

Dear Friends,

Over the years there has been a lot of discussion in the church about Manses and the way in which they are maintained. At this year's General Assembly there was a report about this which if you wish to read it can be found here:

[Reports of the 2023 General Assembly \(churchofscotland.org.uk\)](https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk)

It has laid down specific guidelines about the condition and the level of maintenance which should be sustained for Manses. When a church falls vacant the Presbytery property committee inspect the Manse and report on its condition. They then make recommendations and until these are carried out a congregation is unable to call a minister.

The report which we received suggested that the current Manse be sold. This was because a significant amount of work is required including a new boiler, heating system, double glazing and a new kitchen. There are also a number of other works which would be necessary to bring the Manse to an acceptable standard.

The Kirk Session asked a small group to look at the options open to them in terms of keeping the current Manse or selling it and buying a new property. This group looked at the pros and cons of each decision and provided the Kirk Session with a paper for discussion.

The finance team have looked at the reserves available to the congregation. They were concerned that the cost of building work and repairs to the Manse, should they be undertaken, would leave the congregation with very significantly reduced reserves. That reduction would limit our capacity to address any big expenditure on our other Church buildings that may arise in the future and more importantly limit our capacity to fund the work of mission and ministry to the congregation and the community in other areas.

The Kirk Session were also keen that the Manse would be one which would be attractive to prospective applicants for the post as minister to the new congregation.

At the last meeting of the Queensferry Kirk Session, Session members had a full discussion about the best way to proceed. A vote was taken, and a substantial majority voted to sell the Manse and buy an alternative property.

I recognise that this is a big step for the congregation as the current Manse has been the Manse since before our Church was built. However, the Kirk Session feels that this is the best way forward to ensure that the Manse is a suitable home for whoever is called as your minister. It will also be a property which can be easily maintained and will be sustainable in the future.

Yours faithfully,

Fiona

Fiona Mathieson (Rev)

Interim Moderator