

**THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND - MINISTRIES COUNCIL  
COUNCIL**

St Andrew's and St George's West Church, 13-17 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PA

Wednesday 25 October 2017

**MINUTE**

**PRESENT:**

**Convener:** Rev Neil Glover

**Vice-Conveners:** Dr John Dent  
Rev Eleanor McMahon  
Rev Sarah Ross

**Members & Observers:** 29 others recorded in the Register of Attendance

**Staff in Attendance:** Jayne Scott plus 7 staff as recorded in the Register of Attendance

**Apologies:** Apologies were noted in the sederunt

**ACTION**

**29 Opening Worship**

The meeting was opened with worship and the Convener welcomed the Rev Lezley Stewart, who was in attendance as part of her induction ahead of starting in post as Recruitment and Support Secretary on Monday 30 October 2017. Apologies were noted.

**30 Minutes**

The Minute of the Ministries Council overnight meeting held on Wednesday 30 - Thursday 31 August 2017 was approved.

**31 Matters Arising**

**31.1 Vision for Ministries Council (16):** Paper *MC3-01* was prepared by Mr Brian Porteous to reflect on the discussions at the Council overnight meeting. It was recognised that the Council of Assembly was seeking to develop a strategy for the Church as a whole and that this would be presented to the General Assembly for debate in 2018. It was agreed that Ministries Council would await the General Assembly vision for the Church before revisiting discussions around a vision for Ministries Council. There seemed to be a consensus that the Council's purpose was that of *enabling, inspiring, equipping, supporting and encouraging ministries*. The Ministries Council's Shaping Strategy Group will discuss the Council's purpose at their next meeting in November.

**32 General Assembly**

**32.1 Operational Plan:** Updates provided in the *Operational Plan MC3-02* were noted. The deliverance on a review of pay structures does not sit within the remit of the Ministries Finance Committee. The Convener and Council Secretary agreed to discuss this with the Human Resources Department.

NG/JS

**33 Convener's Report**

The Convener gave a verbal report and the following points were noted:

**33.1 Housing & Loan Fund:** A letter had been received from the Housing & Loan Fund Trustees containing proposals regarding future payments made from the Ministries Council.

Miss Lin Macmillan, Secretary of the Housing & Loan Fund, advised that the Trustees would be confident that commitments can be met over the next 5 years and would not anticipate

problems in the short-to-medium term.

The Trustees of the Fund anticipate an increase in requests in the future and request involvement in the survey on ministerial retirement.

Council agreed, subject to concurrence of the Council of Assembly, that payments to the Fund would be suspended until 2021. This is subject to the condition that the Housing & Loan Fund Trustees would meet with the Ministries Council and the Council of Assembly in the first quarter of 2020 to review the situation.

JS

The Council Secretary agreed to send a written response to the Trustees.

**33.2 Membership:** Council received details of current membership (MC3-04a,b&c) and noted the difficulties to service all the requirements of its Committees and Groups within the allocated number of members. Council agreed that the Convener should make requests to amend to the Council constitution as follows:

NG

- a) Allow for the appointment of an additional Vice-Convener. The fifth Vice-Convener would be the Convener of the Ministries Finance Committee who, until now, has not served as a Vice-convener.
- b) Increase the permitted number of co-opts to be greater than the number of members on the understanding that those groups do not set policy.
- c) Increase the number of General Assembly appointed members on Ministries Council.

Council also agreed that approaches should be made to fill 2 current vacancies for Council Members. An update would be brought to a future meeting.

**33.3 Proposed Council Meeting Dates 2018-2019:** The following meeting dates for 2018-2019 were noted:

Wednesday 20 June 2018

Wednesday 5 – Thursday 6 September 2018

Wednesday 31 October 2018

Wednesday 12 December 2018

Wednesday 13 February 2019

Wednesday 20 March 2019

**33.4 RIT Update:** Mr David Plews, Education & Training Secretary, reported that the Re-thinking Initial Training Group (RIT) had been looking at the key elements and components for what needs to be in place for recruitment, training, deployment and Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD). There was awareness of the growing variety of skills required for those in ministry and recognition that training should be accessible and flexible. A level of agency is required and Ascend supports people in identifying what may be useful in their own training and development. Digital formation is urgently required in particular within Initial Ministerial Education (IME). Technology should be used to improve processes, make information accessible and allow for effective communication which would reduce misunderstanding and lack of understanding.

