

**Strathaven: Trinity Parish Church**  
**Minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Stated Annual Meeting**  
**Held on Sunday, 16 March 2025 at 12.00pm, in Strathaven Church**

**CONSTITUTION:**

At Strathaven on Sunday, 16 March 2025, the meeting was constituted with Prayer.

**WELCOME:**

The Chairman, Rev Norman McKee, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked all those present for staying on for the meeting after this morning's service and also to those from Chapelton and Glassford who had come along.

**APOLOGIES:**

Apologies were received from Christine Murray, Pamela Thomson, Bill Beveridge, Isobel Beveridge, Willie Park, Janette Keenan, Cillia McCleary, Pamela Walker, Harriet Thomson, Sheila Dodds, Ken Dodds, David Lipowski & Mary Frew.

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS STATED ANNUAL MEETING:**

The congregation approved the minutes of the previous meeting held in Strathaven Church on Tuesday, 2 April 2024.

**INTIMATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

There were no further items added to the agenda.

**CONGREGATIONAL ACCOUNTS:**

Ruby Davidson (Session Clerk) passed on apologies from David Lipowski (Treasurer) as he is currently assisting with Boys' Brigade Kings Badge Training at Carronvale. Ruby presented the following report on David's behalf:

The accounts, having already been presented at the last session meeting, and approved by the trustees, have been reviewed and signed off by our independent examiner, Charles Beattie.

2024 income has shown no increase in unrestricted income – mostly driven by decreased hall lets offset partly by the increase in investment income.

Expenditure has increased from 2023 mostly related to increase in utilities and repair costs as well as general inflation. Expenses have increased 9%.

Fabric costs are up to £48,660 from £39,797. The Fabric costs over the three buildings are up to £48,660 from £39,797. This includes a new control board and rewiring of fire alarm in the Strathaven Building.

Investment valuation has shown an unrealised gain of £58,221 after the unrealised gain of £45,797 last year.

The principal source of income to the Church is donations from its members. During the year, total income amounted to £179,021 of which £10,080 was in respect of designated funds (this was all church organisations income).

Offerings have decreased by 2% from the previous year (£116,554 down from £118,706, they are still far short of the 2019 value of £134,569 as a result of the Covid crisis).

At the year end the Church held unrestricted funds of £579,771; £25,000 of Endowment Funds and £263,879 of Designated funds

Prices have been increasing – inflation from January 2019 is around 25% (according to the bank of England) – our giving has not kept pace with this. I propose a recommitment letter to members later in 2025.

David wished to express his personal thanks to Sheila Dodds, Jim McKay, Charles Beattie and the Finance Committee for their involvement in preparing the accounts. Also to Andrew Rendall for his involvement in reclaiming Gift Aid and to Iain Park for the work involved with the WFO envelopes.

No questions or comments were received regarding the accounts, and their adoption was moved by Maggie Mears and seconded by Robin Jack.

The Moderator thanked the Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Finance Team for their diligence throughout the last year and for all their work in preparing the accounts for 2024.

#### **SESSION CLERK'S REPORT:**

Ruby Davidson (Session Clerk) gave the following report:

2024 was quite a different year for Strathaven Trinity. In April Shaw left us to prepare for his installation as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. On Saturday, 18 May the Gallery of the General Assembly was filled with members of the congregation who were there to witness his installation. It was a joyous occasion and the members of the Assembly and the Lord High Commissioner, the Duke of Edinburgh, soon learned that the new Moderator had a deep commitment to the church along with a wicked sense of humour.

In typical Shaw fashion, preparations were made so that worship in all of our three church buildings could continue in his absence. We are indebted to Rev Robert Allan, Rev Robbie Hamilton and our worship leaders who have led us in worship throughout the year and of course our Interim Moderator, Rev Norman McKee, who as well as leading us in worship has ensured that our church and our Kirk Session have been well supported as has his sterling work in pastoral care. Personally I owe Norman a huge thank you for supporting me in my role! It was very much appreciated that David McKee returned to us initially as a student Assistant and following his ordination as Assistant Minister. Lots of us had the pleasure of attending his ordination especially since it was the Moderator who ordained him.

We continue to support many charities. In the last year £6559 has been donated to a variety of charities, harvest food donations to The Lodging House Mission and our weekly food donations to Loaves and Fishes. The Strathaven Memory Club which, staffed by members of Trinity, continues to grow and thanks to Lynda Horn and her team, Heart for Art, a Crossreach initiative will commence in March. This continues to be a very successful and necessary venture for many families.

