

REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2006

The Committee continues to deal with the practical aspects of Administration and Finance, which enables the work of the denomination to continue as it seeks to follow and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2006

The Committee was pleased to find in the Salutation Hotel, Perth, a venue with accommodation suitable to facilitate all General Assembly Sessions including the Opening Session of Assembly and the Praise Service. The Annual Meetings of the Women's Home and Overseas Committee will also be held in the hotel.

Details of the arrangements for the 2006 General Assembly are contained in the Outline Order of Business in Appendix 1 of the report.

Following recent practice, the opening of the General Assembly will take place on Thursday evening with the Appointment of the Moderator and the Communion Service. The Business Sessions of Assembly will be held on Friday and Saturday. Each Presentation is allocated forty-five minutes. Included within this time is the verbal report, which should last no more than ten minutes, questions, discussion, and the paragraphs of Deliverance. Conveners are therefore asked to keep to their time when presenting their verbal report. The Moderator will give his Address during the closing Praise Service on Saturday and Commissioners are urged to make every effort to be present at this Service.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2007

Having received very positive feedback from General Assembly 2004 regarding the accommodation and format of General Assembly, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly 2007 should again be held in the John McIntyre Centre at Edinburgh University with the opening and closing sessions being held in a suitable local church.

STEDFAST

The viability of the ongoing publication of Stedfast as a denominational magazine has been a concern to the Committee. Current circulation stands at 1,374 copies, showing a decrease of 59 from the previous year.

The Committee is grateful to the editor, Rev J. A. M. McFie for his work in producing Stedfast. Aware that the role of editor is not an easy task to fulfil, a team consisting of members from each presbytery has been formed to provide assistance and support in the preparation of the magazine. The team will meet with the editor on a regular basis with the remit to:

- Make suggestions about articles/ topics etc to be included in the magazine and consider the content and layout of the magazine for the next 2/3 issues.
- Take responsibility for ensuring articles etc are available on time.
- Offer constructive observations on previous issues with a view to developing the magazine further.
- Assist in links with presbyteries and congregations both in terms of gathering material and in encouraging distribution of the magazine.

Producing a magazine that provides articles and material to stimulate the life and faith of the church, encourage congregations and provide a link across the denomination by sharing initiatives and stories is still a worthwhile enterprise.

DISCUSSION PAPER

The Joint Supplementary Report of the Administration & Finance and Ministry Committees at General Assembly 2005 stated the report was by nature an initial response to the issues raised by the Discussion Paper. The issues raised by that report are being addressed by the appropriate General Assembly Committees and as such need to be viewed as works in progress.

CHURCH OFFICE

As requested by the General Assembly 2003, the Administration and Finance Committee (previously Business and Administration) have explored various possible arrangements for Church Office. It has been agreed that we need an office. The last valuation in October 2003 gave a figure of £450,000. The report noted that the property is finished to a 'basic style and specification throughout' with an electrical installation of a 'dated vintage' which will require to be upgraded.

The floor area is 3,027 sq feet - Basement 680, Ground Floor 694, First floor 817, second floor 836. At that time they suggested a reasonable selling figure of £150 per sq ft although No 8 had recently been sold for £520,000 (£179.56 per sq ft) and no 9 for £503,500 (£151.59 per sq ft). The survey report suggested that rental income for this type of property would be in the region of £10 - £12 per sq ft.

It is recognised that we do not need such a large office - approximately half of the floor area would suffice. The basement area is currently used by three Christian organizations and from this we receive a rental income of approximately £3,500 per annum. One room at the rear of the top floor could be rented. Some upgrading of the room and stair would be required and we would need to rent the room to a charity so as not to affect our rate-free status. The current rateable value is £30,000 and the current business rate is in the region of 50p in the pound.

In considering how we should proceed, a number of factors have been taken into account.

- What would be the purpose of selling the present office and how would the proceeds be used? It would not be wise to use the funds simply to subsidise the ongoing work.
- Alternative office accommodation would be required. In the Glasgow area, recent evidence suggests a rent of £10 - £13 per sq ft. There may well be other service charges. The position regarding rates would need to be investigated. To rent alternative accommodation would be costly and most of the capital from the sale would be required to give an adequate income to cover rent. 1500 sq ft would cost £15,000 - £20,000+ per annum, possibly plus other service costs and rates. Generally costs do not appear to vary significantly across central Scotland.
- We could consider an office in other areas but it was felt that the location should be accessible by car and by public transport for those coming from different parts of Scotland. Obviously this limits the areas which we can consider and will affect the cost.
- Another possibility might be to adapt or build accommodation at one of our churches. None of the locations is ideal for this although some have parking and are on a bus route.

