

UPPER BRAES PARISH CHURCH (UBPC) MINUTES



Type of Meeting:	Kirk Session
Date and Time:	Tuesday 28 th January 2025 at 7.15pm
Location:	Brightons Ministry Centre
Sederunt:	Rev S Burton, Moderator and Ruling Elders: I Baillie, J Falconer, A Gillespie, J Glass (Presbytery Elder), G Mann, L McGarry, J Meek, R Moore, J Norton (Session Clerk), B Rankine, M Scott, J Wallace, W Tomlinson Rev M MacDonald (visiting as Pastoral Assistant) S Glass (Treasurer) for Item 5: 2025 Budget
Apologies:	H McManus, P Paterson
Absent:	None

Minute No.	Comment	Action
1. Constitution	1.1 The meeting was opened with a reading from Philippians 1:3-11 then constituted with prayer.	
2. Sederunt	2.1 The sederunt, as above, were noted. The Moderator welcomed Rev M MacDonald, visiting as Pastoral Assistant.	
3. Conflict of Interest (new)	3.1 No new conflicts of interest were declared.	
4. Minutes	4.1 The minutes from 10 th December (pp408-415) were approved, including updated wording in 7.3 Finance: Treasurer's Report, to note the concerns raised by the Trustees. An updated set of minutes (v2) was issued. Moderator
5. Matters Arising	<p>5.1 Letter of thanks from Ian Baillie – the Moderator read Ian's letter of thanks and gave thanks himself for Ian's letter and service.</p> <p>5.2 Sale of Shieldhill Building and Muiravonside Building – J Glass is leading on the sale of the Shieldhill building with a small team. J Glass provided an update on the latest position as at 28th January:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 viewings • 2 offers • 2 notes of interest <p>for a range of uses including home, church, business premises. Closing date expected to be in two weeks' time.</p> <p>J Glass noted a Christian church (St Andrews Mar Thoma) were very interested. They are ready to move and do not require planning permission.</p> <p>Session agreed to delegate approval for the sale to a sub-group consisting of the Moderator, Session Clerk and J Glass.</p> <p>Session also approved the sub-group primarily exploring the route of selling to another Christian church as it would be good to retain the building as a church; noting that whilst we don't need to sell to the highest bidder, as</p>	

UPPER BRAES PARISH CHURCH (UBPC) MINUTES



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	<p>Trustees, we want to ensure a fair price is obtained. Session approved accepting up to £10k below the 'offers over' price of £85k. The sub-group would defer back to Session if wider discussion/decisions were needed.</p> <p>The Moderator noted that the Glebe Committee of the General Trustees had signed off on the glebe/car park for Muiravonside to be included in the sale; and await Presbytery sign off. UBPC won't have a final say on the sale since the deeds are vested with the General Trustees.</p> <p>5.3 Letters to Butterfly Garden and Congregation Member – the Moderator noted the Shieldhill Butterfly Project team would meet in the new year to discuss the response from Session. No response had yet been received from the Congregation Member.</p> <p>5.4 Response from Orange Order – the Moderator noted a meeting had been held with six members of the Orange Order and the minute issued with the Moderator's Report had been shared with them.</p> <p>Brent Haywood had confirmed that Session's decision was correct legally.</p> <p>The Moderator also noted he had challenged the Orange Order regarding comments made to a member of UBPC. They readily took these on board, apologising for the behaviour and will take action to speak to all members of their Order.</p> <p>5.5 Policy Updates – J Falconer took Session through the latest changes in each of the 13 policies issued prior to the meeting. J Falconer noted that 11 of the 13 policies had been reviewed in the last 12 months; some were a requirement of Presbytery and CoS as a charity, some were Human Resource policies put in place to so we could recruit. Within the policies there is an emphasis on Elders as Trustees who have a responsibility for ensuring compliance with them.</p> <p>Session approved the following policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Security Policy for BMC (noting the policy for SMC is still to be produced; policies may be put in place for the Muiravonside and Shieldhill buildings.) • Conflict of Interest Policy • Data Protection Policy • Data Retention Policy • Employer Privacy Notice • General Privacy Notice • Whistleblowing Policy • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy • Harassment Policy • Bribery and Procurement Policy (with special note of the addition of the Budget management section for the Teams) 	

UPPER BRAES PARISH CHURCH (UBPC) MINUTES



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety Policy (noting the Fire Safety documents referred to in Appendix 1 are under review. These are operational documents so don't need to come to Session for approval) • Vehicles Policy (with special note for volunteer drivers who have responsibility bringing others to church (eg for Friendship Plus or groups within Up and Coming) to check with/notify their insurer they are covered for volunteer driving.) • Lone working <p>J Falconer noted the policies would be reviewed over the next three years, a few at a time.</p> <p>An item highlighting the new/refreshed policies will be placed in the newsheet and the policies added/updated on the website.</p> <p>The Moderator gave thanks to J Falconer for his work on the policies, and asked Session to take time to read the policies and encourage others to do the same.</p> <p>5.6 Replacing the Organ – Permission has been secured from the appropriate Presbytery Committee. Now await Presbytery to sign off at meeting on 08 February.</p> <p>Denny Westpark Parish Church are interested in the existing organ at BMC. All enquiries to go via the Moderator, as the organ will need to be valued.</p> <p>5.7 Replacement of Pastoral Assistant – Session considered the request of Gayle Miller, our candidate for ministry, to be considered for an 18-month fixed-term contract for this role from 01 June 2025 until 31 December 2026. Following consideration of Gayle's skills, gifts and experience against the duties expected within Schedule 1 of the Pastoral Assistant job description, Session felt she met the criteria and agreed to internally appoint Gayle for 18 months.</p> <p>5.8 2025 Budget – S Glass took Session through the draft 2025 Budget that was shared ahead of the Kirk Session meeting.</p> <p>The key columns are</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) FY25 Annual Budget 2) 2024 Estimated Ongoing Total (calculated from 2024 BMC actuals and 2023 SMC actuals that are expected to continue, eg Heat and Light) 3) LFL (Like for Like) difference which is 2) – 1) <p>Key points noted: Giving to Grow (G2G) allocation have been updated based on increased figures provided by 121. £20k for new organ will come from reserves</p>	<p>J Falconer/ Moderator/ Session Clerk</p>

UPPER BRAES PARISH CHURCH (UBPC) MINUTES



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	<p>unless the work is needed to keep the buildings wind and watertight.</p> <p>5.9 2024 Accounts for UBPC and Legacy congregations:</p> <p>The Moderator asked the following to ensure the 2024 accounts were updated and sent to the Independent Examiner:</p> <p>BBS – R Moore Brightons and UBPC - S Glass Muiravonside – Moira Sharp Slamannan – L McGarry</p> <p>S Glass requested all accounts were sent to her to review at same time as send to Independent Examiner.</p> <p>5.10 Update on external party for merging accounts – S Glass confirmed an external auditor is available to do this work. If less than £500 cost, this can be managed within the Finance Team.</p> <p>5.11 Trustee Responsibility - J Glass cautioned that as Trustees we need to be mindful of starting to build in fixed costs that could make running the business of the church unsustainable. Therefore, he urged the Trustees not to be too quick to agree costs, as may have been done previously when the deficit was much lower.</p>	<p>R Moore / S Glass / M Sharp / L McGarry</p>
<p>6. Standing Updates</p>	<p>6.1 Update from Presbytery – No update as no meetings have been held since December Kirk Session.</p> <p>UBPC have been selected to send an Elder as Commissioner to General Assembly in May. Session approved J Norton to attend. The Moderator noted he would also be attending.</p> <p>6.2 Attestation of UBPC Roll and congregational statistics</p> <p>Session attested the new united Congregational Roll as at 31 December 2024.</p> <p>J Norton (Session Clerk) noted the change in procedure for submission of Congregational statistics to Presbytery this year following the Union on 1 November 2024:</p> <p>The Congregational stats for all four legacy congregations plus the new united UBPC need to be submitted to cover the period 1 January 2024-31 December 2024. The stats for the four legacy congregations technically cover 01 January 2024 – 31 October 2024 and UBPC will then cover the period 01 November 2024-31 December 2024.</p> <p>Numbers were as follows:</p> <p>Legacy congregations:</p>	