Strathaven Trinity has a whole range of organisations and groups who utilise our premises. We give thanks for the success and popularity of our Guild, Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade, Sunday Schools, ladies keep fit, ladies badminton, men's group and drama groups. In addition, our halls (particularly in Strathaven and Chapelton) are virtually at full capacity as we seek to welcome the community into our premises which is very much a missional activity.

We were very saddened that two of our elders, Angus Stuart and Harry Menzies died during the year. We give thanks for their many years of service to Strathaven Trinity, Strathaven East and to the Church of Scotland

Our chaplaincy connection with the five local schools in our parish continues to develop and we recognise increasing use of our premises by the schools. Julie, our Youth Worker and Rev. David McKee made good contact with the schools and we are delighted that special services are held in our three churches. Our annual Bubblegum and Fluff activity (for older primary pupils), which helps to explain what the season of Christmas is all about, saw all schools take part over two days.

The Bigger Picture, for academy pupils in the church hall at Strathaven, is well established and has between 30 and 80 young folk coming into the hall on a Monday and Friday for hot chocolate and a cheese toastie. The Bigger Picture started when the school was decanted to East Kilbride during the rebuild, some seventeen years ago, with the minister taking flasks of hot chocolate every week for the pupils. This has been a huge success and has proved very popular with a large section of the young people in our community. Special thanks to the team of helpers, especially Cillia McCleary for coordinating so much! Throughout the year, and particularly so at Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas, the churches were decorated for the season. Thank you to everyone who decorated our buildings both inside and out.

The church website continues to be upgraded and provides up to date information on organisations and church activities. Huge thanks to Donald Cunningham who established and coordinates the content of the website.

We are required by church law to address stewardship each year. It was decided that now is not the right time for a stewardship campaign and continual encouragement is given to members to review their giving to the church. We recognise that with growing costs that this will have to be addressed. Since we no longer have a bank in Strathaven, it is encouraging that so many members make their offerings by Standing Order and Bank Transfer. We are grateful to everyone who supports the work of the church so faithfully. Our thanks are due to everyone who has contributed to the work of the church over the year and, in particular, to David and Sheila for administering our finances so effectively. Thank you to all involved in caring for our properties so that they remain in such good condition – much of the work is unseen but essential and appreciated.

The Presbytery Mission Plan was approved in April 2024 and submitted to the Faith Nurture Forum. We made an appeal against the plan as it stands and await a decision i.e. that there will be two church buildings in Strathaven, Glassford should close by June 2026 and Chapelton and Drumclog should be reviewed by June 2027. All of this to be served by 1.5 ministers.

We look forward to our minister Rt Rev Dr Shaw Paterson returning to us in June, watch this space for new initiatives!

Despite my introduction that this was a different year for us, a huge thank you to everyone who has ensured that it has been a successful year, especially all of you who attend either in person or through live streaming, after all a church is not a building but the people who unite to worship together.

The Moderator thanked the Session Clerk for her report and said that it was an enormous privilege for him to be acting as Interim Moderator during Shaw's Moderatorial year.

**PROPERTY REPORT:**

Robin Jack (Property Co-ordinator) gave the following report:

He began by thanking all local property conveners and committee members for their work throughout the year to maintain our three buildings. Their work keeps them safe and comfortable for us to use for worship and other activities.

This report will briefly summarise the 'big ticket' items of works carried out in 2024 - under four headings. Before getting into detail, it's important to understand the context in which our building assets are maintained. As is widely known, the Church of Scotland is going through a period of significant change: this is happening under the heading of Mission Planning. Until all mission planning is complete, property committees must operate under considerable financial constraints.

The so-called 'big ticket' items are as follows:

**Electrical works at Strathaven**

By law, public buildings require what is known as an Electrical Installation Condition Report (or EICR) every five years. (Both Chapelton and Glassford underwent EICR in 2022.). This fell due in Strathaven in 2024.

Additionally, the fire alarm system needed upgrading. The law about fire alarms now requires church buildings with fire alarms to have alarm apparatus in the sanctuary. EICR, necessary upgrade works identified and fitting of a new extended alarm system was carried out in 2024 at a cost of £25,619.

**Boiler servicing and repairs at Strathaven**

Annual Gas Safety Inspection is required by law. In addition, some repair work was necessary to the Strathaven boilers. The cost of these works amounted to £6,820.

