

12 May 2020

Message and appeal from the Treasurer

I presented our 2020 accounts to the Kirk Session in April which showed a recurring deficit for the year of £10,056. I had budgeted for that year a deficit of £16,657 so in the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic this was deemed an acceptable outcome. We also made a loss on our investment holdings but those fluctuate from year to year and the loss followed a large gain in 2019.

The underlying picture of 2020 was more complex with a large fall in income and a large reduction in costs. Our income fell by £21,626 and our costs fell by £28,225. The income fall was mainly in halls income, open plate and weddings but also in freewill offerings. However, many members who normally give weekly by freewill offerings generously made up for the lack of regular giving by making single payment donations for which I was very grateful. Our cost reductions were mainly in building repairs and energy costs. We also managed to recover some salary costs through the UK Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

At the Kirk Session meeting I presented the 2021 budget. The budget for this year was difficult to prepare in light of the on-going lock-down and uncertainty over the resumption of normal worship and regular use of our facilities as a community hub. I presented a position which showed a recurring deficit of £34,690. We aim to recover £20,000 of this from the Consolidated Fabric Fund held on our behalf by the Church of Scotland General Trustees. However, that leaves a deficit (being our normal income less our day to day running costs) of £14,690. As all of you will understand, is not good housekeeping to run on continuous deficits and deplete the reserves that have been built up over many generations by members who have supported SMPC.

This is also a challenging year as we aim to return to "normal" following the pandemic while we move from Tom's era towards a new minister. We are fortunate in having the support of both Douglas Clark and Mark Johnstone through this period and if I know anything about the members at SMPC it is that you will do everything possible to get us back to normal as quickly as possible.

I therefore set the Kirk Session certain financial objectives for the coming year with a view to negating the deficit. Two of these objectives relate to income generation and will require your **wholehearted** support. They are:

- To increase your annual giving to the church by at least 2% - 3% (preferably more given that we did not put out an appeal last year) which will also have the benefit of increasing the level of Gift Aid received; and
- To run a Post-COVID fundraising activity to raise somewhere above £3,000.

I am also looking to put in place actions to ensure our controllable costs remain at the level they were two years ago which would represent a real decrease in costs.

If everyone can do their little bit to help achieve the giving objective then this will go a considerable way to restoring balance in the church finances without the need to initiate a full Giving Campaign which I know everyone would really prefer to avoid.

I trust that members will consider this appeal carefully and respond positively. If anyone needs new standing order forms of more information, please feel free to contact me.

Kindest regards