UPPER BRAES PARISH CHURCH (UBPC) MINUTES



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	<p><u>Blackbraes and Shieldhill (BBC)</u></p> <p>Number on Roll at 01-Jan-2024: 52</p> <p>Added during the year:</p> <p>by profession of faith 0 by certificate 0 by resolution 0 Joining a Union 0 a total of <u>0</u></p> <p>Removed during the year:</p> <p>by death 0 by certificate 0 otherwise 0 To Union 52 a total of <u>52</u></p> <p>Number on Roll at 31-Dec-2024 0</p> <p>There were 0 Adherents on the Roll.</p> <p><u>Brightons</u></p> <p>Number on Roll at 01-Jan-2024: 383</p> <p>Added during the year:</p> <p>by profession of faith 5 by certificate 2 by resolution 0 Joining a Union 0 a total of <u>7</u></p> <p>Removed during the year:</p> <p>by death 5 by certificate 4 otherwise 3 To Union 378 a total of <u>390</u></p> <p>Number on Roll at 31-Dec-2024 0</p> <p>There were 12 Adherents on the Roll who transferred to UBPC.</p> <p><u>Muiravonside</u></p> <p>Number on Roll at 01-Jan-2024: 74</p> <p>Added during the year:</p> <p>by profession of faith 0 by certificate 0 by resolution 0 Joining a Union 0 a total of <u>0</u></p>	

UPPER BRAES PARISH CHURCH (UBPC) MINUTES



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	<p>Removed during the year:</p> <p>by death 4 by certificate 24 otherwise 21 To Union 25 a total of 74</p> <p>Number on Roll at 31-Dec-2024 0</p> <p>In addition, there was 1 Adherent on the Roll who transferred to UBPC.</p> <p><u>Slamannan</u></p> <p>Number on Roll at 01-Jan-2024: 88</p> <p>Added during the year:</p> <p>by profession of faith 0 by certificate 0 by resolution 0 Joining a Union 0 a total of 0</p> <p>Removed during the year:</p> <p>by death 3 by certificate 0 otherwise 8 To Union 77 a total of 88</p> <p>Number on Roll at 31-Dec-2024 0</p> <p>In addition, there were 0 Adherents on the Roll and 18 on the Supplementary Roll (previous members removed without issuing a Certificate of Transference).</p> <p><u>New United UBPC</u></p> <p>Number on Roll at 01-Jan-2024: 0</p> <p>Added during the year:</p> <p>by profession of faith 0 by certificate 0 by resolution 1 Joining a Union 532 a total of 533</p> <p>Removed during the year:</p> <p>by death 4 by certificate 0 otherwise 0 To Union 0 a total of 4</p> <p>Number on Roll at 31-Dec-2024 529</p> <p>In addition, there were 13 Adherents on the Roll and 18 on the Supplementary Roll.</p>	

