LONGNIDDRY PARISH CHURCH STATED ANNUAL MEETING 23 MARCH 2025

1. CONSTITUTION

At Longniddry Church on Sunday 23 March 2025, the Congregation met and the Stated Annual Meeting was constituted with prayer.

2. SEDERUNT

There were present the Rev. Dr. Robin Hill, Chairman, and thirty-seven members of the Congregation in person plus three via Zoom whose names are recorded in the Sederunt Book. Apologies for absence were recorded in respect of eleven members.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Stated Annual Meeting held on 17 March 2024 previously approved as Correct by the Kirk Session at its meeting on 14 May 2024, were presented.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

None.

5. URGENT MATTERS NOT PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED

None.

6. SESSION CLERK'S REPORT

Mrs Morrison summarised her report from the Achievements and Performance section of the 2024 accounts for the Church. Ms Moore wanted to record her thanks for all the music that we heard in church over the last year. The Moderator thanked the organists and Mrs Devlin and all the members of the band who play so well in our services.

7. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr Clarke gave his report on the Church's finances. The key message was our finances were in good shape in 2024 thanks to the support of everyone who gives to the church and to careful management of costs. Mr Clarke outlined the sources of income (nearly 70% is from donations and legacies) and key areas of expenditure (almost half is our Giving to grow allocation which pays for ministry here and elsewhere and for shared services). Mr Clarke mentioned our heating and lighting costs have increased to 2.5 times the 202 amount. We had previously been protected from market increases because we had a foxed contract for energy but that has now expired. But we end the year in a financially strong position: we hold £110,0000 in unrestricted reserves (though £25,000 of that is earmarked for work on the church and manse).

Mr Clarke ended by thanking everyone who supported him in the management of the Church finances: Peter Helmn with Gift Aid, Robin Cuthbertson with hall lets, John Ellis checking the books, Derek Easton with property costs and Sheila Jamieson for hospital transport finances. He thanked the door teams for their work counting offering every week and he also thanked everyone who continues to give to the Church to support our work.

There were two questions for Mr Clarke:

1. The Moderator asked if the church and hall heating was on in the evenings, even when the halls are not in use. Mr Clarke it was not a policy decision to do so and he would raise this with Mr Easton, the Property Convenor.
2. Mr Wyllie asked if our heating costs had increased solely because of the increase in prices or have we used more too? Mr Clarke replied that there was a small element of increased use in 2024 compared with 2020 when the church was shut but most of the increase is due to increased per unit energy costs.

8. MINISTER'S REPORT

The Moderator thanked Mr Clarke and Mrs Morrison for all the work they do for the Church.

The Moderator summarised our recent history: taking part in the Path of Renewal programme in 2015 where we explored how to adapt to changes including understanding how the role of a minister is changing; in 2022 the Lothian Presbytery Plan which updated ministry allocations and restructured congregations, which caused real pain and suffering; younger ministers leaving ministry; contraction of the central church e.g. world mission department has suffered redundancies. We need to think about our role.

The Presbytery Plan had two local restructures – the union of Chalmers Memorial Church with Cockenzie Old (which is complete) and the union of Gladsmuir and Longniddry churches. The Moderator said he will not be perturbed if the votes for the union between ourselves and Gladsmuir go either way though, on balance, he thinks a union is best – but it will be up the Session and congregation.

The Presbytery Plan made it clear that the allocation of two ministers to Cockenzie, Port Seton, Gladsmuir and Longniddry was dependent on the four churches (now three) working together to provide mission in Blindwells. All three churches have a responsibility for this – these are our houses, our people, our outreach. Though we have recently applied for a grant to fund a mission worker in Blindwells that does not let us off the hook. Outreach to Blindwells will change the face of ministry locally almost beyond recognition. All of us need to be enagaged. But the Moderator will become more involved in Blindwells, which means doing fewer things here.

We all need to help make Blindwells a community of faith. The Moderator would like us to respond with enthusiasm and play our part in building the kingdom of Christ, to look forward in faith, to look at ways we can each play our part – in giving, volunteering, praying.

Mrs Neill asked if Tranent is involved in outreach to Blindwells. The Modaetaor responded that they are, on the fringes. But they were not asked by the Presbytery Plan to take a major role as they have a huge workload in their own right. But they are interested in helping us.

Mrs Abigail Morrison, Session Clerk, thanked Rev Dr Hill for his service to the Church in 2023. He works tirelessly in so very many aspects of church life and we value him enormously.

Mrs Morrison also paid tribute to Mrs Ailsa Hill for her work on behalf of the Church and for the continuing support she gives to our minister and thanked Miss Katie Hill for her administration role for the Church.

The congregation showed their heartfelt appreciation for Rev Dr Hill.

9. CLOSE

The Chairman closed the meeting with the recital of the Grace.

CHAIRMAN **CLERK**