RIT will bring proposals and recommendations on training to the Education & Support Committee. An interim report will be provided for the General Assembly of 2018 with a further report in 2019.

**33.5 Presbytery Conference:** The session hosted by Ministries Council will include information on Presbytery Planning, Registration of Ministries, Priority Areas Learning Academy, Hub-style Ministries, Ascend and the Go For It Fund.

## 34 Staffing

As mentioned earlier the Rev Lezley Stewart, will begin as Recruitment and Support Secretary on 30 October 2017.

Mr Craig Renton was appointed as Depute Council Secretary and will begin in post on 13

November 2017.

### 35 Development Programme

The proposed staffing structure was tabled and was subject to decisions by the Council of Assembly at their November meeting. The structure set out a team approach to the work of the Council and included new staffing within Education and Training and within Partnership Development. Any new posts would be for a fixed term period of 3 years. Council welcomed the inclusion of a named staff member for the Readership and Ordained Local Ministers. It was noted that deployment and oversight of Readers lay with the Presbytery and that there was a need for a consistent framework. Referring to the Readership Act (Act 17, 1992) it was understood by the Rev Eleanor McMahon, Education and Support Vice-Convener, that provision of pastoral care and support for Readers was the responsibility of Presbytery although this is not specifically mentioned in the Act.

Council would issue communicates with the wider Church following decisions of the Council of Assembly to clarify what should be expected from Ministries Council, where to find the relevant information and who the contact person is.

### 36 Finance

Mr Allan Sim, Ministries Finance Committee Convener thanked the Rev Alastair Cook for deputising at the recent Committee meeting.

**36.1 Management Accounts to August 2017:** The Management Accounts to August 2018 along with commentary (*MC3 – 06a&b*) were received. Forecasts to the end of the year indicate a deficit of £791k against the budget for the year of £1,499k, a significant expected saving of £708k. The main savings were expected to be in Parish Ministry stipends and the Path of Renewal project. The full time equivalent number of parish ministers as at 31 August was 744 and this was 27 fewer ministers than originally budgeted.

With £44,197k in Council reserves and £13,757k of which being unrestricted, Mr Sim suggested that it could be argued that this was not enough in reserves for a charity.

**36.2 Draft Budget 2018:** The *Draft Budget 2018 (MC3-05a&b)* included a 1.5% increase in stipend and MDS salaries from 1 January 2018 as this has been approved by the Council of Assembly. The Development Programme costs were also included. The Council of Assembly has put a block on any new spends. The Ministries Finance Committee would consider business cases on the condition that they were well-prepared and received with good notice.

During lunch break the 4 Young Adult Volunteers (YAVs) from PCUSA were welcomed along with Mrs Lynn MacLellan, Office Manager & Site Coordinator (Glasgow). The YAVs spend a year of service in Scotland working in different Church community projects in Priority Area parishes. This year they are serving in Glasgow: Cranhill, Queens Park Govanhill, St James' Pollok and Larkhall: Chalmers. This is the third year of hosting YAVs in Scotland.

### 37 Partnership Development

A written report *MC3-07* providing an overview of the work of the section was received along with a verbal report from the Rev Sarah Ross, Partnership Development Vice-Convener.

**37.1 Property Portfolio:** Council affirmed its decision of March 2014 to dispose of surplus properties, as identified in paper *MC3-08*, as and when opportunity arises:

- a) 5 Baberton Mains Crescent, Edinburgh Manse for Edinburgh: Holy Trinity, owned: 34.6% Ministries Council; 65.4% Congregation.
- b) 4 Sydney Terrace, Edinburgh Former manse, ownership: ½ Ministries; ½ General Trustees.
- c) Site of St Columba's, Livingston Site of former church, maintained as required.
- d) 27 Heatherbank, Livingston A former manse, presently leased to a third party. New lease being issued as market conditions not suitable for sale (6 month let). Will review sale

market at end of this lease period.

