

## **Minutes of the Finance and Property meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup>, Nov 2019 at Trinity Methodist Church, Douglas.**

**Present;** Pat Costain, Circuit Steward, David Clague, Union Mills, Frank Cowin, The Promenade, Chris Martin, Bride, Gareth Moore, Circuit Steward, Harvey Garton, Circuit Steward, Alwyn Collister, Castletown, Joy Creer, The Cooil, Jennifer Corrin, The Cooil, Rev Steve Ingroille, Sue Montgomerie, Circuit Steward, Leon Roome, Trinity, Rev David Shirliff and Eddie Teare, Circuit Treasurer and Chair of the Meeting.

The meeting commenced at 8-05 pm with devotions lead by Rev Richard Hall.

**Apologies for absence** – Margaret Kennaugh, Ruth Gorry, Judy Matthews, Andy Fishburne, Anne Cowell, Mike Simm, Evelyn Bevan, Chris Lyon and Lily Chapman

**Minutes of the meeting 11<sup>th</sup>, June, 2019** were agreed and signed by the Chair.

**Matters arising** – there were no matters which were not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.

**Kerrowkeil**, The meeting discussed the future of the building. A letter had been received the same day from Mr C Lyons on behalf of the Manx Methodist Historical Society expressing a wish that the building be retained and used as a heritage centre or operated on an arms length basis by an independent organisation, for example, the Friends of Kerrowkeil as is seen in the Church of England. Rev Hall explained that this was not possible in the Methodist Church. A discussion ensued and it was agreed that the Circuit was unable to fund the ongoing costs associated with the building. It was resolved to seek the agreement of the March Circuit Meeting to offer the building for sale if no firm proposal had been received by the April Circuit Meeting, including the team of individuals involved, to take over responsibility for the future of the premises, at no cost to the Circuit.

**Update on Orrisdale**, The Chair and Rev Hall reported that there had been no developments, although they expected matters to move forward in the near future when one of the claimants would commence an action in the Courts. The Circuit Meeting had already approved that the Treasurer could represent the Circuit in any proceedings to minimise the costs falling on the Circuit.

**Policy re spending reserves**, The Chair advised that the Circuit held c£650,000 in excess of its day to day requirements. The auditors had asked that the Circuit puts a policy in place relating to the reserves. Rev Hall also explained that in the UK charities were encouraged not to keep more than six months expenditure in hand and that it was likely that Manx Charity Regulations would, in the medium term, be amended to follow suit. If a decision was made to reduce reserves it could help to alleviate the upward pressure on assessments from increasing costs and reducing number of Churches. It was resolved that it be recommended that 10% of the

reserves be used each year to assist with assessments and that a scheme be drawn up to enable grants for local church projects.

**Draft Accounts for Circuit for Year ended 31<sup>st</sup>, August, 2019.** The draft accounts had been circulated. Whilst the figures had been agreed the Chair advised that there were ongoing technical discussions with the auditors relating to the notes to the accounts. It was expected that the final accounts would be available for signing by the end of the year. The shortfall of expenditure over income was £45,000 which was represented by the cost of the mission team in the South of the Island. The meeting decided to recommend to the Circuit Meeting that the accounts be approved for signing as long as there were no material alterations.

**Waterloo Road sale proceeds** – The Chair advised that the proceeds of the sale of Waterloo Road had been received and were held by Circuit. The Circuit has the ability to ring fence the funds for use to purchase an alternative building for use by Ramsey Methodist Church. It was agreed that it be recommended that approval be given that the funds be held in trust for RMC for the same period as they can reclaim the levy from Connexion i.e. five years to July, 2024. (Note – the monies had not been included in the Treasurer’s calculation of the free reserves mentioned above)

**Future of Manor Ark** – Rev Hall explained that the contract with Ms Dooley expired in September next year and that a decision needed to be made on the way forward. Discussions were ongoing with SMUT to share premises as it was more convenient to work from Douglas and also they would be able to work more effectively in the same building. The Treasurer is currently reviewing the lease of Manor Ark Premises to ascertain whether it is possible. It would also support joint outreach for developing community worship, subject to identifying the necessary funding. It was resolved to recommend to Circuit that authority be given to entering into a partnership with SMUT.

**Circuit Advance Funds Grants.** It was proposed that grants from the Circuit Advance Fund be available to Churches to enable them to fund expenditure on premises or staff. It was agreed that draft proposals would be submitted to Circuit.

**Approval of replacement windows for Peel Methodist Church.** The Treasurer advised that as part of the remedial work being undertaken at Peel, planning approval had been obtained to replace eight windows with PVC of identical appearance at a cost of £6568 plus VAT. The costs of the supporting buttresses for the wall, was proceeding on budget and Circuit approval for this had been obtained in 2017. The entire costs are being funded by their reserves and assistance from the Kelly Trust. It was agreed that Circuit be recommended to approve the replacement of the windows.

**Assessment Count.** Rev Hall asked all Churches to ensure that the results of the October headcount be returned to the District Office ASAP. This was to enable the basis for the assessments to be updated.

**Future meetings policy.** The Chair explained that he would only hold meetings when absolutely necessary. However with the pressure on diaries it was felt prudent to put dates in the diary for the meetings if it proved necessary to have one. This was welcomed.

**Any other business.** The Chair advised that, as at earlier that day, there were outstanding Schedule B's from Ballagarey, Crosby, Glen Maye, Kerrowkeil, Laxey, Promenade, Pulrose, The Howe, Trinity and union Mills (two years). He reminded the meeting that there was the ability to increase the assessment for those Churches who did not lodge the information by the end of the year.

The meeting concluded with the Grace at 9-10pm