

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD MAY 2018

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the report.
2. Note the proposals for twinning partnerships with Guilds in Malawi (2.3)
3. Congratulate the Guild on the success of its Project Partnership Scheme in 2015-18 (2.7)
4. Welcome the Guild's strategy for 2018-21 "One Journey, Many Roads" and its annual themes (3)
5. Note the six new Partnership Projects for 2018-21 and offer prayerful support for the work of these charities (3.6.2)
6. Celebrate the addition of over 600 new members to the Guild in the past session (3.7.7)
7. Welcome the addition of 2nd Linlithgow Girls' Brigade Company as an Honorary Guild Group (3.7.9)
8. Encourage Presbyteries, and National Councils and Committees to consider how they can develop their support for the Guild (4)
9. Encourage Kirk Sessions to explore ways in which they can offer practical support to Guild groups (4.6)
10. Encourage Presbyteries to explore ways in which they can offer practical support to Guild Presbyterial Councils (4.6)
11. Encourage Kirk Sessions to work closely with their Guilds and to challenge their practice where appropriate (4.7)
12. Thank the Guild for the contribution it has made to the work of the Church of Scotland in practical and financial terms (6)

Report

1. INTRODUCTION

Be bold, be strong, for the Lord, your God, is with you!

1.1 Since 2015, the Guild has based its work on the strategy, "Be Bold! Be Strong!", with separate themes in each session:

- 2015-16 Go in Peace!
- 2016-17 Go in Joy!
- 2017-18 Go in Love!

1.2 The triennium has been a great adventure, during which a number of changes have been made to how the Guild works, how it communicates internally and how it presents itself to the wider world.

1.3 New committee structures, a growing presence on social media, regular e-news, Roadshows and Regional Gatherings, "Big Sings", new resources...the list goes on, with everything aimed at these outcomes:

- Increased confidence amongst the membership
- Support for leaders
- Encouraging new people to join
- Developing new ways of working
- Better awareness of what the Guild is
- Refreshing our wonderful organisation

1.4 Against a backdrop of difficult challenges around membership numbers, demographics, lifestyle issues and finance (a list that pertains to the whole church as well as the Guild), the Guild has sought to face up to problems and to find new approaches.

1.5 What has remained the same, though, is our determination to keep worship, prayer, action and fellowship

at the centre of all we do, seeing change as evolution and growth and maintaining the spirit of the Guild as our tradition, not just doing things the way we always have.

1.6 This report brings news of a Guild in good fettle and looking forward to an exciting new stage in its existence as we embark on our new strategy for 2018-21, "One Journey, Many Roads", with these themes:

- 2018-19 Seeking the Way
- 2019-20 Companions on the Road
- 2020-21 The Extra Mile

2. WORSHIP, PRAYER, ACTION AND FELLOWSHIP!

May God's blessing surround you each day...
go in peace, go in joy, go in love!

2.1 The three years from 2015-2018 have seen the Guild work under its strategy (essentially an over-arching theme) "Be Bold! Be Strong!"

With annual themes of "Go in Peace!", "Go in Joy!" and "Go in Love!", we have had many great experiences and done many things, all of them against the backdrop of our four tenets, worship, prayer, action and fellowship. This last year has been no exception.

2.2 Special Events

2.2.1 Much of the year has been focussed on celebrating the Guild and on bringing people together to share ideas, challenges, opportunities and experience.

This has taken several forms, including:

2.2.2 The Annual Gathering

On 2 September 2017, around 2000 people gathered together for a day of worship, fellowship and celebration. We heard from the Moderator, Rt Rev Derek Browning, who spoke on our theme "Go in Love" and from Dr Pam Cairns of the "Free to Live Trust", a charity doing amazing work with prostitutes and their children in Pune in India.

Music played a major part in the day. As well as hymn singing, we were led and entertained by the Heart and Soul Swing Band and also shared in some nostalgic singing of action songs, led by the General Secretary and the Associate Secretary.

2.2.3 "Big Sings"

We have had three of these since last reporting to the Assembly.

- The first was during the 2017 General Assembly, when Very Rev Dr Andrew McLellan led us in an evening that brought a real sense of energy and praise, with over 1000 people sharing in the evening.
- The second was in the East Parish Church in Inverness during Guild Week in November. The presence of around 750 people was a clear statement of the willingness of the Guild to share its sense of belonging across the country and the Highland welcome was excellent.
- The third was the "Big Christmas Sing" in St George's Tron Church in Glasgow. A new idea, we were unsure as to how popular it would be at a busy time, but found that it was necessary to run the service twice to accommodate those wanting to join in!

This programme of Big Sings will begin again at the 2018 Assembly.

Over the course of the year, thousands of pounds were raised to fund the work of the Loudon Teacher Training College at Embangweni in Malawi, especially the drilling of a second bore hole to provide fresh water for the student hostel there.

