carried out, including cleaning out gutters and minor slating repairs.

As part of the vacancy process, an inspection of the manse was undertaken and a detailed condition schedule was prepared and passed onto the General Trustees. An Energy Performance Survey of the premises was also carried out and a Certificate issued.

**Jim Bishop**

**Fabric Team Leader**

## **2020 Premises & Staff Committee Report for Church Stated Annual Meeting**

### **Church**

The move to the Church Hall has worked very well while the refurbishment of the Church takes place.

### **Church Office**

Julie Nicol has had a very busy year and her move to the temporary premises has gone very smoothly thanks to **her** efficiency and I thank her most sincerely for all the work she has undertaken in the last year.

My thanks go to Ruth Laidlaw for acting as holiday relief and we have a small group of Ladies who are prepared to stand in if necessary.

### **Church Organist Director of Music**

Donald Cameron has also coped extremely well taking the Choir to higher levels in the Church Hall to enhance our worship, our thanks are due to him.

### **Church Halls**

The Halls have been painted this year and the two toilets upgraded. My thanks to Dorothea and Fran for coping with all the dust from the building work being done.

### **Health & Safety**

Sincere thanks are recorded to Ian Templeton and Betty Watt for making sure the Health and Safety rules are applied, also their work as Fire Representative and Halls Convener throughout the year.

### **Beading Duty Rota and Sound**

Thanks, are recorded to Ian Templeton, Adrian Johnston and both the teams. Thank you to Iain King and his team of helpers for taking on the sound system for the large Hall, not an easy task.

Thank you to all the organisations that use the Church Halls for their patience and understanding.

Finally, a thank you to all the gentlemen and ladies who assist with the jobs required to be done in and around the Church.

**Frances M Douglas**  
**Premises and Staff Convener**