

**The Black Isle Charge  
Annual General Meeting**

**Minute of the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Joint Charge  
Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

**Sederunt:** A total of 23 members were in attendance, namely:- Linda Couper, Ann Danson, Gill Dobson, Jane Furniss, Peter Furniss, Rev Canon Mel Langille, Joan MacInnes, Ann McGhee, Betty Marshall, Margaret Pern, Gail Sanderson, Janet Spence, Heather Ireland, Michael Hulse, Jackie Rodger, Richard Cherry, Helen Cherry, Trish McKeggie, Louise Jeffery, Iain Brown, Helen Knowles, Bill Fraser and Alan Danson.

**Apologies:** Apologies were received from eight members, namely; Ramsay McGhee, Kathleen Armstrong, Marjorie Taylor, Alison Garraway, Lois MacDonell, Julie Gamble, Joan Deakin and Gill Pimm.

**Opening:** The Rector, Rev Mel Langille, welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting and opened the meeting with prayer at 12.45.

**1 Minute of the Seventh Annual General Meeting**

The Minute of the Seventh Annual General Meeting held on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2016 was unanimously adopted as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

**2. To receive the Treasurer's Report and adopt the Annual Accounts:**

The Treasurer, Peter Furniss, circulated copies of the audited accounts. He then gave the following explanation:

**Introduction**

*I apologise for the accounts submitted today still being subject to scrutiny by our examiner, Mr Iain Brown. Unfortunately, due to a combination of my having visitors in the latter part of October and Iain being on holiday in the first part of November, it has proved impossible to complete the examination in time for today's meeting. I'm not expecting any significant changes to the figures presented today and I will report back to you in the weekly newsletter once the examination has been completed. There are no implications regarding OSCR as we have until 30th June 2018 before the accounts have to be submitted.*

**Receipts and Payments – Page 4 Summary**

*The transactions reported on page 4 are showing a small surplus of £1,547. The receipts for the year are £67,680 while the corresponding expenditure was almost equal at £66,133.*

*On Page 7 more details are provided of the receipts and payments. It should be noted that in the receipts section of the summary on page 4, the income from fundraising activities totals £13,485 approximately 20% of our total income and underlining the importance of these activities as referred to in Fr Mel's report.*

### **Statement of Balances – Page 5**

*The overall cash balance as at 30 September 2017 is £16,622. Within this amount there is a restricted balances section earmarked for various projects such as the repairs to the access road to St John's at Arpafeelie and possible heating replacements at St Regulus and St Andrews. The un-restricted cash available is £5,700 which is more than sufficient to cover our day to day activities.*

*The value of our investments in the Scottish Episcopal Church Unit Trust Pool have again increased this year this time by about 11%. This is partially caused by the focus on the stock market and a beneficial impact of "Brexit". The year-end valuation now stands at £28,440 and our total asset valuation including cash but excluding buildings now stands at £45,062.*

*There is more detail of our income and expenditure shown on page 7 and I am more than happy to answer any questions that you wish to ask either now or later outside the meeting.*

### **Thanks**

*I would like to thank you all for your help during the past year and, in particular, Alan Danson from St John's and Trish McKeggie from St Regulus. Trish has very recently retired after many years in this position. Helen Cherry aided by her husband Richard have very kindly taken on this role from Trish and I am pleased to welcome them to the meeting today.*

### **Collection Envelopes**

*The new envelopes to be used from the beginning of January 2018 are now available. They are pink in colour and I will try and pass them to you at the various services held between now and the end of the year.*

*Peter Furniss  
Honorary Treasurer*

The accounts were unanimously approved on the motion of Gill Dobson seconded by Bill Fraser.

The rector warmly thanked the treasurer for all his hard work and for the on-going work of the examiner.

### 3. To receive the Rector's Report:

During the preceding service the Rector gave his annual report in lieu of his sermon. The Report is appended hereto in its entirety:

#### ***Statistics from Advent I, 2016 till the Eve of Advent I, 2017:***

*Celebrations of the Eucharist: 301 (254 last year)*  
*Persons on Roll: 225 (196 last year)*  
*Attendance: 6325 (6890 last year)*  
*Communions: 6198 (6029 last year)*  
*Baptisms: 7 (None last year)*  
*Confirmations: 5 (None last year)*  
*Marriages: 1 & 5 Blessings of secular marriages (5 & 4 last year)*  
*Burials: 2 (6 last year)*  
*(The Rector has done an additional 8 cremation/committal services of non-charge members)*

