



CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE

The past year, 2020, will never be remembered as a normal year. For some it will have been a year of sadness, some a year where staying home was the only option, some will have experienced upheaval and a total lack of structure and others it will have had their busiest ever. Whoever you are, you will remember 2020.

For us as a committee we started the year as normal, holding our first meeting in February, where Nigel Jameson, our Treasurer, gave his annual report. We had an update from a few of the subcommittees including that the refurbishment work was progressing as planned. March started normally but by the 16th March our Prime Minister announced, “now is the time for everyone to stop non-essential contact and travel” and by the 23rd March the announcement was given to “stay at home”. All our activities and services were suspended in terms of “coming to church”.

Our deepest gratitude is owed to the Tech Team. Within a few days arrangements were made to record items of praise and edit them together passing them to Robin. He then edited the morning and evening services publishing them on YouTube for the congregation to watch. These recorded services developed and through various stages of lockdown our technical expertise developed to live streaming. Live streaming continues and remains a valuable aspect to those who are not able to attend our services in person.

Although a lot of activities of the church were suspended, others continued in an altered state. Interim working committees were established by Session and Committee to ensure critical functions of our church were continued. In line with government guidelines our refurbishment work recommenced. During the refurbishment, extra, significant unforeseen works were required. The floor of the church required piles to be installed, the roof of the lecture hall had to be replaced due to the number of rotten support timbers. It was also discovered that the front facade of the church was being supported by a large wooden beam which was experiencing extensive rot at each end. Removal of this beam would have significantly increased the project duration with a commensurate increase in cost. With the expertise of our principal contractor (Leo Matherson) and a subcontractor (Stronghold) a solution was engineered where modern epoxy resins would replace the removed rotten wood.

Over the summer restrictions eased, services were permitted, and “business” meetings commenced in August. Over the next couple of months, the committee decided on the seating style to be installed and also to add an additional room to the rear of the property.

I wish to also thank Kenny Gilpin and his family for providing a great source of release by hosting a sunflower event. This was very well attended and was greatly appreciated by all after several months of restrictions. A sum of £21,000 was raised and was donated to the refurbishment project.

As a society, we entered 2021 in a very unremarkable way. A third lockdown was announced. As a congregation, we have a faithful God who, is our Hope and Strength, a very present help in trouble (Psalm 46).

Please continue to pray for the Committee and the various tasks it undertakes.

Nigel McClelland

Honorary Congregational Secretary

2020