

Strathaven: Trinity Parish Church
Minutes of the 6th Stated Annual Meeting
Held on Sunday, 8 March 2026 at 12.15pm, in Strathaven Church Hall

CONSTITUTION:

At Strathaven on Sunday, 8 March 2026, the meeting was constituted with a Bible Reading (John 20 v19) and Prayer.

WELCOME:

The Chairman, Very Rev Dr Shaw Paterson, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked all those present for staying on after this morning's service and extended a special thanks to those who had travelled from Chapelton and Glassford to attend.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received from Ken Dodds, Chinky McPhail, Maggie Mears, Pamela Thomson and Alice White.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS STATED ANNUAL MEETING:

The minutes of the last meeting held on Sunday, 16 March 2025, having been made available, were taken as read and agreed.

INTIMATION OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

There were no further items of business.

CONGREGATIONAL ACCOUNTS:

David Lipowski (Treasurer) presented the accounts for 2025, which had been adopted by the elders at the recent Kirk Session meeting.

He started his report by thanking Christine White for approving payments, counts etc, the counting teams at Glassford and Chapelton, Andy Rendall for completing the gift aid returns, Iain Park for organising the weekly freewill offering envelopes, Jim McKay for auditing the organisations accounts, and the support of the Finance Committee and their review and comment on the draft Accounts.

The financial results have been prepared on an accruals basis, which is consistent with the 2024 accounts.

2025 income has shown a small decrease in unrestricted income – mostly driven by decreased hall lets offset partly by the increase in investment income.

Expenditure has increased slightly from 2024 mostly related to increase in utilities and repair costs as well as general inflation. Expenses have increased 1% from prior year.

Fabric costs are down to £35,268 from £48,660. This includes new boilers in the Strathaven Building early in 2025.

Other Building costs have increased from £42,270 to £50,270 due to increased gas and Electric costs.

Investment valuation has shown an unrealised gain of £53,135 after the unrealised gain of £58,221 last year.

The principal source of income to the Church is donations from its members. During the year, total income amounted to £187,353 of which £10,074 was in respect of designated funds (this was all church organisations income).

Offerings have stayed around the same as the previous year by 2% from the previous year (£116,400 v £116,554 they are still far short of the 2019 value of £134,569 as a result of the Covid crisis).

A strong control of expenditure exists within the Church and it is essential that we maintain this policy while still investing in our fabric.

Ministries & Mission Contribution was paid in full by Standing Order.

The Treasurer reported the accounts would be submitted to Presbytery by the end of March and then on to OSCR.

David thanked our Independent Examiner, Charles Beattie, for his work in reviewing our accounts and volunteering his services and informed the congregation that the Kirk Session had re-appointed Charles as auditor for 2026.

David requested volunteers to assist with taking the weekly offering to the bank and with sending out invoices to those who use the church halls for lets.

There were no question or comments for the Treasurer.

The Moderator thanked the Treasurer, and Finance Team for their diligence throughout the last year and for preparing the accounts.

SESSION CLERK'S REPORT:

Ruby Davidson (Session Clerk) gave the following report:

We were delighted when Shaw returned from his year as Moderator in June, his first service being a joint service of Holy Communion in Strathaven. During his absence we were indebted to Rev Norman McKee, Rev Robbie Hamilton and all of our worship leaders who ensured that worship continued in all three places of worship and have continued to support Shaw after his return. We were also very well supported by our Assistant Ministers, Rev David McKee and Rev Eleanor Hamilton and were delighted when both David and Eleanor were inducted to their first charges, David to Carmunnock and Castlemilk Parish Churches and Eleanor to Dumbarton Parish Church. They left with our best wishes for their future ministry.

We continue to support many charities. In the last year £7464 has been donated to a variety of charities, harvest food donations to The Lodging House Mission and our weekly food donations to Loaves and Fishes. The Strathaven Memory Club and Heart for Art, which are staffed by members of Trinity, continue to grow and, thanks to Lynda Horn and her team, continues to be a very successful and necessary venture for many families.