*Our statistics point to modest increases of persons on our members' roll and, hence, our communicants' roll as well. Attendance numbers are down but fewer funerals and special occasions would account for that, especially when we consider that, at the same time, the number of communions has risen slightly. **We might all do better when it comes to our attendance patterns...wink, wink !!!***

*As we listen to today's readings we are reminded of God's call to us to be more than statistics... more than history... more than beautiful buildings... more than an inward-looking Sunday morning social club.*

*God, speaking to us through the prophet Isaiah, says...*

*Comfort, O comfort my people, says our God.*

*He reminds us of God's call to us, that like himself, we are here to bring peace, comfort, joy. To remember we live in the Kingdom of God which, while we long for it, Jesus tells us it is already upon us, in us, around us.*

*And so, we strive to make God's amazing love, embracing love, inclusive love, yoke breaking love, oppression ending love, weapons of war destroying love, absolutely fearless love... known to everyone.*

*We seek to live what the Psalmist prophetically proclaims...*

*"I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, \**

*for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him.*

*Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, \**

*that his glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth have met together; \* righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

***Truth shall spring up from the earth, \****

*and righteousness shall look down from heaven."*

*Notice, truth shall spring up from the earth! That is, you and me as, by God's Grace, we seek to live the Good News.*

*As a Christian Community spread through our three congregations, we are seeking to do just that. And in so many and varied ways, both within and outside our churches. Things like: leadership in the Luncheon Group for seniors at the Fortrose Café and*

*Friendship Club; being drivers for elders to enable them getting to these gatherings as well as surgery and other important appointments. More than a few are working with the Highlands Supports Refugees. The Foodbank has seen more and more giving. Wednesday morning study group. Engaging discussion groups. Meals on wheels. Street Pastors. Foster Child support. Mission and medical visits to various places. Our Charity Shop. Work with PTSD sufferers. Teaching the pipes to the young and not so young. Weekly Peace Mass. Meditation group, teaching about meditation too. First Thursday Eucharist for healing. Third Thursday, post Eucharist, coffee time with monies raised normally going to cancer and other charities. Hosting community carol services and Crib Services. Hosting concerts. Saturday Morning Coffee time in Fortrose Town Hall. Twice monthly youth gathering in the Rectory. Gala Activities, Peace Groups, The Classic Film Club, Leadership and involvement in community choirs, A weekly Sunday Club is now doing great things in St Regulus'. We have a Monthly Men's Brekky, small, yes, but great fun and who knows. Might we need something similar for the Ladies? Young people?*

***When you remember that we are only 222 persons of a wide assortment of ages, we are doing pretty well!***

*It is worth noting, as well, that this is all above and beyond Sunday and weekday worship, fund raising, being there for one another, and the million other things that keep us busy as members of our churches.*

*But, as that famous Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, once said:-*

***“The Church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members.”***

*In the adjusted words of an old Advent themed quote...*

***JESUS IS COMING! AND WE ARE BUSY!!!***

*And that is as it should be...Christians being busy, doing our utmost, to be the Good News and not just talk about it!*

*I have said it before and I will again, I would like to think that all of the great things listed above and the many more things are involved in and will be involved in down the road, formally, as a church and less formally as Christian individuals, stem from our having been part of congregations like St John's, St Andrew's and St Regulus'.*

### ***Some thank you's – Fund Raising***

*The team continues to do outstanding work. Fayres, Garden Parties, Burns' Nights and all sorts of other things. It is a pile of work and I would like to think they always know and feel we are all and always behind them. And days like the past Friday, when the weather didn't cooperate, shows how disappointing the results of our efforts can be.*

### ***Mission and Ministry***

*Our Committee of Eunice, Ann, Alison and myself continues meeting and plotting and planning things for our benefit and that of the community around us as well as the world at large.*

*We have encouraged the use, once again, of the Reverse Advent Calendar and it has, once again produced much. I have been pondering that perhaps we should keep an “All Saints' Month” next year and, remembering our call to be Saints, place one item a day in the basket (keeping Christmas in mind) and deliver it on the First Sunday of Advent?*

*We will be exploring the amazing GRANDMOTHERS to GRANDMOTHERS programme this year and reach out to help grandmothers in Africa who have been, with very little support in their various countries, raising children orphaned by AIDS and other infections, with support from Canada, the UK and elsewhere.*