- e) St Columba's Church, Rosyth
- f) 7 Maple Place, Perth A former manse, with a life rent interest.
- g) 5 Bruce Walk, Nigg, Aberdeen Former Manse for Associate Minister (MDS post) of Aberdeen South of St Nicholas Kincorth / Cove Parish Grouping. Presently leased on a commercial basis to a third party.
- h) Roddach Cottage, East Cummingston, nr Burghead
- i) Canna Mission Church, Isle of Canna, North West Lochaber Parish There had been discussions between the National Trust for Scotland (which holds the Isle of Canna in trust) and the Law Department about Canna Church. NTS personnel changed, and steps are being taken to re-establish contact.

Blanket approval would be sought from the Council of Assembly, and, where appropriate, the General Trustees, for the sale of said properties. Then, following such approval, Council would instruct staff to proceed accordingly with sale or disposal. Mrs Ross agreed to confirm the details of what happens with the money received from property sales.

SR

**37.2 Deliverance - Video Streaming/Remote Access/Proxy Voting:** Council noted the contents of paper *MC3-09* outlining the proposal from the Legal Questions Committee for legislation which would provide for virtual attendance and voting online at congregational meetings. The following comments shall be passed on to the Legal Questions Committee who have responsibility for this deliverance:

- Note that charities are being encouraged to provide options for proxy voting.
- Concerns were expressed for the potential additional burden on Interim Moderators.
- Only a small number of Congregations currently have the capability to allow people to join a meeting and/or participate in vote online.
- To confirm how anonymity would be maintained in proxy voting.
- If accept the principle of voting from a distance it may be difficult to limit that option. If under discretion then pressure would be put on the Moderator of a meeting.
- It was not felt that this would be appropriate for decisions on buildings or unions.

**37.3 Interim Moderators in Vacancies:** Background details were provided in paper *MC3-10* along with some possible options for the way forward. Council agreed that anyone who has served as an Interim Moderator in the current vacancy after a leave to call has been granted, shall not be eligible to apply or to be considered as an applicant unless 24 months have elapsed since he or she has been discharged by the Presbytery. This would be in line with the 2 year period for reviewing permission to call already provided for in the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act 8, 2003), notwithstanding that these periods may not be co-terminous.

**37.4 Interim Ministries Task Group Co-optee:** Council approved the appointment of Miss Marjorie Clark as a co-opted member on the Interim Ministries Task Group to replace Mr David Wyness who has come to the end of his term.

**37.5 Hub-Style Ministries Update:** A number of Presbyteries attended the Hub-Style Ministries event on Tuesday 26 September as noted in update paper *MC3-11*. There are ongoing conversations with all those Presbyteries who have expressed interest in exploring Hub-Style Ministries. The core 5 Presbyteries involved in the Hug-Style Ministries Experiment are: Abernethy, Angus (West Angus Area Ministry), Argyll, Caithness and Dundee.

**37.6 Partnership Development Review Group:** A review of the Pioneer Ministry Project Group took place on 24 October. Lessons can be learned from this experience for the initial stages of Hub-Style Ministries in terms of project management and effective communications. A report will follow in due course.

**37.7 Shetland Presbytery:** Council agreed in February 2017 that the J B Athol Gordon

Fund would be used to allow a team of three ministers from the Interim Ministries Team to be appointed as Assessor Ministers for Shetland Presbytery over a period of 9 months from March 2017. The Team did not relocate to Shetland, but made planned visits to the islands which coincided with key Presbytery meetings and reported regularly to the Council Secretary.

Shetland Presbytery decided in September 2017 that the move over an agreed period of time towards becoming a single parish with presbytery administration being absorbed into another Presbytery. The Rev George Whyte, Principal Clerk, agreed to explore this on their behalf.

The Presbytery was successful in their application to the Interim Ministries Task Group for a 5 year Transition Ministry which will work towards this new pattern. This Transition Ministry post will be one of the four new posts being created from January 2018.

Further details were provide in paper *MC3-12*. The Council Secretary confirmed that a report would be brought to a future Council meeting with proposals for how to develop the learning gained from this model.

JS

- 38 Draft Legislation – Continuing Parish Ministry Beyond the Age of 75:** Council considered the draft Legislation (*MC3-03*) and Vice-Convenor, Dr John Dent, offered to feedback comments and follow up with the Legal Questions Committee.

