

What's Happening at Kirk Session – January 2026

Here are the key points from the Kirk Session meeting of Linlithgow and Avon Valley Church, held on Tuesday 13th January.

Finances: Session noted that general funds for the 11 months' period to the end of November showed a deficit of around £50,000, primarily as a result of the fact that income from members via freewill offerings, standing orders and cash was significantly below what was budgeted for 2025.

The budget for 2026 was discussed at the December Kirk Session and a projected deficit of £54,000 was identified. However, since then, we have been informed that our Giving to Grow contribution for 2026, that is the money that we give to the Church of Scotland centrally, has increased to £250,000. As a result, we have had to revise our projected deficit in our general funds for the forthcoming year to over £80,000.

As a consequence of this financial situation, proposals are being prepared for a Stewardship campaign with the aim of increasing our levels of giving as well as the other aspects of stewardship.

Property: Updates were provided on a series of projects being managed by the Property Team. These include the decoration of Torphichen Manse following the building work undertaken in the last few months of 2025 and work on the St Michael's Manse, as well as ongoing maintenance work at the various properties within the parish.

MP Visit: Our local Westminster MP, Kirsteen Sullivan visited St Michael's and Cross House recently to find out more about our major projects for these two buildings as well as the work required for Torphichen Kirk. Apart from her local interest, she is also a member of one of the Westminster committees which has responsibility for the conservation and renovation of historical buildings.

Festival of Christmas Trees: Margaret Johnston reported on the successful event which had brought 80 local groups together and had drawn over 3400 visitors to the church. £14357.22 had been raised and was being shared among Youthspace, The Shed and First Responders. This had been a major outreach, strengthening our mission to the community and warm thanks were expressed to all those involved in supporting the event. Session noted that since the first Festival in 2017, over £60,000 had been raised for charities.

Children and Young People's Team: Kirk Session was informed that Tracy Curle is stepping back from her role as leader of this Team. Sincere thanks to Tracy were expressed for the work which she has done in establishing the CYP Team across the Parish. She has given a lot of time to establishing a framework for overseeing the various children and young people's activities which fall under the responsibility of this team.

Amnesty International: The Amnesty International Write for Rights' exercise which was undertaken at the end of last year resulted in 92 cards being written and posted directly to support the 11 individuals highlighted in the support material. The event was carried out in all 5 congregations and 7 services on the same day across the Parish. The money donated covered all the postal costs.