Sharing accommodation could raise difficulties that would need to be considered. If additional accommodation is built this could be costly but as with other church buildings, it might have no saleable value if the premises were ever to be disposed of. In other words the money is effectively 'lost' rather than providing an 'asset'.

A full building survey has been carried out on the office by D. M. Hall. A detailed report included an outline of work that required to be carried out over the next few years. The report indicated that the building is in reasonable condition for its age but some work requires to be carried out to renew areas of the electrical system and carry out repairs to the roof. The Committee agreed that these were necessary repairs and for the work to be carried out.

The Committee wish to record its appreciation for the contribution of the office staff and the amount of work they do throughout the year as they serve the Church.

COORDINATING FORUM

The Coordinating Forum met in October 2005 and March 2006. The Forum consists of General Assembly Conveners and Vice-Conveners, Presbytery Clerks, and the National and Presbytery Development Coordinators. These meetings enable the sharing of information regarding the work of the Committees and Coordinators, plans for the future, and discussing budgets for the following year.

CHURCH HANDBOOK

The Committee agreed to publish an updated Handbook, which was made available from March 2006. The format of the handbook has changed to accommodate the growing number of e-mail addresses. Due to the spacing required for the new layout it was decided to omit the paragraphs containing information on the history of each Church. The Committee thank the Rev J O Fulton and Mrs H Jarvis for gathering the necessary information and producing the Handbook. The cost of the handbook remains at £3 per copy.

SPECIAL AID

Matters relating to Special Aid continue to receive confidential consideration when required. The Committee was most grateful to receive a Legacy of £89,452 from the estate of Mr John Cowe to Special Aid.

QUINQUENNIAL VISITATION

Visitation were made during this year to the following congregations:

East: Bannockburn: Murrayfield, Broxburn: St Nicholas

West: Clydebank, Dalreoch, Fort William

North: Newport: Trinity, Tayport, Westray

MODERATORIAL VISITATION

The Committee record their appreciation to Rev J G Marshall and Mrs S Marshall for their visits to congregations during the past year and for the encouragement these have brought.

East: Alloa, Bannockburn, Bo'ness, Broxburn, Canonbie, Menstrie, West Calder

West: Ardeer, Ayr, Bargeddie, Chryston, Clydebank, Cumnock, Duntocher: West, Stonehouse, Whifflet, Wishaw

North: Aberdeen: Northfield, Balbeggie, Cunningsburgh, Dounby, Dundee, Lossiemouth, Perth, Sandwick, Westray

In the name of the Committee,
GARY J A BARCLAY
GRAHAM G BROWN
JOHN O. FULTON

Convener
Vice-Convener
Secretary

Appendix 1
GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2006
OUTLINE PROGRAMME

THURSDAY 8th June Salutation Hotel Perth

- 11.00 & 2.15 Committee on Women's Home and Overseas.
Meeting of the Prayer Union at close
- 7.00 General Assembly Constituted
Roll of Assembly submitted
Appointment of Moderator of Assembly
Communion Service - Preacher: Retiring Moderator: Rev J G Marshall
- Communion conducted by Moderator: Rev A McMillan
- Roll of Departed
- Loyal Address to the Queen
Appointment of Business Committee
Appointment of Committee to Examine Records and Minute Books
- (Close approx 8.30)

FRIDAY 9th Salutation Hotel Perth

- 09.45 Opening Devotions
Open Prayer
Memorial Tributes
Reception of Delegates from other Churches
Report of Assembly Business Committee
Presentation by Overseas Committee
Presentation by Ecumenical Relations Committee
Presentation by Christian Education Committee
Presentation by Evangelism Committee
Presentation by Church and Society Committee
(Close approx 8.00)
- Lunch 12.30 – 1.45, Buffet tea 4.30 – 6.00, tea/ coffee: 11 – 11.15 & 3.00 – 3.15.*
Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Students Association at 4.30 p.m.

SATURDAY 10th Salutation Hotel Perth

- 09.45 Opening Devotions
Open Prayer
Representative of Scottish Bible Society
Report by Committee on Women's Home and Overseas
Presentation by Administration & Finance Committee
Presentation by Ministry Committee
Presentation by Panel on Doctrine
Presentation by Youth Committee
Report by General Trustees
Committee on Records and Minute Books
Any business left over from previous diets/ closing items
Opportunity to share what is happening in congregations
Lunch 12.30 – 1.45, and tea/ coffee: 11 – 11.15 & 3.00 – 3.15.

Salutation Hotel Perth

- 6.30 **Praise Service**
Moderator's Address
Closing Items
(Close approx 8.00)