2.2.4 Regional Gatherings and Roadshows

Recognising that not everyone can come to the Annual Gathering in Dundee, we have established a programme of Regional Gatherings and Roadshows, bringing Guilds together at a more local level to have conversations and learning opportunities that allow dialogue between the national and local structures.

Events in Aberdeen, Tarbert, Fort William, Kyle of Lochalsh, Stornoway, Shetland, Orkney and Caithness have all been welcomed by everyone involved and have given the Guild the chance to express confidence in itself and to continue to build on its history of service.

In addition to these special events, the Guild organises conference meetings for a number of groups of office-bearers:

- Resource Co-ordinators
- Project Co-ordinators
- Presbyterial Council Conveners

2.3 Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi

2.3.1 Over a number of years, the Guild has grown and developed a close connection with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, both with the whole Synod and, particularly, with the Umanyano and the Madodana, the Women's and Men's Guilds respectively.

2.3.2 In the summer of 2017, the National Convener, General Secretary and Associate Secretary, attended the conferences of both groups in Lilongwe and Mzimba. They also met with Christian Aid, the Bible Society, and the Scottish charity "500 miles". Visits were made to hospitals in Livingstonia and Ekwendeni. A visit was also made to meet those involved in the work of the Livingstonia Aids Project, funded by a Guild project from 1997-2000. This included a very powerful outing to the village of Jomo to meet villagers of all ages affected by AIDS and to see the Village Savings and Loan fund in operation, enabling people to improve their own situations in a wide variety of ways.

2.3.3 During the visit, a series of conversations took place regarding possible twinnings of Scottish Guilds with those in Malawi. It is hoped that such connections can be made between Presbyterial Councils and the Men's and Women's Guilds, with initial contacts having now been made.

2.4 Resources

2.4.1 One of the main purposes of the national Guild structures is to support local groups by offering resources that help with leadership matters, planning of meetings and syllabi, leading sessions and worship and so on.

2.4.2 These have been continually developed and offer materials that are very helpful within the Guild, but which could also be used by other groups within the church. We hope that Guilds can share these widely and that they might be taken up by bible study groups, youth groups, Kirk Sessions and others where appropriate.

2.4.3 We look forward to introducing new and updated resources over the next year.

2.5 Marketing

2.5.1 A wide range of merchandising material is produced with the intention of promoting the Guild and strengthening a sense of identity. The most successful of these has been our range of tartan products, and we are grateful to the Moderator for once again using these as gifts for dignitaries he has met, including the Prime Minister, Pope Francis and many others.

2.6 Communications

2.6.1 Social Media

Many Guild members and others keep up to date with current events and news through our Facebook page. In January 2018, the number of people "liking" the Guild's page rose beyond 2000, a figure that challenges stereotypical views of the IT literacy of the Guild!

2.6.2 E-news

Similarly, the Guild's electronic newsletter "Gui(l)d News" has grown in popularity, with over 1200 people now signed up for it. Many of these then share the content with Guild groups and thus take the numbers of people reached well beyond the number receiving the publication.

2.7 Project Partnership Scheme

2.7.1 The Project Partnership Scheme is one of the best known and most highly regarded elements of Guild work. Over the years, in excess of £6 million pounds have been raised for causes all over the world. At least as importantly, the scheme has raised awareness of a host of issues from human trafficking to post-natal depression, domestic abuse, dementia, AIDS, runaway young people, oppression, genocide and climate change, to name but a few.

2.7.2 Over these past few years, the scheme has worked with:

- **Prospects** on the place of people with learning disabilities in the church
- **Christian Aid**, working on issues around climate change and gender roles in Bolivia
- **Care for the Family** on the pressures of family life

- **Mission International**, supporting people who have experienced natural disaster in Haiti
- **Ascension Trust (Scotland)** and the work of the Street Pastors
- **Feed the Minds** on the cruelty and devastating effects of female genital mutilation

2.7.3 The sums raised for these projects are listed in the appendices to this report and they speak volumes for the commitment, interest and Christian service that are found in the work of the charities and the work of the Guild.

2.7.4 As the current round of projects comes to an end, thanks are due to Guild members, charity staff, volunteers and everyone who has contributed to the success of the appeals.

2.8 Working with others

The Guild continues to be represented on a number of internal and external groups.

These include:

- Church and Society Council (including the Violence Against Women Task Group)
- CrossReach
- Ministries Council
- Mission and Discipleship Council
- World Mission Council
- ACTS Anti-human trafficking group
- Interfaith group on domestic abuse
- Jubilee Scotland
- World Day of Prayer

2.9 Loneliness and Isolation

2.9.1 Over the past year, the Guild has worked closely with Faith in Older People on a project funded by Action of Churches Together in Scotland to explore the ways in which the church relates to older people. Emerging from this process, there have been two seminars involving a wide range of interested partners.

