

**MINUTES of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh,
held on Monday 23rd November 2020 730pm by Zoom**

Present: Some 40 members of the Cathedral, with the Provost in the Chair.

1. Welcome and apologies

The Provost welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced Zoë Gamble as the new Cathedral Administrator. Apologies had been received from Iona Roberts, Diana and John Lumley, Duncan Ferguson (for the first part of the meeting) and Helen Gibson.

2. Commemoration of the departed

Members of the Cathedral congregation who had died during the year were remembered:

Charles Wright; Hilary Naish; Charlotte Henney; Joyce Sturrock; Robert Cloughley; Ruth Joachim; Lyn Dodson; Mona Bruce; Donald Reid

3. Minutes of the AGM held on 25th November 2019

The minutes were approved.

4. Provost's report

A written report was included in the previously circulated Annual Report. The Provost highlighted the following:

- a. The Vice Provost was appointed in January 2020, proving a great strength and whose contribution is much appreciated.
- b. The Provost expressed sincere thanks to the Vice Provost, the Chaplain, Duncan Ferguson, James Parsons, Colin and Andrew (the Vergers) and all the volunteers for their flexibility and hard work in responding to Covid 19 and enabling the Cathedral to re-open both physically and digitally. It had been a particularly challenging year for music staff, choristers and lay clerks. He paid tribute to them and particularly Duncan Ferguson, Adam Wilson and the Choir.
- c. This time of stress has revealed the essential nature of the Cathedral, something which is perhaps only fully apparent during difficult times.
- d. Whilst everyone is looking forward to returning to normal, he noted that he also wanted to build on the positive outcomes of the last few months including the imaginative ways the digital world had been utilised to reach out to current and new members of the congregation through, for example, social media and online streaming.
- e. Last year he had talked about the need to develop pastoral care, put on hold to some extent due to the pandemic. However, he had been impressed with the 'webs' of care which had radiated out from the Cathedral through people to bring everyone together: something to build on in the future.
- f. Finally, he called for feedback noting that this was a good moment to reflect. He invited everyone to let him know by email or phone what they feel has worked well and what hasn't during the last few months.

5. Lay Representative Report

Gill Stewart (GS), the Lay Representative and Chair of the Cathedral Council, noted that a full report had been included in the previously circulated Annual Report and noted:

- a. Tackling financial deficit required a 'multi-pronged' approach (increase giving, grow congregation, implement budgetary controls). Much had been achieved but still more to do.
- b. Whilst highly valued, 'music' is a costly element of Cathedral expenditure. GS expressed her view that there is potential to identify and implement ways to increase income from music.
- c. Potential existed for making capital improvements to the Cathedral Estate to enable it to be further used to generate additional income. This depends on the state of the Cathedral's resources and needs to be carefully thought through.
- d. GS called for people (perhaps beyond the congregation) to come forward who have fresh ideas and would like to contribute.

After three years, GS reported that she was standing down. She expressed her thanks for a rewarding tenure which she had greatly enjoyed and thanked the clergy and wished them well. The Provost responded and thanked GS particularly for reinstating the Cathedral Council.

6. Cathedral Reports

Written reports on all Cathedral groups, and by those with particular responsibilities, had been circulated. The Provost thanked all those who had been involved in the activities recorded in the reports.

7. Presentation of the Cathedral accounts to 30th June 2020

Summarised accounts were provided on the reverse side of the Agenda and a commentary provided in the previously circulated in the Annual Report. Full copies of the audited accounts can be circulated to those who want them.

The accounts are in draft and unaudited due to issues of timetable and cost with the appointed auditor. Therefore, it had been decided to re-tender.

Godfrey Robson (GR), Convenor of the Finance and Risk Committee presented to the meeting. He made the following key points:

- a. The main challenge remains the deficit in the General Fund. This had been reduced compared to previous years and was a remarkable achievement but nevertheless remained a concern and it was imperative to eradicate it and achieve a balance budget within the next 2-3 years.
- b. The first quarter accounts for the new financial year looked promising but the next 6 months will prove challenging as the impacts of Covid 19 are felt fully. However, by summer 2021 the hope was that there would be evidence of real impact on expenditure.

8. Questions

- a. Mike Appleby pointed out the great amount of work that went on behind the scenes which was not fully apparent through the tabling of papers in the Annual Report. There was a risk of this work being overlooked. He asked for a special note of thanks to all the convenors. The Provost reiterated his thanks and recognition of everyone's hard work and contributions.
- b. Robbie Thomas thanked everyone involved in Sunday Clubs, and in particular David & Christina, Sheila and the Chaplain, whose work has been very useful and supportive for the children attending the Sunday club via zoom during the pandemic.
- c. Richard Seligman asked 2 questions. Firstly, in relation to capital projects, he asked how worthwhile it is to reduce capital to increase income by other means (than investment). GS agreed this needed very careful consideration and would potentially be combined with fundraising and cost control. GR noted that it was important to get the basics right first in relation to Cathedral finances and although long term prospects are positive, given the current background it was even more important to be prudent about any capital expenditure. The Provost commented that some improvements related to making the Cathedral more attractive to potential hirers (for example, the lavatories and the heating). Funding has been secured for a feasibility study considering options for heating the Cathedral.
- d. Secondly, Richard Seligman asked why the cost of heating and light remained high despite the impact of Covid 19. David Jeffcoat (DJ) explained that this was mainly a timing issue and that during lockdown energy bills were estimated so modest impact will be seen in the following quarter; the bulk of the cost was for insurance and rates which were included in the same budget line.
- e. Thanks were given to DJ for his valued support over the years.
- f. In response to a question about Christmas services, the Provost noted
 - It is unlikely that the current limit of 50 people physically present at services will change.
 - Further information about Advent and Christmas services will be available online soon.
 - The Cathedral will be open all day on Christmas Eve (probably until 10pm). The Clergy will be present with careful stewarding to maintain social distancing.
 - There will be no Christmas Eve service.
 - On Christmas Day, there will be services at 8am and 1030am. People wishing to attend will be invited to email and there will be a ballot to identify those who can attend the 1030. The 1030 morning service will be live streamed.

9. Election of Lay Representative and Alternate Lay Representative

Andy Reddish was proposed as Lay Representative by Helen Hood and seconded by Sheila Kidney. Helen Parker was proposed as Alternate Lay Representative by Jo Hargreaves and Andy Reddish. Andy Reddish was duly appointed as Lay Representative and Helen Parker was appointed as Alternate Lay Representative.

10. Appointment of Auditor Chiene and Tait were appointed as the Cathedral's auditors.

11. AOCB

None

12. The Provost closed the meeting, giving thanks again to everyone who together shared the saying of the Grace.

ZG 26.11.20