

FRIENDS OF THE CATHEDRAL OF THE ISLES

Patron: The Bishop of Argyll and The Isles

Scottish Charity No. SC030311



Minutes of the Annual meeting 10.30am, Saturday, 22 October 2022

Sederunt: Rt Revd Dr Keith Riglin (*Patron of The Friends and Chair of the meeting*), Robert Garnett (*Chair of The Friends Committee*), Nick Roe (*Treasurer*), Revd Canon Gordon Fyfe (*Secretary*), Revd Canon Marjory MacKay, Revd Canon Alec Boyd, Diana Boyd, Graham Sommerville, Morag Burns, Sonya Davidson, Jill Corcoran, Sandra McIntyre, Marie Jones, Susan Hunter, Alistair Chisholm (Lay Chaplain), Carol Campbell, Linda Orr and Elizabeth Deeks.

1. Prayer: Robert Garnett welcomed everyone to the meeting which the Bishop then opened in prayer.

2. Apologies: These were received on behalf of Elspeth Robertson, Fergus Boyle, Julian Cochrane, Gill Cochrane, Dean Fostekew, Patrick Boyle, Susan Forrest, Revd Canon Keith Pagan, Anthea Clark, Kathy Turnbull, Eric Clifford, Sheila Allen, Jim Allen, Dawn Allen, Andrea Mc, Frazer Kelly, Anne Makes and Joy Blakeney.

3. Chair of the Annual Meeting: The minutes of the previous Annual Meeting (held on 30 October 2021) were accepted as correct: Proposed by Jill Corcoran and seconded by Marie Jones. There were no matters arising from these.

The Bishop, speaking also as Provost of The Cathedral of the Isles, reported that this had been a good year. Two Canons had been installed (Revd Canon Alec Boyd and also Peter Kemp - as Lay Canon) during the Queen's Jubilee weekend and Cathedral's Patronal Festival. This had been a busy event; with standing room only.

The Bishop congratulated Robert Garnett on becoming an ordinand of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

4. Lay Chaplain's Report: Alistair Chisholm offered the following report to the meeting: Shortly after last year's AGM, on Sunday 31 October, Miss Susan Hunter was confirmed by Bishop Keith. On Remembrance Sunday, 14 November, following a parade to the War memorial including the marking of 100 years service by the Royal British Legion, our usual Eucharist was conducted by Canon Alec. At this stage services were still socially distanced in the Cathedral and Communion was only in one kind.

On Advent Sunday the Choir was in place and the annual Advent Carol Service took place that afternoon with a collection of £163 received.

On the evening of Sunday 121 December a united Carols by Candlelight service was held in the Cathedral at 6.00pm - a very happy joint occasion. Mrs Margaret Duthie's funeral followed on 19 December - the end of an era.

The usual Christmas services took place on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and St Stephen's Day. Ian Duncan, a vigorous supporter of Cathedral and Friends, and Treasurer of the Congregation for many years, died on 31 December and his funeral was conducted by Canon Alec and the Lay Chaplain in St John's Parish Church, Largs, by permission of minister and session.

With the invasion of Ukraine by Russia on 24 February we marked the occasion with a Mass for Peace on Sunday 27 February. From that time onwards a candle for peace in Ukraine has burned daily in the Cathedral. A laminated sheet with a prayer accompanied the candle in the sanctuary (later moved to the Lady Chapel).

Services were sustained largely by Canon Alec but on a few occasions the Lay Chaplain led a service from the Reserved Sacrament. During Holy Week joint services were shared with other churches and Canon Alec and the Choir led us through the Triduum.

On Low Sunday the Choir of St John's, Princess Street, resumed their annual visit and sang for us on Saturday evening and Sunday morning. On Ascension Day we had the joyful news of the acceptance of our Lay Representative, Robert Garnett for training for ordination by the SEI.

Bishop Keith joined us for the weekend of 3rd and 4th June when we celebrated Pentecost and the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. At the Saturday Festal Evensong Dr Kemp was created Lay Canon of Cumbrae (as well as Lincoln). Sung Eucharist on Pentecost was an especially joyful day as the Parish Church congregation joined us and the Cathedral was full. There were 73 communicants - quite a day.

On 17 June Max Fraser and Rebecca Riddle were married in the Cathedral.

Summer concerts began in June and lasted until September. It was a highly successful season with quite a number of full houses.

With the death of the Queen at Balmoral on 8th September a service of reflection was led by Canon Alec at 6.00pm on Wednesday 14th. This was well supported and widely appreciated by worshippers of all traditions. On the day of the Queen's State Funeral a requiem was said in the morning at 8.30am.

In the spring COVID restrictions had been reduced and Communion was received in both kinds: with the coming of autumn Sunday services were taken in the Lady Chapel for the first time in 2 or 3 years.

5. Committee Chairman's Report: Robert Garnett offered the following report to the meeting:

This has been a fairly quiet year but one where we have made some progress.

The pandemic meant that for two years we have had very little activity and members will be aware that the 18 months or so before the pandemic were also a difficult period for the Cathedral. However, your committee has not been inactive.

