

INTERIM MINISTRIES' HANDBOOK



Church of Scotland

Ministries Council

August 2017

This Handbook is intended to provide guidance and information for members of the Interim Ministries Task Group, Presbyteries and members of the Interim Ministries Team – Interim Ministers, Transition Ministers, and Interim Deacons. The Handbook will be updated each year.

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I. REMIT OF INTERIM MINISTRIES TASK GROUP

1. Manage initial enquiries and liaise with Presbyteries and local congregations in the exploration of the possibility of Interim Ministry
2. Recruit, induct, train and deploy the team of Interim Ministers
3. Support, monitor and evaluate each Interim Ministry placement
4. Formulate an exit strategy for each Interim Ministry placement, in conjunction with the Interim Minister and Presbytery
5. Provide on-going in-service training for Interim Ministers and Interim Deacons
6. Develop other areas as required e.g. peripatetic Deacons, Transition Ministry
7. Inform the policy-making of the Ministries Council, through the Partnership Review Committee

2. INTRODUCTION TO A TASK GROUP MEMBER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Task Group Member's responsibilities:

*Engage with Task Group meetings (5 per year, including one with the IM team)

*Membership of at least one Transition Support Group (approximately 2/3 meetings per year for each one). See Role and Purpose of TSGs paper (Section 9).

*Delivery of presentations to those seeking an IM.

Ideally, each new member of the Task Group is invited to observe a presentation and a Transition Support Group meeting prior to their own participation. The Interim Ministries team has expanded to 10 Interim Ministers, including a peripatetic Deacon and 3 Transition Ministers. See Section 14 for a list of current placements.

Summary of other relevant information:

Interim Ministers have their own programme of continuing development. They meet twice a year, for a single day, at one of their placements, share reflections and experiences, and engage in other activities as determined by them. Once or twice a year they have a residential conference (and one of these usually includes a meeting with the Task Group). The Interim Ministry Secretary (John Thomson) and a representative of the Interim Ministries Team work together on content, based on input from the whole team. Previous conferences focussed on capacity building and coaching, spirituality for a peripatetic lifestyle, critical incident analysis, and family systems (based on Church Conflict, Cosgrove). The most recent conference had input from a psychologist on the topic of self-care when you are the object of criticism.

Staff Roles: The Interim Ministry Secretary (John Thomson) is responsible for the Task Group and the development conferences. Angus Mathieson is the line manager of the Interim Ministers, peripatetic Deacon and the Transition Ministers and is responsible for contractual matters, management of individual interim ministers, assessment of workload, and recruitment and selection of new team members.

Relationship with Partnership Review Group: The IMTG reports once to twice a year to the Review Group to facilitate a two-way flow of information. The Review Group decides upon policy matters with regard to Interim Ministries.

Interim Ministers: Eleanor McMahon, John Collard, Jim Davies, Alan Greig, Sandra Black, Russell McLarty, Lynn Brady, Ian Murray, David Denniston. Ann Lyall is also part of the team, as a peripatetic Deacon. Transition Ministers – Alistair Duncan in Glasgow St George's Tron, Jane Howitt in Glasgow: St Rollox and Caroline Lockerbie in Shetland.

Evaluation: It is the aim to develop a process of evaluating each Interim Ministry placement (not the Interim Minister) and work is under way with this. One suggestion is to utilise a final Transition Support Group meeting for this purpose. The aims are two-fold. The first aim is to ensure an efficient use of resources for the Ministries Council. The second is to enable Presbyteries to judge when the Interim Ministry is coming to an end, how much has been achieved, and what remains to be done. A paper named the Role and Purpose of Transition Support Groups has been agreed as providing a framework for evaluation (Section 9).