JD

### 39 Priority Areas

A written report *MC3-14* providing an overview of the work of the section was received. Dr Alan Naylor offered a verbal report on behalf of the Priority Areas Committee.

**39.1 Widening The Reach of Our Offer:** Details of the deliverance were provided in paper *MC3-15*. Around half of the 64 designated Priority Areas are in the Presbytery of Glasgow and the remaining spread across a further 13 Presbyteries. The list of Priority Areas was last reviewed in 2014 and the Priority Areas Committee will begin exploring the methodology, timetable and plan for the next review at a future Committee meeting.

The Priority Areas Committee will work in partnership with the Presbytery Planning Task Group to look at new models of resourcing ministry in Priority Areas.

**39.2 The Big Conversation 2:** The 2-day conference will focus on Asset Based Community Development and Worship Development. A copy of the programme was provided for information *MC3-16*. The target is for a minimum of 40 Priority Areas to be in attendance.

The new Priority Areas Academy learning programme, will be open in the first instance to Priority Areas Congregations but will also be open to non-Priority Areas and in addition a record will be kept of involvement of rural Congregations.

### 40 Education and Support

Written report *MC3-13* providing an overview of the work of the section was received along with a verbal report from the Rev Eleanor McMahon, Education and Support Vice-Convenor.

**40.1 Readership:** The Committee welcomed the affirmation made at the August Council meeting regarding Readership. Mrs McMahon explained that the Council offers a Vocations Information Day, a period of Discernment and then the selection/training of Readership candidates was shared with Ministries Council and Presbytery. Ministries Council provides a conference programme for Readers-in-training and Presbytery provides placement and supervision of that placement. When set apart Presbytery maintains a Role of Readers and superintendance is also under the remit of Presbytery.

The Readership Act (Act 17, 1992) says that Readers set apart after May 2012 will participate in a biennial cycle of personal appraisal linked to engagement in ongoing learning and development, to be resourced by the Ministries Council. It was noted that the care and support of Readers was not clearly defined in the Act although it may be assumed that superintendance by Presbytery would include support. The Education and Support

Committee would seek to clarify roles and responsibilities relating to Readers, the current provisions and to identify improvements. With current staffing capacity it was not certain when work would be carried out on this. A report will be brought back to a future Council meeting.

Further to these discussions the Convener suggested that the Ministries Council session at the Presbytery Conference should include comment Readership.

**40.2 Ascend:** The priority this year has been the Ministerial Development Conversation (MDC) programme and will remain a priority in 2018. The programme is not offered to Ministries Development Staff (MDS) as the Human Resources Department are working on a similar process for MDS. However, MDS who are Deacons or Associate Ministers would be encouraged to undertake MDC.

Information on Pastoral Supervision will follow.

**40.3 Admissions:** Further to the Registration of Ministries Act (Act 2, 2017) there was need to review the legislation regarding what has been commonly called “conditional” Certificates of Eligibility for those wishing to retain their status in their own denomination.

No change would be anticipated to the principle that a charge must be vacant and advertising for 6 months before it can appoint a Minister from outwith the EEA. A paper will be brought to December Council.

**40.4 Initial Ministerial Education (IME) Update:** The following figures from the IME programme were noted:

Full-time Candidates	43
Ordained Local Ministers Candidates	15
Diaconate Candidates	2
Full-time Probationers	13
Ordained Local Ministers Probationers	6
Diaconate Probationers	1
Passed Final Review in 2017:	23 [18 FTWAS + 5 OLM]
Currently within Recruitment & Discernment:	45

**40.4 Discipline Process Impact:** The Education and Support Committee raised concerns regarding the impact that current disciplinary processes have on the health and wellbeing of those in ministry and their families. Those conducting and administering these processes also have pastoral needs. This can generate significant pastoral care demands as well as financial, emotional and spiritual costs within the Church. The Committee will consider this further.

**41 Date of Next Meeting** – The next meeting of the Council will take place on Wednesday 6 December 2017 at St Andrew’s and St George’s West Church, 13-17 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PA

**The Convener thanked those present for their contributions and the meeting closed with the Grace.**

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 Convener Date

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 Secretary Date