

BRIGHTONS PARISH CHURCH MINUTES



Type of Meeting:	Kirk Session
Date and Time:	Tuesday 28 th May 2024 at 7.45pm
Location:	Brightons Parish Church
Sederunt:	Rev S Burton, Moderator and Elders: I Baillie, J Falconer, A Gillespie, J Glass, G Mann, C McEwan, H McManus, J Meek, J Norton (Session Clerk), P Paterson, B Rankine, K Wansbrough
Apologies:	J Dick, J Callahan, R Callahan, A McDonald, T Nimmo, G Scott, M Scott, W Tomlinson, J Wallace
Absent:	None

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1. Constitution	1.1 The meeting was opened with a reading from 1 Corinthians 12 and 14:1 then constituted with prayer. The moderator encouraged all Elders that to carry on the ministry of Jesus, we need the wider body to take our church forward in the journey of discipleship.	
2. Sederunt	2.1 The sederunt, as above, were noted.	
3. Conflict of Interest (new)	3.1 No new conflicts of interest were declared.	
4. Minutes	4.1 The minute from 27 th February 2024 was approved (pp383-387).	
5. Matters Arising	5.1 Kirk Session Away Day - the Moderator outlined the programme for the day, noting the focus will be on priorities for the period ahead and time for prayer. Moderator
6. Presbytery	<p>6.1 General Feedback from Presbytery – Jason Glass (Presbytery Elder) shared his experience of his first Presbytery meeting on 27 April - the process was well managed and very structured but challenged how effective it was to facilitate debate and engagement. Jason is considering what team/committee he could get involved in. Nothing to note from 27 April for discussion.</p> <p>6.2 Basis of Union preparation - the Moderator noted Presbytery will formally hear at the next meeting on 1 June 2024 of the approval for the Presbytery plan at General Assembly. There is then a two-week window for review requests on the process. The Moderator also noted a possible timeline for the Union:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting of all four Kirk Sessions (KS) before end of June to agree the Basis of Union • Congregational votes before end August • Start Union 1st Nov (with first Sunday on 3rd Nov) <p>The Moderator noted there is much to do ahead of the Union, eg recruit additional Pastoral Assistant.</p> <p>The Moderator noted the Principal Clerk has advised the text should change in the Basis of Union about the election of Elder. The suggested text is:</p>	

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	<p>Kirk Session: The Elders of the four Kirk Sessions shall form with the Minister the Kirk Session of the united charge. It is the intention that the number of Elders on the new Kirk Session will be reduced as soon as possible to around 15, in proportion to the roll of each of the uniting congregations.</p> <p>In essence a new KS will be formed after the Union and Elders of all four KS will automatically become Elders on the new KS. This new KS will agree the final process/numbers for electing 'ruling' Elders (Trustees) onto the new KS. As part of this process Elders will be asked if they wish to retire as 'ruling' Elders (though they will still retain their status as 'Elder', as they are ordained for life).</p> <p>KS unanimously agreed the language/proposal above and in the papers.</p> <p>6.3 Verbal Update on General Assembly - the Moderator shared the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five days of debate – 9.15am-6.15pm • 400 present in the room / 100 online • Lord High Commissioner: Duke of Edinburgh • Electronic Summary from Life & Work will be issued; the Moderator will circulate to KS and make paper copies available on Sunday morning <p>Main take aways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of resources and ideas to explore, read, share and try out • New training route and discernment for those going into ministry agreed in principle • Criteria for Seed of Growth Fund have changed (Brightons now eligible to apply for funding for our Youth Worker) • Access to Consolidated Fabric Fund increased for local mission • Review of Presbyteries to begin • Massive issues remain: 460 vacancies, £8m deficit in CoS General Account, only 29% of churches pay their cost of ministry • Interim reports presented on assisted dying and transgender identities 	
<p>7. Team Updates</p>	<p>7.1 Community Outreach Team – report accepted as tabled.</p> <p>Session discussed the question outlined in the meeting agenda regarding a special additional service geared to the 'unchurched'. Key points/thoughts raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will this be an addition to Belong or an additional service? • Is this a one off, or ongoing event? • Isn't this what Belong originally intended to be? Support this but concern about capacity of volunteers • Not against but can't see what the picture is – could an example of what this might look like be provided? 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion to hold in a neutral venue, eg Community centre or school • Can see the benefits of coming to a church service but concern it's another additional thing when it already feels like we're doing too much as a church • Should we focus more on discipling in the community – could this give more of an impact/benefit for the effort/work involved? • Already seeing some folks come to church when invited. With Belong / upcoming socials - could we be looking at these avenues for outreach as the intermediate step? Eg Found church have a high emphasis on invitation • Could this be a potential 'splinter' if not lined up with whole church vision? • Could have similar disadvantages to 'splitting the congregation' as some felt the summer services did • Suggestion to have something after 11am service where opportunity for interaction/discussion/sharing testimonies <p>7.2 Up and Coming Team - report accepted as tabled. It was noted Peter Costello has taken on the Team Convenor role.</p> <p>The Moderator noted his thanks to the Teams in Brightons and encouraged all Elders to ask after how things are going in the Teams.</p>	
<p>8. Discussion Topic</p>	<p>8.1 Holy Spirit paper – The Moderator introduced the Session outlined in the meeting agenda, noting the message from the new Moderator of the General Assembly that we all need to be led by the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>This paper is about making space to explore; it is not a three-line whip. The Moderator noted all are feeling a level of anxiety, but he hoped we can approach this open, interested and excited. Often God wants to use our fears to draw us closer to Him, away from what makes us comfortable.</p> <p>The Moderator noted and addressed a few points raised from those who sent apologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern raised it may marginalise people; suggestion some already feel marginalised with previous changes, though no names or examples provided to the Moderator • The Moderator proposed what is being shared in the paper is more inclusive as makes us broader as a church. 'Broad church' does not mean reducing our shared life to the lowest common denominator • This is not about hype or worship styles • It will not regularly add more time to the services • 'High level teaching on the gifts' means a brief overview • Discipleship pathway – what journey do we take people on? Alpha, then what's the next step? 	

