

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD

May 2017

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Congratulate the Guild on its 130th anniversary. *(Section 1.5)*
3. Encourage congregations without a Guild to consider establishing one. *(Section 3.1)*
4. Note the possibility of individuals joining the Guild. *(Section 4)*
5. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to consider their relationship with the Guild at all levels, including support of Guild Projects. *(Section 5)*
6. Welcome the on-going developments in the services delivered nationally by the Guild. *(Sections 6 to 8)*
7. Commend the Guild's published resources to use by other congregational groups. *(Section 8)*
8. Welcome the developing relationship between the Guild and the Synod of Livingstonia of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. *(Section 10)*

REPORT

1. Go in Joy!

The joy of the Guild for me...“Being part of a national movement, meeting complete strangers and finding a common bond and instant friendship”

1.1 This past year has seen the Guild's work and witness under the theme “Go in Joy!”, the second theme in our three year strategy, “Be Bold, Be Strong”. Throughout the year, we have sought to support each other in the work of the Guild at local, regional and national levels. Through resources, events, advice and simply through sharing what it means to be part of the Guild, we have emphasised the positives and challenged the negatives; encouraged innovation and valued continuity.

1.2 This has meant building on the strengths of the Guild, which are reflected in the three pillars of worship, prayer and action that have underpinned our work for many years and to which we now add fellowship as a fourth tenet.

1.3 In other words, we are focussing on our core values, our core strengths and our core aspirations. To manage and develop our work, our National Council has four sub-groups:

- Communications and Marketing
- Outreach
- Resources
- Events

1.4 Together, these give us the acronym “CORE”, which serves to remind us of the importance of doing what the Guild does well...serving God through on-going work and through new, often challenging, concepts and practices.

1.5 In this report, we record much about the work of the Guild as it celebrates its 130th anniversary. However, we also want to look at new ways of connecting the Guild with the wider church and to invite people to find ways in which they can share in our mission and service.

The joy of the Guild for me...“I find joy in the Guild as our branch finds new members and continues to be outward looking, taking an interest in and helping others, near and far.”

2. Join us!

2.1 Much of the Guild’s work is done in partnership with others, at the national level of the Church of Scotland, with congregations and parishes and with other groups.

2.2 We’d like to extend that ethos of partnership further and to look at ways in which the whole church can “own” the Guild, not only in places where Guild groups exist, but elsewhere and to offer a series of opportunities for that to be made possible.

The joy of the Guild for me...“Singing and praying with like-minded people.”

3. Having a Guild

3.1 There is a Guild to be found in around two thirds of our congregations. These range from the smallest with four members to the largest with over ninety.

Forming a Guild is an obvious way of becoming involved in our work. Materials and advice to help with this are readily available and described elsewhere in this report.

3.2 Where a Guild group exists, congregations have a real asset in terms of leadership, service, commitment and energy. They also have a ready-made connection with a

range of issues that may not otherwise be brought to the attention of the church...our projects being excellent illustrations of this point.

3.3 In some places there will never have been a Guild, at least in recent times. In others, it will have folded for a number of possible reasons.

3.4 In any case, we contend that it is worth thinking very seriously about the advantages of having a local group and to speak to us about how that can happen, including information about how a Guild can work in the contemporary context.

The joy of the Guild for me...“Feeling connected, even when I sometimes feel alone.”

4. Individual Membership

4.1 Individuals can join the Guild. If there is no local group, then anyone who wants to be part of our movement can contact Guild office and become an individual member.

One of our highlights in the past year was the enthusiasm with which the Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Russell Barr, asked to become such an individual member.

4.2 This type of membership offers a place for those who want to be involved in the Guild and perhaps allows such members to sow the seed of a Guild presence within a congregation.

The joy of the Guild for me...“Opening my eyes to issues which may otherwise have passed me by.”

5. Supporting the Guild

5.1 The Guild is centred on its local groups, but it is a major part of the life of the whole Church. Where there is no local Guild, there can still be a strong connection. We know of one Presbytery where information about the Guild’s Project Partnership scheme has been circulated to

all congregations, encouraging them to support the projects as part of their own mission and service.

5.2 The Guild invites everyone to take an interest, not only in the fund-raising aspects of the Project Scheme, but also in praying about, considering and reflecting upon the issues that the projects deal with.

5.3 We also ask Kirk Sessions to challenge us, as well as support us. All too often, we hear of Guilds struggling and even closing without any apparent investigation into options which may help the group find new ways of operating.

