



## important information about changes to our constitution

**Granton**  
Church of Scotland

The Church of Scotland a few years ago recognised that not all congregations function in the same way due to size, people and circumstance. However every Church of Scotland congregation was encouraged to have a way of working tied to the Kirk Session and Congregational Board. This was called the *Model Deed of Constitution*.

Granton operated under this model since it was granted its independence as a parish from Cramond. (Historically we are an offshoot!)

Recognising this model did not always suit congregations a different model was suggested to the General Assembly which accepted it in 2003. This was called The *Unitary Constitution* as it proposed only having a Kirk Session.

Increasingly congregations are moving from the Session/Board model to only having a Kirk Session. This trend has happened at an increasing rate in recent years.

Recognising each congregation is unique the Church of Scotland allows Kirk Session to organise themselves as they see fit. It is up to us to find the best way of managing ourselves to enable us to fulfil our calling as the church in Granton.

**This booklet sets out details of how the Kirk Session sees our future under the Unitary Constitution.**



### The background

For the past 6 years the Kirk Session has wrestled with the question of how we should move to the new Unitary Constitution.

In 2005 the matter was raised but at that time it was decided we were still best served by both Session/Board. It was raised again at the 2010 Session Conference where Session was asked once more to look at this.

In light of these deliberations the Kirk Session decided by a majority vote on Feb 17<sup>th</sup> to move to the Unitary Constitution.

### What does this mean for Granton?

How we organise ourselves has to start with 2 basic questions:

1) What functions are we as a congregation called to fulfil?

2) Is this structure going to allow us to fulfil the first question better than we currently do?

What functions are we as a congregation called to fulfil? Without going into deep theological discussion with lots of bible quotes we can find a good approximation in the 1<sup>st</sup> question of the Shorter Catechism.

*What is the chief purpose of mankind?*

*Answer: Mankind's chief purpose is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.*

Breaking that down into its core functions there are 3 things we need to do as a congregation:

#### Worship God

Worship

#### Nurture our people

Pastoral, Discipleship,  
Social, Fellowship

#### Share our faith

Outreach, Evangelism,  
Testimony, Service

These are the fundamental purposes of any congregation irrespective of where/when they meet and which denomination they belong to.

On the following pages, we look at these 3 things more closely, and see how we can structure our groups around these key action areas.



## Worship [Looking Up]

- Encourage participation in services
- Plan services in conjunction with the Minister/Musical Director
- Take the lead in Developing worship throughout the week
- Work with the congregation's youth ministries to encourage all age participation
- Lead development of worship 'seasons' at Easter and Christmas
- Encourage and Develop musical involvement
- Ensure CCLI licence is up to date
- Organise the Sunday Rotas

Membership: Minister (Convenor), Musical Director + others

## Nurture [Looking In]

- Support Alpha / New Members Courses
- Keep the church roll up to date and relevant
- Baptismal follow up
- Bereavement follow up
- Walk alongside new members to help them find their place in our church family
- Take the lead in developing small groups
- Encourage and support the Bible study
- Develop our commitment to Christian Aid/Fairtrade and other issue of justice
- Support the Pastoral Network
- Offer training to those engaged in pastoral ministry
- Regularly review how best to pastor the people in our care
- Help people to put the spiritual back into the mundane
- Encouraging church members to find what their own gifts and talents are;
- Promoting awareness of the different opportunities in Granton;
- Helping people to find ways to serve Christ in the church, parish, home and workplace;

Membership: Current Pastoral Group Leader (Convenor), K4K Leader, Rep from Ladies Fellowship, Rep from Lunch Club, Rep from Coffee morning, Alpha Co-ordinator, Deacon, Minister (ex officio), Safeguarding Officer, + others



## Outreach [Looking Out]

- Taking the lead in reaching those who are not connected with the church.
- Encouraging those once connected with the church to renew their commitment
- Offer training and support to those involved in welcome ministry
- Support the annual Easter Holiday Club
- Make initial contact with those who have newly moved to the area
- Promote the work of Granton in the wider community
- Develop stratagems for moving the work of the congregation beyond the church grounds
- Support and train the congregation in effective evangelism
- Be the lead agent in nurturing local ecumenical relationships

Membership: Led by an Elder, Minister (ex officio), + others

An effective congregation will be one where these 3 areas are taken seriously. If we forget to *look up* we are no more than a social club. If we do not *look in* our own growth with stall and if we do not *look out* we fail our parish.