**Repairs in Strathaven belfry**

It may be recalled that works took place in 2023 to deal with the consequences of water ingress (decayed flooring) and infestation by pigeons and insects. Repair works were finalised in 2024 with replacement of damaged louvres at a cost of £3,930.

**Fencing repairs – Glassford Glebe**

Whilst the Glassford Glebe is an asset of the church's estate managed by this congregation; the General Trustees retain a specific interest in it. Fencing repairs costing £4,250 were executed in 2024 at the direction of the General Trustees.

**Concluding remarks**

These four 'big ticket' items account for £40,518 or 83% of the Fabric expenditure shown in the accounts. The remaining £8,132 (17%) of expenditure was incurred in minor repairs, regular testing (fire extinguishers, PAT testing etc) and procurement of supplies (e.g. cleaning materials).

As a congregation we must be aware that the financial constraints mentioned earlier continue to be in place in 2025.

There were no questions for Robin regarding his Property report and the Moderator thanked Robin and the Property Conveners for all their hard work during the year in keeping the three buildings in excellent order.

**YOUNG CHURCH REPORT:**

Julie Robertson (Children, Youth and Family Worker) gave the following report:

**Toddlers**

We ceased Glassford toddlers in the past year due to a lack of support from the community as all who had started were now of age for school or nursery. There has never been a desire to bring this back, but Chapelton and Strathaven toddler groups remain strong with healthy numbers and good participation.

There has been some cross over, particularly in Chapelton where families who have originally attended via toddler groups have joined us for worship.

**After School**

Numbers attending after school on a Thursday in Glassford remain consistent and this has become a popular and engaged group. We have worked through various bible stories over each term and it is encouraging to see the children are retaining and able to recall stories we have discussed previously.

**Messy Church**

Due to a lack of engagement on a Sunday afternoon the decision was made, this year, to move Messy Church to a Friday night and out to Chapelton. This move has been very successful, and we are seeing growth in the number of children and families attending. We have had up to 15 attend.

Encouragingly again we have seen crossover where families who have worshiped with us at Messy Church have attended morning worship on a Sunday.

**Schools**

School relationships have been maintained and we were in attendance at all schools' Harvest and Christmas services. We were asked to take part in parts large and small and all interactions were received well.

Bubblegum and fluff was led within Kirkland Park and Wester Overton for both schools and Glassford Primary. This was well received and run well by the team of volunteers in attendance on the days.

I also attended Chapelton and Glassford Primaries to share the Nativity story with their infant classes. This was received well, and we have had some new attendees along to after school after this visit and spending some time with the younger classes.

Arrangements have already been made for Kirklandpark Easter and Leaving services within the church.

**Rock Solid**

This initiative for the P7+ group on a Friday night was launched at the start of the school term. This was to run monthly and was set up after consultation with parents. This was, however, unsuccessful at this time. David Lipowski has discussed running sessions with the Company section of BBs to give them an idea of what this group would be during one of their normal BB nights to encourage attendance. Unfortunately, due to personal circumstances, I have been unable to complete this before this meeting but will make arrangements before the summer or at least before we re-launch this group.

**Take time**

Take time mediations were run over the advent period in Chapelton. This was after discussion and consultation with some of the parents and grandparents in Chapelton toddlers who had an interest in finding out more about these groups. We are hoping to

run these again over the summer when the lighter nights may encourage more people out.

**Godly Play**

In September I was part of the group from Godly Play Scotland who hosted the international conference in Edinburgh over the September weekend. This was an incredible opportunity to meet and work with other storytellers from all over the world. I remain in touch and work closely with the Godly Play Scotland trainers. I provided an article for the Godly Play magazine and ran a workshop around Godly Play with Makaton signing.

**Inter Church Events**

I have worked alongside the Evangelical church, Avondale and the Outreach church on events such as Phillippa Hanna, Titanic show and others to represent Strathaven Trinity in these community ecumenical activities.

The Moderator thanked Julie for her report and commended her for the work she puts into all the events she organises for the young folks and families within the Church.

**MODERATOR'S THANKS:**

The Moderator thanked the congregation for the way they have supported him during the last year and also thanked the Worship leaders for their ongoing support each Sunday. He also reiterated the enormous privilege it has been for him to be Interim Moderator during Shaw's time in office. On Shaw's return, he will return to his duties as Pastoral Assistant, but hopefully still be around on the occasional Sunday to meet up and have a chat over tea/coffee and biscuits!

**CLOSURE:**

There being no further business the meeting closed with the benediction.

**MINISTER**

**SESSION CLERK**