5.4 Kirk Sessions are in a unique position in terms of being aware of the challenges and opportunities that lie before their Guild. We ask, therefore, that congregations feel able to approach Guild Office for advice and to take the time to consider fully how they are supporting their Guild and how that might change to meet new circumstances.

The joy of the Guild for me...“Hearing about the work of the Guild and feeling part of something bigger”

6. Communications and Marketing

6.1 Communications are, of course, central to the operation of a national membership organisation. They are crucial in terms of information, but also in terms of training, support and a general sense of being part of a bigger movement.

6.2 Over the last couple of years, the Guild has worked hard at improving the range and quality of its communications. The Guild e-news now has around 1200 subscribers. The Facebook page has 1600 “likes”.

Our web pages continue to be developed, with more content planned for these in coming months.

6.3 These statistics reflect a really significant change in the ways that we speak to and listen to our membership and our supporters. They also challenge some of the

stereotypes that are attached to the Guild. Clearly there is still a lot that can be done, but the usefulness of electronic communication lies in the speed with which we can consult and inform and the way in which we can react quickly to new ideas and issues.

6.4 As well as the electronic media, we have also seen great strides in the quality and usefulness of printed newsletters, through which we communicate directly to every member of the Guild.

6.5 If the communications elements are important to the operation of the Guild, then marketing offers us a chance to strengthen the identity of the organisation. With that in mind, we continue to produce a range of Guild merchandise items, with the Guild tartan proving a particularly effective and popular idea. Indeed, we were grateful that the Moderator chose to use our scarves and ties as gifts for people he met during his year of office, including the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prime Minister.

6.6 Turnover on sales of Guild merchandise items has increased by around 300% over the last two years and the importance of that figure lies in it representing a renewed confidence and enthusiasm, with people proud to identify with the Guild.

The joy of the Guild for me...“Sharing in the work of the whole church and so many partner bodies”

7. Outreach

7.4 The Guild has a long history of working closely with the Councils and Committees of the Church and with a wide range of other groups. These relationships are symbiotic and allow the Guild to influence thinking and practice whilst, at the same time, informing our own strategies and agendas.

7.5 The Outreach Group has been formed to bring the Guild’s representatives on other bodies together, to share

their experience and knowledge and to offer a sense of coherence to our external connections.

7.3 Through this Group, we work internally to the Church with:

- Church and Society Council, including the Violence Against Women Task Group
- Ministries Council
- Mission and Discipleship Council, including the National Youth Assembly
- Social Care Council
- World Mission Council

7.4 Outside the Church of Scotland, we work with:

- Jubilee Scotland
- World Day of Prayer
- ACTS Anti-human Trafficking Group
- Inter-faith Group on Domestic Abuse

7.5 In addition to the above, the Outreach Group is the one that relates to our Project Partners and which, along with the Leadership Team, has the responsibility of making recommendations on our choice of partners for each three year cycle. We look forward to making new choices for the 2018-21 period later this year.

The joy of the Guild for me...“Learning, constantly learning!”

8. Resources

8.1 The effective running of a Guild can be greatly supported and enhanced by the provision of good quality resources. Leadership, faith development, worship, recruitment and so on can all be addressed in this way.

8.2 To that end, the Resources Group has published or is working on a range of materials including:

- The annual Theme and Discussion Guide

- The “Big Book of Gui(l)d Ideas”
- “Help, I’m Leading Worship”
- “Planning and Practice”, a guide to the constitution

8.3 Recognising concerns that exist over finding leaders, planning meetings and developing the Guild, it is intended that more resources will emerge in future. Proposed to be amongst these will be additions to the “Big Book of Guild Ideas” and resources for worship and for content for Guild meetings.

8.4 As stated earlier in this report, the Guild hopes that it can offer its services and resources to those within the church and outside the Guild.

Therefore, we invite ministers and other leaders to look at our resources and consider making use of them in worship, house groups, youth groups or any other situation where they could be valuable.

The joy of the Guild for me...“The Annual Gathering...the joy and the chatter of it, even in remote places where it is being streamed”

9. Events

9.1 A very significant amount of the Guild’s work that is overseen by the National Council involves the organisation of events. These can range in size and purpose and take place across the country.

9.2 The Events Group of the National Council is responsible for planning the programme of events, ensuring they are well-run, that they are publicised, that they are staffed and that they add value to the life of the Guild.

9.3 Over the past year, we have had:

- Two “Big Sing” events, one at the General Assembly of 2016 and one in Westburn Church in Greenock. With over a thousand people at each, these have been joyous occasions and have raised thousands of

pounds to support the work of the Synod of Livingstonia in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in Malawi.