3. COMPARISON BETWEEN INTERIM AND TRANSITION MINISTRY

COMPARISON TABLE	INTERIM MINISTRY	TRANSITION MINISTRY	NOTES
Overall aim	To work with a vacant congregation until it is in a position in which Presbytery will lift the sist from the vacancy, (or until presbytery and council take the view that progress has been made towards identified aims and objectives).	To enable the shape of ministry across an area of Presbytery to change, to enable the sustained future mission of the Church.	
Criteria	Possible Criteria (6): *After a long or short ministry *A need for development or clarity of direction *After the death, illness or extended absence of a minister *Changing parish composition *After a pastoral tie is severed or dissolved *After conflict	*A new shape of ministry across an area needed. *A group of congregations experiencing long-term vacancies or a single congregation, plus a Presbytery remit. *Area involved will have been identified and agreed as needing additional leadership to effect change.	
Placement	One substantive placement.	Either: Across a number of vacant congregations, or a single congregation, PLUS a clearly defined Presbytery Role.	
Other core work	Consultancy, mediation, acting as Interim Moderator (as capacity allows).	As capacity allows.	
Aims and Objectives of Current placement/role (broad aims and objectives only)	Developed through working with the congregation.	Agreed at a meeting of all parties prior to the start of any placement.	
Timescales	Up to 2 years (usually 12 – 18 months). Not defined at start of placement.	Three to 5 years. Defined at start of placement, but reviewed regularly.	
Employment	Employee of Ministries Council. (Cannot apply for the charge.)	Employee of Ministries Council. (May apply for the charge.)	
Application	By Presbytery, in consultation with congregation.	By Presbytery, in consultation with congregation(s).	
Support, Monitoring and Evaluation	Transition Support Group (equal numbers from Interim Ministries Task Group and Presbytery) - Ministries Council and Presbytery roles.	Initial Meeting, then Transition Group (weighted towards Presbytery), Ministries Council and Presbytery roles.	

4. INTERIM MINISTRY PRESENTATION

Please see separate document on Church of Scotland website – IM Initial Presentation 2017.

Section 4.2 Process Outline

INTERIM MINISTRY PROCESS – a brief outline

1. Initial Enquiry (from Presbytery, Interim Moderator, through Regional Meeting etc.).
2. Application form completed by Presbytery representative.
3. Interim Ministries Task Group (IMTG) receives completed application form and considers whether the criteria for Interim Ministry are met (or whether other support would be more appropriate).
4. Presentation to Office Bearers and Congregation – Interim Moderator and Presbytery are present. Presentation delivered by combinations of TG members, staff and Interim Ministers, usually 2 people.
5. If KS votes to explore this further, a second vote is taken, by the congregation. (if KS votes no, no further action is taken by the TG.)
6. If the congregation votes in favour of Interim Ministry, then Presbytery formally approves this.
7. TG considers deployment (availability of Interim Ministers, other enquiries etc.).
8. If an Interim Minister is deployed, then a date is set for their Introduction.
9. A Transition Support Group (TSG) is formed. This comprises 3 people from the IMTG, 3 people from Presbytery and one external Interim Minister. This supports the Interim Ministry as a whole and forms the link to both Presbytery and IMTG.
10. The first meeting of the TSG takes place (usually in the first month of the Interim Ministry). This takes the form of information gathering at the meeting, followed by the formulation of aims and objectives for the Interim Ministry. These are approved by both Kirk Session and Presbytery.
11. Further meetings of the TSG take place as required, at the initiation of the Interim Minister (usually 2/3 per year). This enables ongoing monitoring and support for the Interim Ministry.
12. Final meeting of the TSG, evaluation and exit strategy.

Note: the process for Transition Ministry and Interim Deacon placements is different.