2.9.2 The issue which has come to the fore from these events has been loneliness and isolation and plans are now being made to explore this further through a conference event and a possible on-going network of interested parties.

2.9.3 This is an issue that has been recognised as crucial in a number of areas of church life and we look forward to taking it forward in the coming years.

3. LOOKING AHEAD

Look forward in faith, all time is in God's hands!

3.1 While it is good to look back and reflect on another year of the Guild, our main focus is on looking forward. There is so much to look forward to!

3.2 As stated in paragraph 1.6, this year we begin our new three year strategy "One Journey, Many Roads".

3.3 This title has been chosen to remind us that the common threads across the Guild lie in the tenets of worship, prayer, action and fellowship and in our ability to react to a changing world as we seek to serve God through our membership.

3.4 To resist change is to go backwards; to look inwards is to miss the vista around us.

3.5 Looking forward allows us to share the excitement of a journey and to anticipate new discoveries, new friends, new opportunities and our agenda for the next three years is filled with such things.

3.6 New Projects

3.6.1 The Guild is delighted to have selected its Partnership Projects for the period 2018-21. Once again, these projects will allow the Guild to learn about and support the work of a remarkable group of charities involved in a wide range of work in Scotland and around the world.

3.6.2 The partners are:

- Boys' Brigade Scotland: "Faith in Young People", looking to develop faith, leadership and community involvement amongst young people

- World Mission Council: “Makeni Mother and Child Centre”, Kanyama, Lusaka, offering health advice and training and development opportunities to young women
- CrossReach: “Join up the Dots”, looking at work with mental health issues across the whole range of their services
- Free to Live Trust: “Seema’s Project”, providing safety, support, rescue from trafficking and education to children of sex workers in Pune in India
- The Sailors’ Society: “Port Chaplaincy in Scotland”, building on 200 years’ of chaplaincy amongst seamen from across the world
- Malawi Fruits: “Help and Hope in Northern Malawi”, working to train and support young farmers, including work on irrigation, mechanisation and diversification

3.7 New Members

3.7.1 As a membership organisation, we need to encourage new members to continue our work. That can mean new folk in existing groups or new groups or new individual members. The Guild faces the same issues as the whole church in this area.

3.7.2 The Guild welcomes new members, but we also recognise that we need to encourage them. That means finding ways that people can see what they can give to the Guild and what they can receive from it. In turn, that is likely to mean that Guilds will need to:

- Take stock of how they operate
- Consider who the “target” groups might be in terms of demographics and local situations
- What opportunities they have to encourage membership
- Consider how they look to potential new members
- How they respond when people do come along

3.7.3 Above all, it is important to paint a positive picture of what we are about and what membership can mean. Clearly, there are challenges.

3.7.4 Morale can be low, Guilds can be tired, leaders can feel burdened, Guilds can feel unsupported.

However, the aim must be to look for the positives and to accept that increasing, or at least maintaining, membership can only be done in small steps. We have seen a long running reduction in numbers and we should not expect that to change quickly, nor should we expect to see numbers return to the six-figure totals of the past...we no longer live in a world where that is likely or realistic.

3.7.5 That said, we can begin by recognising that a fall in total membership doesn’t only recognise people leaving, for whatever reason. Constantly reporting on reductions is neither positive nor helpful in terms of recruitment.

3.7.6 In that regard, we have put together some information on the number of new members who have joined in the past year.

3.7.7 We are delighted to report that the number of new members is well over 600!

3.7.8 We warmly welcome all of these people and look forward to seeing more join us in the future.

3.7.9 We also welcome the 2nd Linlithgow Company of the Girls’ Brigade as our second honorary Guild group, joining the National Youth Assembly in this. The girls have taken a very real interest in our projects and we are delighted to have them on board.

3.8 New Ways of Working

3.8.1 In any organisation that has been around for a long time, there is the tendency to keep doing things in the same way, even though that can become more and more difficult. Indeed, as challenges increase, it can be very tempting to stick with the familiar rather than venture out in new directions.

3.8.2 In recent years, an increasing number of Guilds have sought new patterns of operation. These include:

- Meeting in different places, be that houses, old people’s homes, cafes
- Meeting in the summer rather than winter
- Using the whole Guild as the committee rather than having to elect leaders
- Forming rotas for organising meetings

- Working more closely on an area basis rather than individual congregations
- Presbyterial Councils merging
- Presbyterial Councils rotating leadership between Guilds in their area
- Meeting in the daytime in darker months and evening in lighter ones

3.8.3 All of these have merit and yet again this reflects the purpose of the strategy “One journey, Many roads” and we look forward to hearing about and sharing more initiatives as they come along.