- The Annual Gathering in the Caird Hall in Dundee, where the Moderator and Sally Magnusson entertained, informed and challenged us and the Heart and Soul Swing Band led us in musical joy.
- Conferences for Presbyterian Council Conveners, Resource Co-ordinators and Project Co-ordinators
- A Regional Gathering in Kelso, attended by over 100 people
- Resource Days, eleven in number, to encourage Guild folk in the use of our published material

The joy of the Guild for me...“ It brings such joy to know that there are people out there who care so much. They do not just care but they care even for a person like me who is HIV positive. We have been shunned by our own people in the village but people from abroad are going all the way to show us love. I do pray for them that God should bless their work”, said 17 year old Eunice Kayira from Malawi, who has been living with HIV since birth.

10. Synod of Livingstonia, CCAP, Malawi

10.1 As mentioned above, the offerings at the Guild’s “Big Sing” events have been raised to support work of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in the north of Malawi. This is a relationship that has been developing over the past four years and which has become a really important element of our work. Real friendships now exist between the Guilds and the Women’s and Men’s Guilds in Malawi. The money raised has gone to furnish a hostel for women training as teachers at the Loudon College in Embangweni and to support the food crisis work of the Livingstonia Aids Project (itself a former Guild project) in Ekwendeni.

10.2 We hope to extend our contacts by working with the World Mission Council and the Synod of Livingstonia,

including the idea of twinning Guilds or Presbyterian Councils with partners in Africa.

The joy of the Guild for me...“Knowing what I think matters”

11. Guild Office and Staffing

11.1 There are five staff members in the Guild Office, who are ready, willing and well-able to support the membership in every area of Guild life. We record our thanks to Iain Whyte (General Secretary), Lesley Blyth (Administrator), and Alice Finlayson (Finance Assistant), who have worked for the Guild for a number of years. We also thank Karen Gillon (Associate Secretary) and Nicola Robinson (Admin Assistant) for their work and especially for the way in which they have settled into their new appointments over the past few months.

12. Finance and Statistics

MEMBERSHIP

The membership numbers for the Guild at the time of writing were:

Members 20,054

Groups 821

FINANCE

General Fund Income	£	General Fund Expenditure	£
Members' Contributions	201,100	Management and admin	207,835
Donations and Grants	24,319	Objects Expenditure	59,728
Sales of goods	28,474	Cost of sales	23,394
Project Support	20,753		
Other	27,950		
Total	302,596	Total	290,957

DONATIONS TO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

Sums given by Guilds in 2016, based on returns received to 21 February 2017, were as follows:

To Ministry and Mission Funds via Congregations	£71,681.32
To Congregational Funds	£341,236.92
To work of the church, including projects	£275,034.26
To work outwith the Church	£88,343.52
Total	£776,296.02

PROJECT DONATIONS TO 10 FEBRUARY 2017

Ascension Trust Scotland: Street Pastors	£71,843.28
Care for the Family: Let's Stick Together	£56,870.81
Christian Aid: Caring for Mother Earth in Bolivia	£46,126.12
Feed the Minds: Breaking the Cycle of FGM	£75,737.53
Mission International: Haiti Project	£47,402.75
Prospects: All Friends Together	£45,373.16
Total	£343,353.65

13. Conclusion

13.1 As mentioned at the start of this report, the Guild has now served the Church of Scotland for 130 years. We fully expect to continue to do so for many more years.

13.2 This report records much of the on-going work and points towards our future, a future to which the whole Church is invited.

13.3 We hope that churches across the land will look again at their Guild, be that at a local level or as part of their commitment to the national Church.

In the name of the Church of Scotland Guild

ROSEMARY JOHNSTON, *National Convener*
IAIN WHYTE, *General Secretary*

ADDENDUM

Rosemary Johnston, National Convener

Rosemary Johnston has served the Guild at local, Presbyterial Council and National level for many years. She became an individual member when her local group closed and was a member of Perth Presbyterial Council, becoming Convener and National Representative. As a member of the then National Executive, she served on the Finance and General Purposes Committee, including a period as Convener of the Committee. At a time when the Guild is looking at innovative ways of working, Rosemary has been instrumental in the emergence of a new and very successful Guild group in the Parishes of Lower Earn

in Perthshire. Over the past two years, she has served as National Vice-Convener and National Convener, leading and representing the Guild with a real sense of purpose, intent on encouraging support for the Guild.

We wish Rosemary every blessing for the future, both within the Guild and elsewhere. We thank her husband Alex for his support for Rosemary and for the Guild as a whole.

In the name of the Church of Scotland Guild

MARGE PATERSON, *National Vice-Convener*
IAIN WHYTE *General Secretary*