Thankfully we are not starting from scratch but have a committed group of people who for years have been working away for God

in Granton. Thankfully also we have been blessed with an excellent suite of buildings which to use in achieving our calling. However, this means if we are going to be effective we need to make sure all these assets are being properly used to support the work. This is why we recommend setting up a further 4 groups in the following areas:

## Communication

- Production and delivery of Kirk Outlook the congregational magazine
- Upkeep of all noticeboards throughout congregational properties
- Active liaison with Worship/Nurture/Outreach to find out what needs they may have in order to best meet their goals.
- Maintenance and development of the Website
- Internal communications

Membership: Current Comms Leader (Convenor), Rep from all other groups, Minister (ex officio), + others



## Fabric

- Active liaison with Worship/Nurture/Outreach to find out what needs they may have in order to best meet their goals.
- Creating a positive environment for all current and possible future church uses;
- Developing a clear programme of maintenance and renewal of church fabric including a timeline for actions and budget estimations;
- Ensuring that insurance cover is adequate for all buildings;
- Arranging letting of buildings, maintenance of any rental agreements and to liaise with property users, ensuring this is reported to the Kirk Session;
- Developing the fabric in order to meet the needs of outside organisations;
- Overseeing special building and fabric projects as requested by the Kirk Session;
- Ensuring that all buildings and surrounding area complies with legislation as required, e.g. Health and Safety, Disability, etc.;

Membership: Current Fabric Leader (Convenor), Minister (ex officio), + others

## Social

- Organise fellowship events
- Liaise with Action groups on how to foster fellowship amongst all people connected with our church
- Work closely with the outreach group in developing ways of creating friendships within the wider parish
- Promote Granton Parish Church as one of the critical organisation in the Granton area

Membership: Current Social Convenor (Convenor), Minister (ex officio), + others



## Finance

- Maintaining and controlling Granton finances: overall income, expenditure, budgets, forecasts to be reported to Kirk Session as and when determined by the Kirk Session
- Oversight of the work of the Treasurer, providing support when needed
- Preparing the accounts for the Annual Report in good time
- Nominating someone to serve as Treasurer should this post fall vacant
- Assisting Worship/Nurture/Outreach Groups in developing their budget, monitoring progress, and agreeing guidelines for the operation of their budgets with the Kirk Session
- Seeking ways to fund special projects from internal and / or external sources
- Playing a key role in developing the financial stewardship of church members: promoting Christian giving, and explaining Christian spending within Granton and the wider church
- Actively promoting awareness of the financial situation of Granton, good or bad, through the church magazine, Church Notices, flyers, etc
- Taking advantage of advice available from national advisers on stewardship when necessary.
- Heading up and delivering the annual Stewardship visit

Membership: Current Finance Convenor (Convenor), Treasurer, Gift Aid Convenor, Hall Letting Coordinator, Minister (ex officio), + others

### How will the new format work?

These 4 groups have the role of facilitating and supporting the work of Worship/Nurture/Outreach and are not an end in themselves.

This way of working is intended to enable the congregation to do more and be released from the restrictions of being Minister centred. The intention is to build a collaborative team.

Communications is essential in all we do.

The Session remains responsible but

committees/groups give the Elders and congregation an opportunity to engage with ministry. Ideally more people will feel they have a stake in the calling of our congregation to be the church in Granton.

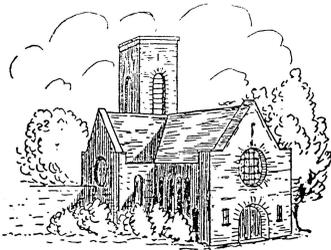
Committees should meet with real agendas, giving plenty of notice, then record and circulate minutes. The committees will be charged with carrying out Session policy and may act as a think tank.

The committees cannot work on their own or in isolation from each other and the Session. Initiative remains with the Session and ideas and suggestions should be brought to the Session before going



public and creating expectations. The committees should stay within financial and policy guidelines as agreed by the session.

