

Assembly Trustees Update 2.01

June 2020

- The trustees started their second year of meetings on 11 June using MS Teams. New trustees, David Harrison, Linda Irvine, Geoff Miller and Ann Nelson were welcomed to their first formal meeting. Jean Couper was unable to attend.
- With the General Treasurer, and with input from the Economic and Financial Oversight Task Group, the trustees continue to monitor the financial impact of the pandemic on the Church and receive rolling forecasts on a monthly basis as new information comes to light. It was noted that the full impact on congregational contributions is difficult to forecast with a high degree of certainty at this stage and it may not be fully understood for several months.
- The 2021 Budget remains a work in progress until the Operational Plan is at a more advanced stage.
- With the Head of HR, the changing patterns of the furlough scheme were discussed. The plans for staff returning to work are being progressed incorporating the need for utilising the extended, more flexible, Government furlough arrangements. The trustees approved a management paper requesting continuation of salary top up for any staff remaining on furlough, whether this was on full or part time basis, from July 2020 to the end of the current scheme in October 2020.
- The proposal from the IT and Communications Task Group to extend Church email addresses to congregational, presbytery and voluntary roles was approved, assuming proper communication and consultation, robust project costing and detailed plans. Benefits include consistent access for the Church community, encryption, and improved and secure digital collaboration. This work will now proceed to a Project Plan with timescales, milestones and budgeting.
- It was noted that there was a very significant increase in communications coming to the Chief Officer which reinforced the need to develop a robust internal communications function.
- The trustees endorsed the Chief Officer's approach to financial planning through proper scenario modelling and sensitivity analyses.
- Digital Heart and Soul had been a considerable success and the possibility of additional events was approved subject to dovetailing with other events and budget allocation.
- The importance of the Review and Development of Initial Training will be considered at the next meeting as will the work on Forum remits. Particular emphasis was placed on the need to progress the work that was focused on those under 40; it was noted that the Moderator and Chief Officer would meet with members of Church of Scotland Youth ("CoSY").

- The trustees discussed the importance for communications, both during the pandemic and beyond, among all involved in the Church whilst recognising the efforts of the Communications Department during what has been a very challenging period.
- The trustees agreed to take forward a proposal from the Faith Impact Forum to vary the terms of the Salvesen Bequest given the changes in circumstance since the 1991 variation. The views of the Procurator will be sought before further work is done.
- The next meeting of the Trustees will be on 24 June. There will be no meeting in July: to allow flexibility for leave for senior staff, whose commitment to work required by the pandemic has been exemplary. The trustees expressed their sincere thanks for the huge contribution and innovative worshipping styles that the Ministers and others working in congregations had progressed which was clearly sustaining the church during these unprecedented times. They hoped that they would also take the opportunity for a break in the summer after a very demanding twelve weeks.