4. WHAT WE ASK OF THE WIDER CHURCH

I am the church, you are the church,
we are the church together!

4.1 The Guild is defined as follows:

The Church of Scotland Guild is a movement within the Church of Scotland which invites and encourages both women and men to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and enables them to express their faith in worship, prayer, action and fellowship.

4.2 Key to this is the identification of the Guild as “a movement **within** the Church of Scotland”, not in partnerships or alongside the Church of Scotland, but within it.

4.3 This demands of the Guild a commitment to share in the life of the church and to find a purposeful place within that church, at local, regional, national and international levels.

4.4 Similarly, it requires a response from the rest of the church at the same levels.

4.5 The Guild is in no doubt that the church appreciates it!

4.6 What we ask is that congregations, Presbyteries and others become “critical friends”, which means they should:

- Support their Guilds, including helping with tasks such as administration, finance and governance
- Encourage them
- Get to know them as a group and as individuals
- Recognise that for some Guild members, the Guild **is** their Church
- Pray for us

That is the “friend” part and includes places where there is no local Guild.

4.7 It also means, and this is the “critical” part, that they should challenge their Guilds.

- Ask them what they are doing, but also ask, “Why?”
- Acknowledge their methods, but suggest alternatives
- Celebrate their membership, but encourage ways of welcoming new people
- Set aside time within Councils, Committees, Sessions and Presbyteries to find out more about the Guild and how they can help
- Find out what they can do for the Guild, but also what the Guild can do for them

4.8 Beyond these things, join us. That can mean:

- Forming a new Guild or reforming a disbanded one
- Joining as individual members
- Bringing other groups together with the Guild in joint meetings and ventures
- Making use of Guild resources
- Sharing in the work of the Project Partnership Scheme
- Coming along to Guild events such as “Big Sings”, Roadshows and Regional Gatherings

4.9 The staff in Guild Office are always available to talk through these and any other ideas and the Leadership Team, Presbyterial Councils and local leaders are more than happy to explore ideas with others.

5. GUILD OFFICE AND STAFFING

Hands to work and feet to run,
God's good gifts to me and you

5.1 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), Karen Gillon (Associate Secretary); Lesley Blyth (Administrator) and Alice Finlayson (Finance Assistant), who have worked for the Guild for a number of years. We also thank and welcome Mandy Muir (Admin Assistant) for her work and especially for the way in which she has settled into her new appointment over the past few months.

6. FINANCE AND STATISTICS

All that I am, all that I do,
all that I'll ever have, I offer now to you

MEMBERSHIP

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

Members 19,189
Groups 785

FINANCE

General Fund Income	£	General Fund Expenditure	£
Members' Contributions	194,186	Management and admin	226,516
Donations and Grants	23,741	Objects Expenditure	38,621
Sales of goods	24,818	Cost of sales	22,546
Project Support	21,707		
Other	31,829		
Total	296,281	Total	287,683

DONATIONS TO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

Sums given by Guilds in 2017, based on returns received to 16 February 2018, were as follows:

To Ministry and Mission Funds via Congregations	£75,206.49
To Congregational Funds	£308,833.31
To work of the church, including projects	£254,222.61
To work outwith the Church	£82,812.86

PROJECT DONATIONS FROM 2015 TO 16 FEBRUARY 2018

Ascension Trust Scotland: Street Pastors	£110,639.41
Care for the Family: Let's Stick Together	£96,425.12
Christian Aid: Caring for Mother Earth in Bolivia	£93,672.60
Feed the Minds: Breaking the Cycle of FGM	£125,792.28
Mission International: Haiti Project	£87,663.31
Prospects: All Friends Together	£90,856.80
Total	£605,049.52

7. CONCLUSION

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live

7.1 The Guild has served the Church for over 130 years and continues to do so in many ways. The support we receive from so many people is deeply appreciated and we hope that we can build on that to find new ways in which the symbiotic relationship between the Guild and other parts of the church can continue to grow, evolve and strengthen.

In the name of the Church of Scotland Guild

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

Addendum

Marge Paterson (National Convener)

Marge Paterson has been a Guild member since joining the movement in 1991 in Pittenweem. When her husband John became minister of Old Cumnock Old in 1994, she joined the Guild both there and at the linked charge of Lugar. She has been Secretary, Convener and National Representative for Ayr Presbyterial Council and also convened the National Marketing and Publicity Committee.

The Guild thanks Marge for her devoted service and wishes her well for her future Guild work and for her involvement in the management committee of her church's bookshop and tearoom, "Words of Wisdom".

Outside of her church work, Marge is also involved with Handbell Ringers GB and teaches Gaelic in a local Primary School and we know that she will also continue to offer much to both of these.

In the name of the Church of Scotland Guild

PATRICIA ROBERTSON, *National Vice-Convener*
IAIN WHYTE, *General Secretary*