Strathaven Trinity has a whole range of organisations and groups who utilise our premises. We give thanks for the success and popularity of our Guild, Boys Brigade, Girls Brigade, Sunday Schools, Ladies Keep Fit, Ladies Badminton, Men's Group, Craft Group and of course all of the activities which are organised by our Child, Youth and Family

worker, Julie – Toddlers in Strathaven and Chapelton, Messy Church in Chapelton and After School Club in Glassford.

In the winter months the Cunninghams and Smiths continued to serve Soup in a warm space.

In addition, our halls (particularly in Strathaven and Chapelton) are virtually at full capacity as we seek to welcome the community into our premises which is very much a missional activity. Thank you to all who serve our church in many ways,

We were very saddened that six of our elders, Barbara Rogerson, Norman Garrow, Alex Roberts, Morag Kirkwood, Sheila Dodds and David Smith died during the year. A special mention must be made of Sheila Dodds who gave of her time so generously in many roles but particularly as Hall Letting Convener for over 40 years, Treasurer and latterly as Assistant Treasurer. We give thanks for all of their many years of service to Strathaven Trinity and to the Church of Scotland

Our chaplaincy connection with the five local schools in our parish continues to develop and we recognise increasing use of our premises by the schools. Shaw and Julie, our Youth Worker have made good contact with the schools and we are delighted that special services are held in our three churches. Our annual Bubblegum and Fluff activity (for older primary pupils), which helps to explain what the season of Christmas is all about, saw all schools take part over two days.

The Bigger Picture, for academy pupils in the church hall at Strathaven, is well established and has between 30 and 60 young folk coming into the hall on a Monday and Friday for hot chocolate and a cheese toastie. This continues to be a huge success and has proved very popular with a large section of the young people in our community.

The church website continues to provide up to date information on organisations and church activities. Thank you to Donald Cunningham who established and coordinates the content of the website.

We are required by church law to address stewardship each year. A letter was sent to all members outlining increasing costs and asking for them to consider an increase in giving. Approximately 20% have increased their offerings by Standing Order.

Our thanks are due to everyone who has contributed to the work of the church over the year and, in particular, to David Lipowski for administering our finances so effectively.

Thank you to all involved in caring for our properties so that they remain in such good condition – much of the work is unseen but essential and appreciated.

The Presbytery Mission Plan was approved in April 2024 and submitted to the Faith Nurture Forum. Our appeal against the plan was refused and it remains that:

There will be two church buildings in Strathaven. Glassford should close by June 2026 and Chapelton and Drumclog should be reviewed by June 2027. All of this to be served by 1.5 ministers. We are deeply saddened as we move towards the closure of Glassford Church and pray that God will support the folks of Glassford as their church closes and those in Strathaven and Chapelton who will welcome all to join in worship with us.

A huge thank you to everyone who has ensured that it has been a successful year, especially all of you who attend either in person or through live streaming, after all a church is not a building but the people who unite to worship together.

CHAIRMAN’S THANKS:

The Chairman thanked the Worship leaders for their ongoing support each Sunday and expressed his personal thanks to Rev. Norman McKee and also to Ruby Davidson for their help and support during what proved to be an extremely busy year. He thanked all those who work tirelessly in the background to ensure the smooth running of the church and thanked the congregation for the way they supported the worship team during his Moderatorial year.

He then went on to say that every Maundy Thursday, the Monarch distributes special Maundy money in a service, dating back to 600AD, which commemorates Jesus washing the feet of the Apostles at the Last Supper. This is an opportunity for the King to thank individuals for their outstanding Christian service and for making a difference to the lives of people in their local communities. He was delighted to announce that Ruby, our Session Clerk, has been chosen as a recipient this year. The service will take place at St Asaph’s Cathedral in Wales on Thursday, 2 April.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

In response to a question regarding the future of the Glassford Church building, the Chairman advised that the church building will close at the end of June 2026. However, Presbytery has granted permission for the church hall to remain open and be used for lets on a three-month rolling basis. Should the hall not be utilised, this permission would not be renewed and the property placed on the market. The Church of Scotland law department will be responsible for overseeing the sale but we would have continuing responsibilities with regards to security and wind and watertight matters.

CLOSURE:

There being no further business, the meeting closed with the benediction.

MINISTER

SESSION CLERK