*We are also pondering ways to become active as Episcopalians in the Muir of Ord area where we once had St Mary's Church (Now a private home).*

*Thank you, my partners in crime, for your care and inspiration!*

### **Ministry**

*Our lay-readers, Dorothy, Patsy and Gail, my sister Priest, Moira and I continue to meet to plan rotas and such. We have welcomed another Priest, Christine Mylne to our meetings as well. Since her retirement she has called St John's home when she has not been off gallivanting elsewhere in the Diocese when her services are needed. She and our fellow Priest, Arthur Sinclair, together with Gail are a blessing at St John's. Jill, Simon, Patsy and Moira are equally valued at St Regulus'. And Dorothy, ever ready to pitch in, is a blessing to St Andrew's. **Thank you all.***

*Over the past year we have welcomed new Servers, Intercessors and Readers.*

*Bay, faithful reader in St Regulus' will turn 100 this coming New Year's Day so, dare I once again say, never think you are too old to start! More of all the above are always welcome. **Thank you.***

*Then there are our amazing musicians! Kristina, Simon, Sandy & Richard all take turns at St Regulus'. Sadly, Edward and his lovely family have moved to Germany. We miss them. Alison continues to step in for Ramsay, on days like today, when he needs to be away. Still hoping a choir will take shape! At Saint John's, Tom has been doing wonderful things on the organ, Susanna, Antony, Amanda, Jeremy and others also pitch in with an assortment of instruments! Sadly, Gill Pill has moved south to be nearer family and we miss her in many and varied ways. **Thank you all.***

*A Sunday group has taken shape in St Regulus' and is being very well received by a good number of children. Thanks to Carsten, Gillian, Sophie, Jill and others. **Thank you.***

*A high school group (with a couple of younger lads) has begun meeting in the Rectory a couple of times a month for pizza, chat, plotting, movies and just good fellowship. I think we all enjoy each other's company! **Thank you for the support.***

*School Assemblies in Avoch and Cromarty are one of the great joys too. The children are amazing, inquisitive and wonderfully responsive. But despite there being somewhere near 300 in Avoch, the 60 in Cromarty can sing them into the ground. They are amazing. St Nicholas was visiting Cromarty Primary over the past week and was bowled over by their rendition of Ding Dong Merrily! Santa also join Cromarty Primary on Friday for their Christmas Fayre. I will be leading Christmas Assemblies in both schools. I am loving it!*

*I would also add, in here, the ministry of hospitality that is exercised on a weekly basis in all three of our congregations. Fine coffees and teas, home baking, warm welcome. **For all the above, thank you.***

*I should also mention, and it should be noted that our own Janet Spence has recently been through the Bishops' Panel and has been accepted to study for the Priesthood. We should all keep her in our prayers as we look forward to dancing at her Ordinations.*

### **Property Care**

*The grounds around St Regulus' and St John's always seem immaculately kept, tidy and looking much loved. Thank you. I am not sure who is doing what these days, but, for all of us, I thank you. Des, and over the past couple of years, the best neighbour one could ever have, James and, often, his lovely wife Sine do wonders around St Andrew's grounds and have the rectory rivalling Versailles. Dorothy always makes sure there are flowers just outside the front doors too, so St Andrew's is also looking loved and cared. For all of us, again I say, Thank you.*

*Our Churches are kept immaculate and always beautified with flowers by a number of amazing people. We all thank you from the bottom of our hearts.*

*And that includes our Sacristans who faithfully set up for services and take great care of the linens, candles, silver and all that we use week after week. A huge task! Especially the care of linens...because the sloppiness of candle lighters and dripping of wax often make cleaning them nigh impossible! On that note I would like to say a special thank you to Shirley Valentine who for many years has taken wonderful care of St Andrew's linens and making them. Shirley has decided to retire from that huge role but for all her work over the years. Thank you.*

### **VESTRY**

*You have an amazing Vestry. People who genuinely care about the church and the world around them. Please say thank you to them and keep them in your prayers.*

*A special thanks to our Secretary, Ramsay, who has escaped today's meeting. His knowledge and ability are monumental.*

*And Peter, our Treasurer. At our last meeting of Vestry, I commented that I have never had such a thorough presentation of the state of matters financial in all my years as a priest and certainly never in such a way that even someone as thick as me can readily comprehend. Thank you, you amazing man.*

*On a personal note I would like to thank you all for all your love, faithfulness and support for the church but also for me. You are an amazing Church. And I am so honoured to be serving our God with you here on the Black Isle.*

