

BASIC INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERS

NAME OF COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE: Church and Society Council

BRIEF SUMMARY OF AREA OF WORK:

The Church and Society Council, working through congregations and with civil society and decision makers, exists to build relationships that might create a world free from poverty and injustice. In this work the Council seeks to be: prophetic, missional, and relational and to root its work in the Christian faith.

Over the next 15 years, through its Speak Out work plan, the Council will focus on seven key areas in which these relationships can find expression. These are:

- *Through local communities* – Where we will work to build local communities where people flourish
- *Through politics* – Where we will work to create a way of doing politics differently, a more inclusive, representative and participatory politics
- *Through our economy* – Where we will work to create an economy driven by equality
- *Through international relations* – Where we will work to build global friendships and peace
- *Through the environment* – Where we will work to care for creation
- *Through children and young people* – Where we will work to invest in young people to enable and allow them to grow
- *Through health and social care* – where we will work to ensure the health and wellbeing of all

By building relationships in these areas the Council will seek to change attitudes, establish partnerships, encourage practical action, and shape policy to create world that looks a bit more like God hopes and intends. We have a particular commitment to do this alongside people who struggle against poverty and injustice.

NAMES OF CONVENER AND SECRETARY:

Convener: Richard Fraser

Vice-Convener: Pauline Edmiston

Vice-Convener: Wendy Young

Secretary: Martin Johnstone

NUMBER OF MEMBERS: 36

Convener and Vice-Conveners, Appointed by the General Assembly

28 Appointed by the General Assembly

1 each from the Guild and Social Care Council

4 co-opted members representing the EMU Covenant (Episcopal, Methodist and United Reformed Churches working together in Scotland), the Salvation Army in Scotland, the United Free Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland.

FREQUENCY, TIMING AND VENUE OF MEETINGS:

Five Council meetings per year: June (overnight), September, November, February (overnight) and April.

Day meetings are normally held at the Church Officers in Edinburgh and overnight meetings at the Conforti Institute in Coatbridge. Meetings are normally held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays.

The **Business Committee** acts as the Council executive, planning agendas, scrutinising accounts and budgets and making policy recommendations to the full Council. The Committee meets three weeks before each Council meeting, and also on the day of the Council's report to the General Assembly where it considers any notices of motion or other issues that may have arisen.

EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBERS:

While the Council meetings themselves are important, Council members are strongly encouraged to be involved in the work of the council in between Council meetings. The Council is committed to a project based approach to its work so that while the seven key areas of the Council's work remain consistent the projects within these areas will adapt and change over time. These projects focus on resourcing and enabling congregations, and the Church as a whole, to engage in the seven key areas, while learning from the experience that local congregations already possess. At various points during their term members will be asked to take part in the planning and delivery of such projects.

In addition to this Council members might be expected to serve the Council in the following ways:

- Representing the Council on external groups.
- Giving presentations on the work of the Council to groups such as Presbyteries, Guilds etc.
- Visiting projects on behalf of the Council & reporting back.
- Gathering information on what is happening in their local community, congregations, Presbytery etc. & sharing it with the Council.
- Following up on individual sections of deliverances that have been given to the Council by the General Assembly, monitoring progress and taking action to promote them.

At Council meetings Council members are expected to:

Prepare diligently

- Read and study papers and reports conscientiously so that you can thoughtfully respond to the work being undertaken.
- Be aware of what staff and working groups are doing in the name of the Council

Debate constructively

- Respect differing opinions and alternative approaches
- Recognise the full range of views and ideas available to the Council in the development of ideas and decision-making

Challenge rigorously

- Engage fully with the proposals and issues facing the Council

Decide boldly

- Make big decisions when they need to be made

DETAILS OF OTHER GROUPS ETC:

In addition to Council meetings the Council is involved in the work of a variety of other groups which relate closely to its work. These include:

The Violence Against Women Task Group

This group is a cross Council group that exists to "work within the Church of Scotland and our society to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls." The group seeks to "create a Church where gender justice is central to our life and work, where all individuals are equally safe

and respected and where women and girls live free from gendered abuse – and the cultural and theological attitudes that help perpetuate it.”

The Young People and Education Action Group

This group is a Cross Council group that exists to enable the Church to coordinate its work to nurture and support young people.

The Society Religion and Technology Project Committee

The SRT Committee is made up of Council members and others with an interest in science and ethics and the work of the Church in this area. It advises on issues for future research and study and supports generally the work of the SRT Project.

The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office Advisory Group

The Advisory Group meets every six to eight weeks when Parliament is sitting. Each of the eleven participating denominations has one seat on the Advisory Group.

The Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) Anti Human Trafficking Group

This group is an ecumenical group which raises awareness of Human Trafficking and how society can defeat it.

The Go For It Committee

The Go For It is a Fund of the Church of Scotland and was established in May 2012. It's all about funding change in church and community. The Fund aims to encourage creative ways of working, which develop the life and mission of the local church, and are transformative for both communities and congregations.

The HM Forces Chaplains Committee

The Church of Scotland Committee on Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces, working through the convener, keeps abreast of Ministry of Defence policy and makes a contribution to the formulation of this as it concerns the spiritual well-being of the women and men of the Armed Forces of the Crown. The committee also takes an interest in the recruiting of chaplains and in their welfare.

The Joint Faiths Board on Community Justice

The mission of the Joint Faiths' Board on Community Justice is to promote constructive action from an Inter Faith perspective, on issues related to crime and its prevention, victims of crime, offenders and their families, prisons, community measures, sanctions, and the Judiciary in Scotland.

The Priority Areas Committee

The Priority Areas Committee is one of the main areas of the Ministries Council. It is responsible for the support, development and co-ordination of the Church's work within its poorest communities.

Scottish Churches Housing Action

SCHA is an ecumenical charity which makes practical responses to the challenge of homelessness in Scotland.

The Scottish Pilgrim Routes Forum

This Group aims to monitor areas of interest and/or concern within Rural Scotland and bring them to the attention of ACTS Member Churches for consideration and/or further action.

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) is a diverse coalition of organisations in Scotland campaigning together on climate change.

Eurodiaconia

Eurodiaconia is a European network of churches and Christian NGOs providing social and healthcare services and advocating social justice.

GENERAL SKILLS/EXPERIENCE SOUGHT:

Experience of and interest in one or more of community development, politics, economics, international relations, environmental issues, youth work, education, health and social care, science, technology, ethics and theology; ability to reflect on these areas in the context of the Christian faith, interest in the broad range of the Council's remit.

PARTICULAR SKILLS SOUGHT FROM 2019:

The Council are particularly keen to ensure that our membership includes people with ongoing direct experience of struggling against poverty and injustice. We are committed to changing our ways of working to accommodate this.