Section 4.3 Interim and Transition Ministry: June 2016 Conference - Notes

The team agreed to adopt the following:

Core purpose of Interim and Transition Ministry

The core purpose of Interim/Transition Ministry is summarised in the 3 key tasks that are undertaken with the congregation(s):

1. Coming to terms with history (Remedial)
2. Discovering our new identity (Transformative)
3. Planning for the future (Inspirational)

Core purpose of the IM/TM Team

To offer support and resource for one another in addressing the key tasks by:

- i. Acknowledging to one another that as change agents we are involved in work that is time-consuming and emotionally demanding.
- ii. Engaging in reflective practice.
- iii. Undertaking training that will help us become more effective in our role.
- iv. Sharing our learning with others in the team.
- v. Creating space for trusting relationships within the team
- vi. Establishing clear avenues for support.
- vii. Fostering a supportive and non-competitive atmosphere within the team

Areas of consideration for further development of Interim and Transition Ministry

Following on from the Feb 2016 conference, in addition to affirming the above as our basis of working, we further discussed the topics below. It was recognised that much of this discussion would need to be extended to Ministries Council, and as such the team would be pleased to meet with Angus Mathieson and Neil Glover.

1. Clarity about what Interim Ministry and Transition Ministry can offer.

- i. We feel that we could clarify more clearly the role of presbyteries within the interim/transition ministry, and provide clearer indications of what would be needed from a presbytery both during and after an interim/transition ministry.

It was felt that clear lines of communication between the interim/transition ministry, congregation and relevant personnel and committees would be beneficial to the process. It was also recognised that we should not overburden presbyteries who perhaps have reached breaking point in their relationship with the congregation seeking interim ministry. This could be done through the preparation of an "agreement of understanding". There is recognition that the new "exit" strategy was helping prepare congregations and presbyteries for the period beyond interim ministry.

- ii. It was recognised that while have a remit beyond the congregation, for transition ministries, it might be helpful to have this broaden beyond the presbytery, that transition ministers could then contribute to the wider work being considered below.
- iii. Clarification of the role would extend to clearer guidance of the use of consultancy, and mentoring relationships that some teams' members have undertaken. This would not mean to hinder their development but to ensure that strategies for enabling the relevant and appropriate deployment of resource to the congregation was made, e.g., could consultancy be made instead of a full-time placement or vice versa.

- iv. Linking with other developing ministries within the church. We are aware that there is overlap between some of the work done with *Place for Hope* and the Coaching team. We are also excited by the developing pioneer ministry and Paths of Renewal, and feel we could both contribute and benefit from some kind of interchange of experience, together with sharing where relevant expertise.
- v. We feel that the interim ministry presentation could be looked at again, and perhaps the use of images, e.g., the trapeze artist or Jacob fighting the angel be inserted to give congregations a clearer understanding of what they might gain from interim ministry.
- vi. We feel that the Handbook could be revised and perhaps reduced in length to make it more accessible to enquiring congregations and presbyteries.

2. **Training congregations to cope with long-term vacancies**

- i. The focus of this would be to enable congregations to 'stand-alone' and counter a model of dependency. Short-term, specific, and contextually relevant training delivered to a parish could benefit them not only during the time of vacancy but also for the longer-term.
- ii. Aspects of this work could include the coaching/mentoring of interim moderators/locums/session clerks where relevant.
- iii. We feel we should explore further what other patterns or options might work. This would tie in with point 1 (iii) above.

3. **Every vacancy to have some Interim Ministry**

While this is the PCUSA model, we recognised that there would be resource implications for the church, and this would certainly mean a much larger team of Interim Ministers. A good case could be made for a larger Interim Ministry Team to help the church in the transition from the current model of ministry towards greater team working in view of the forecast shortage of ministers. We recognise that there would be management issues but, if larger Presbyteries emerge, line management could be devolved to them.

However, if there is an Interim Minister in the presbytery, this person could be used as a resource to ready the congregation/Kirk Session/Nominating Committee for the next phase of ministry together with some of the suggestions in point 2.

4. **Working in pairs as Interim Ministers**

This is the pattern adopted by *'Place for Hope'*. This could strengthen motivation for change, might also reduce isolation and model effective collaborative working.

It could be two Interim Ministers working across two nearby or neighbouring parishes depending on the circumstances.