Practical operation will see the Session meeting every 2 months with action/support groups meeting between Session as needed.

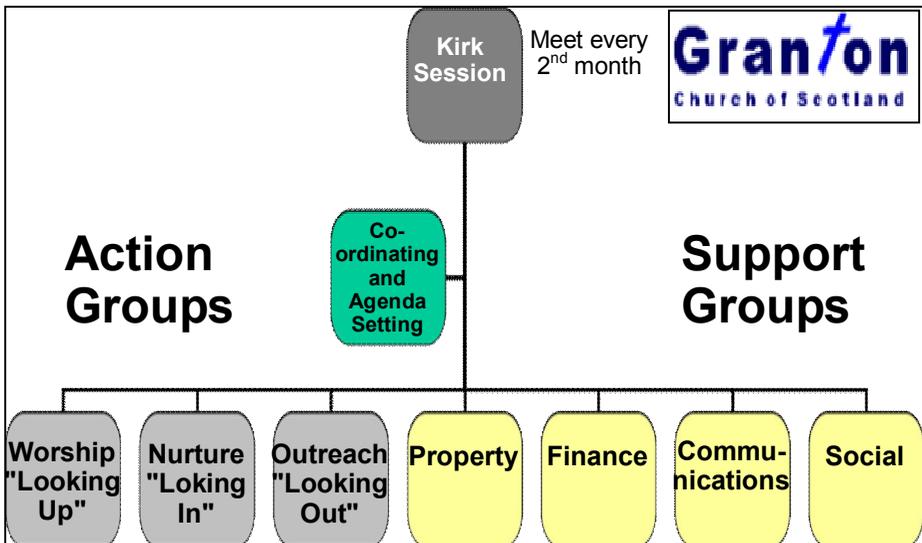


## Co-ordinating Group

A co-ordinating group will also need to meet to keep a unified vision amongst the groups and ensure no group is working in isolation from the rest. It is envisaged this would be made up from Convenors of Action/Support Group.

By giving groups carefully thought out operating guidelines/boundaries the hope is to free Session from much of the minutia that currently takes up its time. Session should then be free to keep the larger picture of God's calling to us as a church in mind.

How will this structure look?





## Q & A

**Some Questions that were asked when this was discussed:**



***By removing the Board you disenfranchise those Board members who are interested?***

Not true. People who are on the Board are there because we believed them to be motivated. They are not motivated because they are on the Board. Many people have been put on the Board but have displayed no motivation to be involved. If someone is motivated there is no reason why they should not be involved to the same degree. Current Board members are in the process of being approached to see where they would like to be involved.

***You concentrate power in the hands of a few people!***

Not true. Although every group should be led by an Elder, no group is restricted to Elders. If the groups are properly set up

and run there will actually be more people involved in the life of the congregation. Our aim should be to have every single member of our congregation involved in its life. Christianity is a participative activity not a passive one.

***How will we identify people to be Elders now as that was one of the Board's unofficial functions?***

Eldership is not a reward for persistence in turning up; it is recognition of leadership gifts that are already being exercised in the congregation. If someone evidences such gifts they are still able to be approached.

***Can we go back to Session/Board if this doesn't work?***

Session agreed to review the operation of this after 6 months. If it doesn't work it is up to us to structure ourselves as we see fit. If Session wishes to devolve finance/fabric/social activities to a body and call it a Board it may do so. However to change constitution requires going back to Presbytery and they would quite rightly ask why we were changing back and forth.

Putting it all back under the auspices of the Kirk Session puts communications/fabric/social and finance back under the spiritual oversight of Session. It is recognition of the spiritual dimension to these activities. Splitting these between spiritual/temporal as was done introduces a disconnect that was never intended. We are called to live before God with our whole lives and to exercise our Christian leadership across all spheres.

The proposals contained in this document are offered to the congregation of Granton only after significant discussion and consideration by the Kirk Session.

We would ask that you not only accept them as how we can structure ourselves but that each person would give serious thought to which are you would like to be involved in. Jesus himself said *by their fruits you shall know them*

**On Sunday 13th March the congregation will be asked to vote and pass these proposals. In the meantime if you wish to discuss these further please contact Norman or Linda.**