*We have entered a new year of Grace. As, once again, we prepare to welcome the Holy Child, let us all look for him each and every day...and find new and exciting ways of serving him in one another and in all those around us. Let always keep our baptismal vows in the forefront of our minds as we seek to serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbours as ourselves and to strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.*

*Glory to God,  
whose power, working in us,  
can do infinitely more  
than we can ask or imagine.*

*Glory to God from generation to generation,  
in the Church and in Christ Jesus,  
for ever and ever. Amen.*

*Respectfully submitted with Love and in Christ,*

*Canon Mel Langille  
Rector*

The Rector's Report was adopted unanimously on the proposal of Joan MacInnes, seconded by Peter Furniss.

4. **To elect three members from each Congregation onto the Vestry:**

The Vestry Secretary read out the names of the nominations from each of the three congregations.

St John's Recommendation – Alan Danson, Susanna Leslie and Gill Pimm  
Lay Rep – Ann Danson,  
Alternate Lay Rep – Mairi MacLean

St Andrew's Recommendation - Janet Spence, Bill Fraser and Ramsay McGhee  
Lay Rep – Julie Gamble  
Alternate Lay Rep – Louise Jeffery

St Regulus' Recommendation - Margaret Pern, Linda Couper  
Lay Rep – Helen Cherry  
Alternate Lay Rep – Eunice Richmond

All appointments were unanimously elected onto the Joint Charge Vestry on the motion of Iain Brown seconded by Gill Dobson

5. **To appoint a Vestry Secretary (from the membership of the Vestry):**

Helen Knowles proposed, and Gill Dobson seconded a motion that Ramsay McGhee continue to serve as Vestry Secretary. There were no other nominations.

6. **To appoint a Treasurer:**

Louise Jeffery proposed and Margaret Pern seconded a motion that Peter Furniss be reappointed as Treasurer for the Black Isle Charge. There were no other nominations.

7. **To transact any other competent business:**

- a) Mrs Betty Marshall addressed the congregation:  
Betty told us that she visited this church, (St Andrew's) in 1933 for the first time. To her it was, and is, an exciting place, she had no idea as a young girl that it would become her family church in due course. Once she was a member here she remembers that twice yearly they would scrub the floors, on their knees, and that she had done the area about where Father Mel is now seated. It is, and was, a place in which she grew to love the material and the spirituality of the setting. Betty wanted us to join her in thanking all the members who had in the past, as well as present, spent time making this church so special. In

particular she expressed her great thanks and warmth for Father Mel's example, for his leadership, his service, as well as his beautiful services. Betty had attended family confirmations, marriage of a grandson and regular Thursday meetings with Mel's bible study group and had been aware of the message of love coming through loud and clear in those meetings as well as Mel's sense of humour. Betty concluded by expressing how lucky we as a charge are to have such a servant and that there is much love of us for our shepherd as well as from him to us all.

Betty's words were warmly received by the congregation.

- b) Louise Jeffrey raised the subject of need and also loneliness in our neighbourhoods. She had been made aware of this by Care/Social Service staff around the time of Harvest giving. Although there are issues of confidentiality regarding who and where such people may be, she asked if we as a church could address the needs by providing Christmas boxes and more regular support. Father Mel reminded us that not all needs were being met and that for some there was a reluctance to attend food banks or meal provision and that we should try and support these people as best we can. Louise was asked to try and gather more information from her contacts as to how many boxes we should make to provide a Christmas box for these folk, and if a regular church(es) based donation would be welcome and help. Mel reminded us of the anecdote he had told before of the three nuns who arrived in a village and within a day had galvanised the community into getting a school established. The provision of Christmas boxes requires action, now.
- c) Ann McGhee was asked by the chair if there were any updates to report on the PVG. Ann informed the AGM that 5 clearances were now through for the children's group at St Regulus.
- d) Joan MacInnes made a request for an update regarding the hall. In reply the Treasurer pointed out that despite the efforts of the secretary to get quotes for the work it was proving very difficult to get companies that were interested in putting in a tender for the work. The chair of the fabric sub-committee, Bill Fraser, said that he would look to see if the wetness on one wall could be addressed so that the clothes were not spoiled.

#### 8. **To agree a date for the 2018 Annual General Meeting**

The rector proposed the date of Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and this was agreed.

The meeting closed with the blessing at 1pm.