5. **Interim Ministry for a presbytery**

There could be situations where a presbytery could benefit from an interim ministry: where difficulties are evident; where conflict may be an issue; where governance or communication is weak.

6. **Use of study leave**

Allowing ministers to use study leave to shadow interim/transition ministers. This might be of interest thinking about becoming interim/transition ministers, or perhaps those wishing to explore the use of conflict management strategies or facilitation of meetings.

7. **Revising the induction programme**

This could include initial shadowing of present interim/transition ministers.

The team have undertaken to provide for proactive “buddying” for new team ministers, in addition to affirming the role of the “external” IM/TM on the TSG, who will act as a “buddy” to the IM/TM in placement.

8. **Candidate training**

Place for Hope are already in conversation about making contribution to candidate training. There might be some mileage in making this a three-way conversation to include some of the expertise which resides in the Interim/Transition Ministry Team, i.e. team building; managing change; providing continuity in an uncertain context.

This would include things such as: being able to identify and/or diagnose ‘distress’ signals when individuals or congregations may find themselves heading for a more critical situation.

Candidates would benefit from learning what’s involved in ‘coming alongside’ a congregation for its agenda rather than simply pushing their own agenda as ministers.

9. **Future Conference**

1. Monday 19th/ Tuesday 20th September – The Gillis Centre
 - Angus Mathieson and Neil Glover to be invited
 - Meeting with members of the IMTG - joint topic
 - Meeting with Ruth Harvey, Director of Place for Hope
2. Friday 25th November 2016 – St George’s Tron Glasgow
 - Peer Group Day
3. Monday 20th – Wed 22nd Feb 2017 – New Lanark
 - Focus on Resilience
 - Listening more Deeply
 - Large group facilitation
 - Approach to Dr David Craigie
 - Approach to Charlie Irvine
4. Wednesday 7th June 2017 – St George’s Tron
 - Peer Group Day

New team members – peer support of the induction process

- Visits to Interim Ministers
- Attending as observer TSG’s, or large group facilitation
- Receiving the Handbook
- Update to Church Law
- Buddying – pairing of new team members with serving members.

Application Form

MINISTRIES COUNCIL

INTERIM MINISTRIES TASK GROUP

Application for Interim Ministry – Initial Information Questions

This form should be completed by a representative of Presbytery, e.g., Ministries Convener, Interim Moderator or as advised by the Presbytery Clerk.

The aim of this form is to enable the Interim Ministries Task Group to make an assessment as to whether or not the situation described would appear to be one which would meet the criteria for an Interim Ministry. As much detail as possible should be given, along with any accompanying paperwork which Presbytery deems relevant e.g., Superintendence Report.

Having considered the report, the Interim Ministries Task Group has a number of options and may:

- Seek further information and reconsider.
- Deem the situation to meet the criteria, and move towards arranging a presentation on Interim Ministry to the Kirk Session. Should there be a positive vote after this meeting, a second presentation will be arranged with the whole congregation, who also have to vote in favour of Interim Ministry. Possible deployment of an Interim Minister will then be considered by the Task Group, along with other applications. There is no guarantee of a full-time Interim Minister being appointed.
- Decide that the situation does not meet the criteria for Interim Ministry, and explore any other potential methods of support e.g. mediation, consultative work.

The questions are set out underneath:

