

CHURCH HYMNARY TRUSTEES – REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2017

Moderator, Ann Inglis, presenting the report of the Church Hymnary Trustees in the absence of the Chairman, Lord Brodie.

Commissioners will be able to read the figures relating to sales. It is interesting to note that, while sales of the Words edition have fallen, sales of the melody and full music editions have risen as have those of the Large Print edition.

I'd like to make a few comments to fill in some background to a couple of matters in the report, but, first something which is not in the report but has been raised with us. I make comment on it now in case it is raised here. We were asked to investigate the possibility of an extra- large print edition of the hymnbook for someone who is visually impaired. We don't have a costing for this except to be told it would be very high. However, there are, I think, more compelling reasons for not going down that route. I am told by those who have been Trustees longer than I have that by far the largest number of complaints about CH4 was its size and weight, and certainly when I was a Parish Minister that was the complaint with which I was met. An extra- large print edition would be much heavier and could hardly be used by anyone even a little frail. Further, what is sufficiently large to one person might not be large enough for another. In my congregation we had a lady who needed the hymns in 24 point size to be able to read them. Imagine the size of a hymnbook in that size! Our solution was that a volunteer typed the hymns required for each week – and, of course, soon built up a large stock of hymns and some weeks was required to produce only one or maybe 2. Another more high tech option is to use an iPad or similar where the text can be enlarged as required. Hymns Ancient and Modern are happy to provide a file of words free of charge for those who require that.

I turn now to grants made by the Trustees in the course of the year. Firstly:

Scottish Churches Organist Training Scheme

SCOTS was formed in 1997 to counter the lack of organists for the worship of our churches and to improve the standard of playing and accompanying. Those also with many years' experience of being a local organist value the opportunity to expand their skills and understanding. Certificates are awarded at various stages.

There are Local Organ Workshops where there are tutorials in subjects relating to the place of music in worship, - e.g. congregational singing, and playing and accompanying skills. Participants in these workshops have been mainly members of the Scheme, who have paid for the events.

SCOTS wished to expand the accessibility and usefulness of these workshops and wished to compile data regarding organists who might wish to avail themselves of them. They also wished to run 3 days which would be free of charge. These days were held in Paisley, Aberlour and St. Andrews and were deemed to be useful and successful. It was for that work that the Trustees gave a grant and SCOTS have expressed their gratitude to us.

Secondly, the Mission and Discipleship Hymn Project

This may well have been mentioned when M and D reported so just a brief word.

This is a project to provide audio samples of all the items in CH4. It will consist of one verse recordings of each hymn in the book being made available for streaming on the Church of Scotland website along with further information about the words and music. The aim of this is to assist those planning worship in a number of ways. Those who do not read music will be able to get an impression of what the hymn sounds like and judge how usable it is in their context, while those who provide musical leadership will be able to hear an appropriate style of performance modelled. The recordings are being made by a broad range of groups throughout the country, demonstrating the breadth of music-making across the Kirk and emphasising that it is not only very experienced singers who can access new and fresh material. This project has been a response to feedback from many different sources over an extended period. It is for that project that we have made a grant which has enabled M and D to release further funds towards it.

Two requests were made to us at last year's General Assembly. The first was for a CH4 App but, for the reasons outlined in our report, we have concluded that this is not feasible. Secondly we were asked for a lie flat organists' edition. Similarly we have decided that this is not feasible either.

Moderator, I present the Report. I am not a Commissioner so would ask the Principal Clerk to move the Deliverance.