We had been hoping to be able to show you something very visible in terms of our recent efforts in support of the maintenance and enhancement of the Cathedral furnishing in the form of new altar hangings for the high altar. Unfortunately, they are still being made but Alec has a sample to show you... These all-purpose multi-seasonal hangings will replace the now green curtains that have been there for decades and are now beginning to show their age. Some £2,000 has been contributed by the Friends toward a total cost of £3,500, the rest of which will be raised from the Congregations of St Andrew's and individual donations. This is something which, thanks to the approval of our Provost, we were able to decide upon quickly and we are confident that it will be met with your approval, too.

There are many other possible projects to be looked into, which I will come on to later, but we first have to look at our funding status and how to improve it.

With regard to this, membership has remained fairly steady over this period, largely thanks to our gaining several new life members around the time of last year's annual meeting, but it is down on figures from 5-10 years ago, and your committee is very much aware of the need to increase the number of members in order to bring in enough funds to make our work possible and also to

diversify the membership as much as possible in terms of its geographical spread. We would wish to see the Cathedral and College known and supported by a network of people of people across Scotland and indeed in the whole of the UK.

We have set aside funds for the website to be updated to give it a more contemporary and appealing look than our current hosting is able to provide. We have created a dedicated Friends e-mail address and we will be creating a membership database so that we can more easily communicate with members by post or by email, according to their preference.

We are very much aware of the need to – as it were - relaunch the Friends after this hiatus and to do this by identifying areas where we could have most impact and undertaking fundraising to address them.

There are many things we could assist with. You don't have to be an expert to see that there are issues such as the state of the Butterfield tiles in the sanctuary, the sandstone floors, the chancel ceiling, and so on.

The situation over the last four years (to which I've just alluded) has meant that very little work has been done on the fabric since the last quinquennial inspection of the Cathedral and College buildings in the spring of 2018 - and much work was urgent then. A new quinquennial is imminent, early next year, and we will look forward to seeing the results of that and then hope to work with the Trustees and the Diocese to see how we the Friends can assist in finding solutions to problems identified.

We have some significant anniversaries coming up in the middle of this decade. 2025 sees the bicentenary of the birth of George Frederick Boyle, 6th Earl of Glasgow and founder and benefactor of the Cathedral and College and 2026 sees both the 175th anniversary of the dedication of the buildings in 1851 – think about that George Frederick Boyle was 26 when he had all this done! – and the 150th anniversary of cathedral status.

These anniversaries have the potential for us to hang a fundraising campaign on these dates, starting now to seek ways of raising money that can be used to initiate projects that could come to fruition at that time and be showcased with a programme of celebratory events that would generate further income.

There is still much to be discussed about how we might do this, but I hope that coming together around something of this kind will afford the opportunity for the Friends to work with the Bishop and the Diocese, the College staff, St Andrew's congregation and others in our common goal of promoting the Cathedral and College, attracting more people to come and worship here, to visit the buildings and grounds and to stay here, and to enable us to pass on this treasure to future generations.

Following the report, questions were raised regarding the availability of grants. This will be explored by the Committee and diocesan expertise may be sought. The importance of working with the Diocese, rather than simply on our own, was expressed.

Clarification was made regarding the remit of The Friends remit. This is to deal primarily with the needs of the Cathedral College's fabric but does not cover assisting with the regular expenses brought about by the B&B business side of the College.

A health and safety item was raised relating to the absence of a handrail at the steps in the path leading to the main door of the Cathedral. Concern was noted and the St Andrew's Vestry will be encouraged to raise this and seek a replacement rail as soon as is possible.

6. Election of Committee Members: The Chair, Treasurer and Secretary indicated their willingness to serve again in these roles and were unanimously re-elected. All agreed that a Membership Secretary role be created and someone will be sought to fulfil this role and relieve the Treasurer of the task. Other existing Committee members were also willing to continue to serve and were re-elected.

7. The College Manager's Report: Patrick Boyle was not in attendance and had not supplied a report for the meeting.

8. The Treasurer's Report: An updated fresh copy of the accounts had been created and will be posted on the website.

Nick Roe reported that membership income is up, though Gift Aid is still to be applied for as he must check all membership forms before doing so. A new Gift Aid declaration will be sent out. He will check the deadline by which this must be done if funds from this source are to be recouped.

Membership: 230 members of which 102 are life members and 8 are honorary. 64 members did not respond with payment in 2022.

The accounts were proposed by Canon Alec Boyd and seconded by Sonya Davidson.

9. Allocation of Funds:

Restricted Funds: £2,000 for altar curtain

New Website: £500

Bursary Fund: £500 (*to assist those making a retreat*)

It was suggested that some funds could be set aside for the production of a Christmas Card for 2023. This, it was agreed, is a good fundraiser and the Committee will discuss this at their next meeting.

10. Any Other Business:

Proposed experimental change of date for Friends' Weekend: Robert Garnett proposed that the time of year be changed in which the Friends Weekend is held. October is problematic due to short days, inclement weather and potential time changes. All agreed that the spring of the year might be more desirable and attract larger numbers. Any permanent shift would entail a change to the current constitution and entail a change in our financial year end if the Annual Meeting were still to take place during the Friends Weekend. After much discussion it was agreed to let the Committee liaise with the College and check for potential available dates. It was thought prudent also to book a date, at this stage, in the College diary for a Friends Weekend in May of 2024.

11. Date of the next meeting: To be arranged

12. Closing remarks and prayer: The Bishop thanked all for their attendance and the meeting was closed with the saying of the grace.