

Assembly Trustees Update 13

- The Trustees met on 4 May using MS Teams.
- The Trustees met with Viv Dickenson, CEO of CrossReach and Thom Riddell, Convener of the Social Care Council to discuss current concerns about the operation of CrossReach during the Covid-19 crisis. Testing was inadequate. There was an insufficient number of testers and testing in care homes was only carried out in locations where the virus was deemed to be present. When homes were affected there was a significant impact on staffing; but many members of staff were showing extraordinary commitment. Special donations had been received not only locally but also from partner churches in Westphalia and Taiwan. An increase of the CrossReach loan was approved. The Trustees expressed their deep concern about the inadequacies of testing and offered all necessary support to CrossReach.
- The General Treasurer, Anne Macintosh, and the Chief Officer are working on a revised budget for 2020 to take account of reductions in income. A proposal will be brought to the Trustees' meeting in June. Liquid funds are presently sufficient for stipends and salaries for a year but, otherwise, the remainder of 2020 and 2021 would be challenging.
- The Chief Officer, Dave Kendall, gave a detailed set of presentations. The Trustees were of the view that financial impact of the Covid-19 crisis made it necessary to have a robust strategy and a prioritised plan including identified weights to be applied to each area. The resilience of the organisation as a whole had to be improved and a defined plan was required to deal with the general return to work and the implementation of new and more efficient ways of working.
- In reports from the new special Task Groups, the Economic and Financial Oversight Group noted that work had to be accelerated on a new system of Ministries and Mission contributions. As regards IT and Communications issues, the Trustees agreed that an imperative was to redesign the Church's website, with the webpages being outward facing and a separate intranet being created.
- The Principal Clerk informed the Trustees on proposed mechanisms to publicise the work of the Church both internally and externally during the next moderatorial year. Numerous opportunities were emerging and the period up to Pentecost would be used to ensure that there was regular interaction about how the Church moves on into new ways of working, harnessing existing energies and initiatives within the local congregations.
- The trustees agreed a number of immediate measures required because of the pandemic.
- The work of the emerging Seeds for Change Growth Fund would be put on hold. The Church's finances would be far removed from those existing in 2019 and congregational needs would be likely to be of a different order. All existing Go For It grants would be reviewed to ensure that projects remained deliverable.
- All current internal budgets would be withdrawn and any re-applications should be measured against a restriction to core work and acceptable overhead costs.

- All requests for use of restricted funds would be appraised to ensure that there was a sound basis for identifying that the proposed work was of central importance to the work of the Church.
- There will be an additional meeting of the Assembly Trustees on 13 May.