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	<p>The Moderator had shared the idea with the Preaching team who felt the teaching would be beneficial. Brent Haywood noted we are not yet seeing renewal/revival in Brightons; maybe because we do not yet have the grounding. Safar/Huddle/teaching in the Holy Spirit may help with this.</p> <p>Cammy Dick had also shared a 'Kairos' moment (a term used in 'Huddle' to describe a moment when God speaks to us) where he saw a withered bush whilst on a walk and had the impression of God saying, "that's my church without the Holy Spirit" – Cammy was completely unaware of this upcoming conversation at KS.</p> <p>Questions/comments raised from discussion in the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We should be bold, open, confident of telling what the Holy Spirit is doing • Listening to a sermon on prophesy by Tyler Staton– didn't find scary/intimidating. This feels scarier, but want to better know God's voice, so will lean into it • Not all had teaching to hear God's voice – will find it helpful and encouraging • We all experience God differently; we have all heard God speak to us but may not have recognised it • What is being proposed is trying to help us tap into the potential of the whole body of Christ in Brightons, with all our gifts welcomed and all encouraged to go deeper with God • Step in together - natural next step even if scary • We shouldn't be afraid to make mistakes • Found it a challenging and interesting read; 'what do people see in me?' Keen to weave it into the life of the congregation • Q: How deal with it if people do stop coming? A: This is an opt in, not forcing people to adopt this practice or theology. Hopefully we will be able to engage with and discuss their concerns. Might they be influenced when see the work of the Holy Spirit in others, 'spreading the knowledge of Christ like a sweet perfume' – 2 Corinthians 2:14 • What's not to like? Think of what it must have been like at Pentecost when speaking different languages • Should speak openly about it. Hear God through different people • No reason to say no • The Holy Spirit takes us to the right place at the right time; works in different ways in different people; not used to this practice of theology • Don't need to change who you are if you're not ready • How create a safe space for folks to try out the gifts? • Adds another element of church worship; creating space for people to explore <p>The Moderator summarised by saying he was not hearing a strong objection to teaching and workshops and that we had shared and discussed our nervousness.</p>	

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	<p>Session therefore approved the proposal for teaching on the Holy Spirit, offering follow-up workshops and see where this takes us.</p> <p>The Moderator noted this will take time, experimentation, allowing ourselves to get it wrong as we journey together.</p>	
9. Correspondence	9.1 None	
10. Roll Keeping	<p>10.1 Since the last meeting, the deaths had been noted of Dorothy Sommerville (29 February) and Bob Adam (10 April). The Moderator gave thanks for the fellowship shared and the hope we have of seeing them again. The Moderator also noted that there have been other wider church family deaths and asked for these families also to be held in prayer.</p> <p>10.2 Session homologated the decision to admit Megan Wansbrough to membership.</p> <p>10.3 A request for baptism had been received from Caroline Whittit for her son Reggie – Session agreed that this would take place at the morning service on 11th August.</p>	
11. AOCB	11.1 Resignation of Jeremy Clerk as Elder - the Moderator noted Jeremy had submitted a generous and kind letter of resignation on 15 May 2024. The Moderator gave thanks for Jeremy's time of service.	
12. Services	<p>12.1 The following services were planned:</p> <p>30th May - half-hour service (Ian) (no Communion) 2nd June - Communion (not all age) 23rd June - Sunday School Closing Service 27th June - half-hour service with Communion (Scott) 30th June - 10.30am summer services begin with Kids Summer Club</p>	
13. Dates	<p>13.1 Dates of future meetings/holidays were noted as:</p> <p>25th June – Deacons' Court and Kirk Session 1st-14th July - Scott on study leave 15th July-4th August - Scott on holiday</p> <p>The Moderator noted the summer teaching series would be 'Meals with Jesus' which is also being adopted as the theme for the Kids Summer Club. Also that a 'Pizza and Praise' event was being organised before end of August by Cammy Dick.</p>	

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<p>14. Close</p>	<p>14.1 The meeting was closed by saying the Grace together.</p>	<p>..... Moderator</p> <p>..... Session Clerk</p>