

**The Way Forward for St Ernan's
Minutes of the meeting held on
Sunday 8th March at 7pm in Creich Community Hall**

Present Linda Cameron (chair), Eleanor Wagstaff (clerk), Jenny Earl, Gill Morley, John Cameron, Andrew Todd, John Noddings and John Wagstaff.

Welcome Linda opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

Apologies Wendy Lloyd

Any other items for Agenda None

Response to Presbytery meeting

At the meeting, Rev Dugald Cameron gave an assurance that no decisions had been reached by Presbytery regarding the status of the two local church buildings. However, Jenny confirmed that, at the meeting with Presbytery in Craignure, Bunessan had been given Category A status, and St Ernan's status B. She also answered questions regarding the criteria used by Presbytery in making decisions about the future of buildings. The report states clearly that a decision must now be reached by the Kirk Session.

Concerns were raised about a lack of friendliness on the part of the elders at the Creich meeting – neither the Presbytery representatives nor the wider public had been welcomed at the door. Jenny explained that she had followed the format of the Craignure meeting, at which Presbytery had taken the lead. Elders have since suggested that some people attended the meeting when they shouldn't have done, and that it had been too widely advertised. It was agreed that the meeting was not secret, and that the attendance had in fact been encouraging.

Reaction to Presbytery Buildings Discussion Report

The Kirk Session is required to make a decision regarding buildings by 30th April 2020. There are three options concerning St Ernan's – to keep it; to allow a community buyout (although there is no wish for this on the part of the community); or to sell it. Presbytery wants the determination to be made locally.

The following were discussed:

Costs: £27,000 is needed for urgent and essential repairs to St Ernan's; £11,000 for the same at Bunessan.

The number of elders: Three elders, who are trustees of the church buildings, will vote on their future – thus effectively making a decision which will affect the whole community. This is a huge responsibility for them, and no doubt worrying. Although The Way Forward Group is offering enthusiastic support, the Kirk Session doesn't appear keen to accept their help. It was agreed that concrete information about how a refurbished St Ernan's might be run could help to allay anxiety. More elders and more members are needed, and several people have expressed an interest in becoming members.

Regular income: Ideas for raising regular income were discussed, as was the role that holiday home owners might play in supporting the church.

Preparation for the Congregational Board meeting to be held on Tuesday 10th March

The Board has been inconsistent in its response to The Way Forward, apparently giving support, but then later back-tracking and delaying decisions. It was agreed that this is unhelpful and that clarification of the Board's position is needed.

It would help if The Way Forward could be granted sub-committee status, and given clear guidelines as to what it was required/empowered to do. This question will therefore be on Tuesday's agenda.

A copy of the Presbytery Buildings Discussion Report is to be made available in both churches, and people informed that it is there.

It was noted that The Way Forward has been at pains to represent the wider community, as far as possible. It has also received encouragement and support from visitors to the area.

Website

The minutes of Kirk Session and Board meetings are still not being put onto the website – the most recent ones available date back to 2013. It was agreed that the website needs to be kept up-to-date and relevant. It would be helpful if The Way Forward could also post news to it, and the possibility of this will be raised at Tuesday's meeting.

Fund-raising ideas

The Easter card, based on Lindsay Kirsop's winning design from last year's Fun Day Competition, has been printed and is now being sold at £1.50 per card. It will be available in both churches and some local shops.

A Sausage Sizzle is proposed – this will be held in St Ernan's grounds when the weather improves.

A round Iona boat trip may be held in the summer, subject to arrangement, and perhaps followed by a barbecue on Fionnphort beach.

Two guided walks may also be held, one (as last year's) from Pottie Road End to Toba Bhreac, the other from Fidden Campsite to Creich. Each could be followed by a catering event.

Emily Wilkins is considering leading a Pilgrimage Walk from Iona to Creich. She, Jan Pickard and Wendy Lloyd are also involved in a Pathway Service – this includes a pilgrim walk based around a Bible Story, with various activities along the route and soup and sandwiches at St Ernan's.

John Noddings raised over £100 last year from the sale of tablet at Seaview Guest House and is willing to do the same again, but with the tablet perhaps on sale in St Ernan's. Other provisions might also be sold in the future, once kitchen facilities are available.

Self-service tea and coffee may be made available this season, with an honesty box for takings. This is subject to the agreement of the Congregational Board and will be raised at Tuesday's meeting.

Other business

Glebe land: The Glebe is still the property of the Church of Scotland, and it may be possible to raise money from the sale of one or two building plots. Jenny agreed to phone Argyll and Bute Council Planning Department to find out if planning permission was likely to be granted.

Presbytery questionnaire: The Way Forward had considered the Presbytery's questions regarding the condition of both churches. Linda outlined their responses to the various questions.

Waterfall Fund: The water connection has not been completed, but the Waterfall Fund money is still in hand.

Closing

Linda thanked everyone for their attendance, and closed the meeting at 9.30pm.