757

The Elders of Houston & Killellan Kirk met at 12.30 hours on 25 February 2024 in the Killellan Halls. The meeting was constituted in worship and prayer by the Moderator.

2. Sederunt and Apologies: the names of those attending were noted, with apologies also noted.

3. Correspondence: it was reported that a letter had been received from some of the elders (signed by 29 out of the 65 elders) regarding the Kirk Session structure which would be duly considered at the next KS meeting

Also, a letter of resignation from Peter McKerell as Organist and choir master with effect from 31 May. There would be a recognition for all Peter had done for HKK in due course

4. Langbank Church

A detailed document outlining the position and reporting on the meeting of the KS of both HKK and Langbank Churches on 19 February had been duly circulated. Thanks to Matthew for preparing this helpful outline.

The Moderator acknowledged that both churches had been given the wrong information but we had to move forward. Langbank in particular had been viewed as linking or forming a union with a variety of churches over the last few years and had been in guardianship for some time.

Langbank had come to the meeting with a clear preference for a linkage nonetheless all the pros and cons were discussed and considered. The respective KS had met together, then separately to discuss the draft basis of linkage, then back together to feedback the outcome of the discussions.

It was explained that HKK manse would need to be used as Langbank Manse was too small but they had been allowed to purchase it with the restriction that they could not call a minister under the age of 55 as it was one room short.

They also needed the sale proceeds to pay for their planned renovations.

Discussions took place which centred around the following

* Whether PIMPIG at 121 had agreed to any change – however it was pointed out that the ministry allocation was not changing nor the buildings
* Upset at what appeared to be a turn around to the position which was outlined to our former Minister

* Concern over work load with Houston perceived to be a parish needing lots of attention
* That HKK had been successful due to the congregation and the elders
* Service times may need to change if a minster to do 2 services each Sunday
* Whether working with Linwood would have been better as links already there, however the size of Linwood parish alone meant the proposal was unworkable
* The long-term future of Langbank had to be considered
* Langbank Buildings may in time become a Community Hub.
* Whether there could be a more positive time scale on working toward a union

The Moderator reiterated that we can not get out of the Presbytery Plan and reminded the meeting that no church was unaffected by this plan. Also, Presbytery have the power to force through unions or linkages.

The Moderator reminded the meeting that 121 owned the Church here with the congregation owning the west Halls and the Manse,

A five-year period to work towards a Union seemed preferable although all presbytery plans are subject to review.

The KS after detailed consideration had put forward the proposal of a linkage working towards union which in their view gave a clear sense of future intentions to the incoming Minister and something to work on, and preferable to a forced union.

There being no stated objections to this proposal, the Moderator outlined that the documents recording the wishes of both KS to a linkage would be sent to Presbytery and then to 121 Law department. Hopefully agreed terms would get approved.

Once this stage reached then there would be congregational votes in both churches on the same day overseen by Presbytery.

The moderator planned to update the congregation next week

The next step then would the submission on behalf of both churches to presbytery and updates would be given to the elders once known

The next meeting would be prior to communion at 10.30 on Sunday 3 March 2024.

759

The meeting finished by saying the Grace together.

Signed

Moderator Session clerk

Date: