

## **Minutes of Annual Stated Meeting of Buchlyvie and Gartmore Church 2026**

The meeting was held in Gartmore Church, on Sunday 8 June, 2026 after morning worship.

**Welcome:** The IM, Rev Barry Hughes opened the meeting with prayer.

### **Session Clerk's report:**

Buchlyvie and Gartmore Church continues in vacancy, now approaching 3 years, and we are grateful to all the ministers who have given their time to help us continue to offer Sunday Services. The Worship Group fills in the gaps and, so far, we have managed to cover every Sunday and have worship every week, which I think is quite an achievement.

Unfortunately, Tricia Cumming has now left the area and the Worship Group are down to 3. We would encourage others to others to train for this.

Last summer, we enjoyed our joint services, including Songs of Praise in both churches. Time again to get your requests in for this summer! We also had a Christmas Day service which was enjoyed by 30 of us. Fiona has agreed to do it again this year.

I, personally, am very grateful to all for the support I receive to aid us in this vacancy journey. But it would be remiss of me not to single out Bill Keeping. Bill does so much work, mostly behind the scenes, and we should all be very grateful to him for all his hard work for the church. It is very much appreciated.

### **WORKING GROUPS**

#### **Property & Finance Report:**

##### **Finance**

2025 was the first full year since forming a union. There are still a couple of effects left over from the union that make it a bit more complicated to follow the accounts.

1. The prior year figures (2024) represent 6 months of just Buchlyvie Church plus 6 months of the united churches, so comparisons with prior year have to be made with care.
2. There was an excess of locally held funds following combining together of the various accounts. These were invested early in the year. For accounting purposes, this counts as a "payment", shown as purchase of investments.

Ignoring this purchase, there was a net deficit of around £5,600 in operating accounts, offset by a net gain in investments of around £16,000 (ignoring the purchase). So the true picture was that the income remained around 5 thousand less than expenses, as in the previous year, but this is easily covered by reserves.

Collections, donations and fundraising are good considering the low numbers in the congregation, and these remain key to our continued existence. (Note that average Sunday

Service attendances remain less than 20 at each church building). However, expenses continue to rise and we have become dependent on our reserves.

Our giving to grow (previously known as allocation) barely covers half the cost of a minister, which matches our charge being allocated a 0.5 FTE minister. As in 2024, we receive no reduction for being in vacancy. Although we can claim some pulpit supply, it is less than the standard cost for two services a week. This adds to our challenges.

Last year approval was given to renew the roof of Gartmore Church, funded from money held by the General Trustees. Work started last year to amass all the appropriate slates required, which has resulted in advanced payment of £42,000 to cover these costs. This shows as a net zero in the accounts as the expenditure is offset by “income” of the corresponding amount from the General Trustees in the receipts.

## **Property**

We are responsible for three properties, two churches and a manse.

There has been no major change since last year’s meeting.

The work on Gartmore Church’s roof is finally scheduled to start end of June to minimise disruption to the neighbouring primary school. The work will not disrupt access to the church building. (It has taken months assembling sufficient of the required slates).

The boiler at Buchlyvie church was repaired, but requires a new flue. The heating continues to require close attention during winter, with the radiators requiring bleeding every other week. Fortunately the large oil tank was filled around the start of the year as a full tank would be very expensive at the moment. There is no significant change in the rest of the building.

Usage of both church buildings remains low.

The manse is currently unoccupied. We have finally found a builder to work on the pending issues, with work due to start week commencing 8 June.

Overall keeping all the buildings going is financially challenging to keep costs in line with income. This is accompanied by a challenge to find the skills / resources to manage and execute all this. I am grateful to the property and finance working group team for their support.

## **Worship & Education Report:**

### **Worship**

- Planning weekly services in either or both churches, plus extra services at Christmas, Holy Week, Harvest Festival and Remembrance Sunday.
- Joint services: this year, as last, we have planned joint services in Buchlyvie throughout July, and Gartmore during August.

- Pulpit supply: credit for the success of this task must go to Janet, who, as Session Clerk, has responsibility for finding pulpit-cover during this vacancy.
- Worship Leaders: All four of us have led five services each in the last twelve months. We will continue to provide cover as necessary.

#### Education

- Plan yearly Study Group programme: 3 blocks of study, lasting 6 – 8 weeks each, at Advent and Lent, and in September. Average attendance, 8 – 10.

We recently lost one very valued member of our group when Tricia Cumming left Buchlyvie. However, we have been joined by an equally valuable member in Fiona Newton. We are glad to welcome her to our number.

As we continue in vacancy our primary aim has come to mean providing a service, or services, *every* Sunday. We're happy to say that, thus far, this has been achieved.

#### **Mission & Pastoral Report:**

This was our second year as a joint Pastoral/Mission Group. We have attempted to move forward encompassing the aims of each original group with a new remit in line with the Five Marks of Mission.

We continue to support Church and community members of all ages.

This includes raising awareness of Church matters and events. This is achieved using Facebook, web sites, The Gartmore News, The Buchlyvie Bulletin and The Stirling Observer.

Community events included Macmillan Coffee mornings, the Buchlyvie Blether, Gartmore Christmas Fayre, Gartmore Village Lunch and a coffee morning in Gartmore plus a Daffodil Tea in Buchlyvie.

Collections were carried out to support Christian Aid ( Door to door collection in Gartmore and collection boxes in venues in Buchlyvie.)

We also continued to support Start Up Stirling.

We continued to mark special birthdays and occasions and deliver a Welcome Pack to new households containing useful and relevant information about each village.

We had a presence at the Gartmore Gala selling Kilombero Rice and Who gives a Crap toilet rolls. We also intend to have a presence at the Buchlyvie Gala on Sat. 13<sup>th</sup> June.

We intend to deliver Christmas cards with the dates of the Christmas Services to households in both Gartmore and Buchlyvie Villages.

As we are a joint group we have tried to encourage each village to help the other village at events bearing in mind that we are also a United Congregation. Church members have

worked hard to achieve this and thanks are due to them. Thank you especially to Joy Henderson who produces our Action Grid.

We have unfortunately lost Tricia Cumming, who has moved away, and was a very active and valued member of our group. We are very pleased to welcome Fiona Newton and I am sure she will be a great asset to our group.

### **Eco Report:**

Eco Working Group Annual Report May 25 to April 26

Our Environmental Policy for Buchlyvie and Gartmore Church was approved by the Kirk Session in September.

A Transform Trade Big Brew Coffee Morning was held in Gartmore Village Hall on 16<sup>th</sup> August to raise awareness of Fair Trade. It raised £598 split equally between Transform Trade and Church funds. Gavin's Mill, Milngavie, provided a pop-up stall which sold nearly £300's worth of Fair Trade goods and showed the wide range of products available.

Awareness of Fair Trade amongst the Buchlyvie community was raised by a second pop-up stall from Gavin's Mill at the Church Daffodil Tea Coffee Morning on 21st March 2026 in Buchlyvie Village Hall.

The Sustainable Christmas Workshop in Buchlyvie Village Hall on 8<sup>th</sup> November was a worthwhile enjoyable event appreciate by visitors and demonstrators alike. We had enlisted several friends not involved with the church to demonstrate fifteen different craft ideas using materials which would otherwise have been thrown away.

The plan for a programme of eco-themed talks and workshops prepared by the Centre for Human Ecology has been put on hold until they can obtain grant funding. However the showing of the National Emergency Briefing film and discussion in Buchlyvie Church on August 25<sup>th</sup> may generate further study possibilities in the villages.

We continue to work with other Working Groups on the environmental aspects of their remits. We benefit from membership of Eco-Congregation Scotland, and their Stirling Network, and individual members' links with SWScan (South West Stirlingshire Climate Action Network) to collaborate with eco groups in other villages.

### **Safeguarding:**

During the year April 2025 – 2026 a review of our safeguarding requirements noted that 5 members were not in the position of doing "regulated" work on an ongoing basis. They were informed of this and subsequently filled in a leavers' form which I then sent to C of Sc. In accordance with GDPR their details have been removed from the Safeguarding Register.

Debbie Pirie has been approached (with the approval of the KS) to join Janet and myself on the Safeguarding Panel. This has required a new application and PVG check which has been processed and Debbie now needs to complete Advanced Safeguarding training.

Most of the Trustees on the Kirk Session have been informed that they require to update their Safeguarding training. It is a statutory requirement at 3 years and is mandatory after 5. They do this online or in person as they wish then send a completion certificate to me for record keeping. So far several have indicated they are preferring to wait on in person training locally and 1 has completed the update.