UPPER BRAES PARISH CHURCH (UBPC) MINUTES



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	<p>6.3 Safeguarding - report accepted as tabled Session approved Owen Gough, Callum Higgins and Lauren Hunter to work with children as part of the Boys' Brigade.</p> <p>The Moderator gave thanks for the huge amount of work Eileen Hope (Safeguarding Coordinator) has done.</p> <p>6.4 Local Mission Church Leadership Team (LMCLT) - report accepted as tabled.</p> <p>The Moderator noted the team was still finding its feet. There had been some questions raised about communications. The intention is not to over-emphasise the LMCLT but some things will need background co-ordination.</p> <p>It was raised that the Easter Funday is not going ahead this year. The Moderator will check with Rachel Gilmour. (Post meeting this has been confirmed there will a pause on the Funday this year).</p> <p>The Moderator asked for Session to keep the LMC in prayer.</p>	
7. Discussion Topic	<p>7.1 Maturity in Following Jesus – carried forward to February Kirk Session</p>	
8. Team Updates	<p>8.1 Discipleship Team Report – accepted as tabled.</p> <p>The Moderator noted there is lots on the go for the Team to oversee and support and gave thanks to the Team. It is good to see the range of opportunities to grow in faith.</p> <p>He also noted H McManus has torn her Achilles tendon so asked Session to keep her in their prayers.</p> <p>8.2 Pastoral Care Team (PCT) Report – accepted as tabled. The Moderator noted it was a delight now to have Monica MacDonald on the PCT and encouraged Session to give their prayers, encouragement and love to Monica.</p> <p>8.3 Worship Team Update – accepted as tabled. The Moderator noted it was a delight to have so many involved in the Worship Team richly blessing both BMC and SMC. He asked Session to be encouraging to all those serving on this team.</p>	
9. Correspondence	<p>9.1 Let request from British Fire Consortium – Session approved the request to let SMC for training courses, usually 2-3 times per year.</p> <p>Finance Team to agree guidance for rates.</p> <p>9.2 Let request from Scottish Women's Institute – Session approved this let at SMC also.</p>	Finance Team

UPPER BRAES PARISH CHURCH (UBPC) MINUTES



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	<p>a good connection with the community as there is no café in the village.</p> <p>The Moderator noted this was an LMC decision rather than Session; the communication from Session being that there is not the same pressure on the Slamannan community as there was pre-union to raise funds for SMC.</p> <p>The Moderator did raise that there had been strong feedback received from some of the UBPC members regarding some of the fundraising activities run, noting the legacy Brightons Parish had a no-gambling, including raffles, policy.</p> <p>The Moderator stressed this was not about enforcing previous policies carte blanche but the strength of opinion is strong as it comes from a biblical position and therefore does not create unity.</p> <p>11.5 Martha's Pantry - M MacDonald asked for prayer regarding a venue for this since the Slamannan Community Centre is closing. She stressed this is technically removing a food source from the community.</p>	
12. Services	<p>12.1 The following services were planned:</p> <p>26th January 2025 (6.30pm) – evening service 30th January 2025 (11.30am) – half hour service 16th February 2025 (11am) – Joint service at Brightons 23rd February 2025 (6.30pm) – evening service 27th February 2025 (11.30am) – half hour service 2nd March 2025 (11am) – all age communion service 7th March 2025 (7pm) – World Day of Prayer service at Wallacestone Methodist 9th March 2025 (11am) – Braes Churches Pulpit Swap Sunday 18th April 2025 (7pm) – Braes Churches Good Friday Service at Brightons 4th May 2025 (11am) – Joint service at Slamannan Primary School</p>	
13. Dates	<p>13.1 Dates of future meetings/holidays were noted as:</p> <p>25th February 7.15pm – Kirk Session meeting (community outreach, children and young people) 25th March 7.15pm – Kirk Session meeting (property, finance, communications) 29th April 7.15pm – Kirk Session meeting (pastoral care, discipleship, worship) 27th May 7.15pm – Kirk Session meeting (community outreach, children and young people) 17th June 7.15pm – Kirk Session meeting (property, finance, communications)</p> <p>The Moderator noted that six-monthly updates would suffice for Teams so will bring an updated schedule to February Kirk Session.</p>	Moderator

UPPER BRAES PARISH CHURCH (UBPC) MINUTES



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<p>14. Close</p>	<p>The Moderator also asked for any ideas regarding the discussion topic carried forward to February Kirk Session (Maturity in Following Jesus) to be sent to him ahead of another meeting on 5th February. He also encouraged Session to reflect what we, as Elders, are modelling as leaders. Are we modelling spiritual leadership.</p> <p>Please note: each month the following items would be standing business, with reports shared where there is business to address, and/or an update given no less than 3 months apart:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding • Presbytery • Local Mission Church Leadership Team <p>Also, under AOCB could come urgent requests via other teams where necessary.</p> <p>Please note the following dates as well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott holiday: 7-13 April 2025 <p>14.1 The meeting was closed by saying the Grace together.</p>	<p>..... Moderator</p> <p>..... Session Clerk</p>