- 1 Name of Congregation(s) and date of application.
- 2 Name of Presbytery.
- 3 Outline as fully as possible the background to this application.
- 4 What circumstances have led to the recent vacancy? Please include information about the dates and causes of the vacancy (translation, retirement, severing of pastoral tie etc.).
- 5 If there are buildings issues to be resolved please state clearly the views of Presbytery and what, if anything, Presbytery expects the Interim Ministry to achieve?
- 6 What lengths were the 2 previous ministries?
- 7 What steps have been taken so far to address the issues outlined above? Please list the people involved, and any Presbytery or National Committees involved.
- 8 Why do you think that Interim Ministry, rather than other approaches such as Presbytery assistance, would be helpful at this stage?
- 9 What would you hope to achieve from an Interim Ministry? What would be the ideal situation at the end of the Interim Ministry? (Timescales for Interim Ministry are from 1 – 2 years.)
- 10 What do you see as the immediate tasks of Interim Ministry – what would Presbytery want the Interim Minister to do?
- 11
 - a What is the intention for the congregation(s) in the Presbytery Plan?
 - b Are there any developments proposed since the Presbytery Plan was agreed which may affect this situation?

- 12** Confirmation that the Kirk Session(s) has/have completed the procedures contained in Sections 2 and 3 of Act 2015 (as amended) concerning Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages and of the outcome of the decision taken on whether or not “to depart” from the historic and current doctrine and practice.
- 13** Is there any other information which you would like to add?

CONTACT DETAILS

Name and title/position of person making the application:

E-mail and phone number of person making the application:

Name of Interim Moderator:

Section 4.5

Interim Ministry Final Appraisal Process

The Reports

There will be two reports. The interim minister who serves on the TSG will produce a one sided A4 report summarising the main points from the congregational meeting and the TSG meeting. This report will be an open public document which may be printed in a congregational magazine, included in a parish profile, distributed to all members of presbytery and be a record for the IMTG. The interim minister who served in the charge may either write an open report that may be freely distributed along with the congregation's report or, in sensitive situations, be a private and confidential report which is for the TSG and IMTG alone.

The Interim Minister

The interim minister of the charge should write a summary report on one side of A4 on the interim ministry and distribute it to the TSG prior to the congregational de-briefing meeting. In the report the interim minister addresses the questions the congregation will tackle plus two additional questions:

- 1) What impact has the interim ministry process had on this church?
- 2) Whether or not they have a minister soon, what needs to happen next to enhance the life of this church and to build on its achievements?
- 3) What has the church learned through its experience of the interim ministry process?
- 4) What further support from the wider church would be helpful to this church?
- 5) Any further comments?

The interim minister would be present at both the congregational meeting and the TSG meeting.

The Congregational Meeting

The meeting would be facilitated by the IM who serves on the TSG.

After brief opening worship the congregation would be divided into groups of 4 or 5.

The groups will be asked to discuss question 1 and to identify a response they would like to share with the congregation. The group should have further responses ready in case their response has been given by another group. The facilitator gathers in responses from the group and creates posters, one response per poster. If the congregation runs out of responses that is fine. Responses might need to be reframed and some responses might be combined. Each person is given 3 stickers to put on the posters. All 3 can go on one poster. The same process is then followed for questions 2 and 3.

The facilitator will summarise at the end of the meeting and later write a report on one side of A4 summarising what the consultation has revealed. The report will not give the numbers of stickers but will interpret the number to indicate the degree of support for the various responses.

The questions are:

- 1) What impact has the interim ministry process had on your church?
- 2) Whether or not you have a minister soon, what needs to happen next to enhance the life of your church and to build on your achievements?
- 3) Is there anything you have learned through your experience of the interim ministry process?

If appropriate a question relating to the specific situation may be included.

TSG

The TSG will gather after the congregational meeting. It will discuss the congregation's responses to the questions and then the TSG will produce comments to be added in its name. The TSG will also consider these further question and its responses will be included in the report.:

- 4) What further support from the wider Church would be helpful to this church?
- 5) Any further comments?

Interim Ministry Final Appraisal Process

Congregation	Presbytery
Interim Minister	Period of Interim Ministry
1) The impact of the interim ministry process.	
2) What needs to happen next to enhance the life of this church and to build on its achievements.	
3) What the church has learned through its experience of the interim ministry process.	
4) What further support from the wider church would be helpful to this church.	
5) Further comments.	

Section 4.6 Regional Model of Interim Ministry Advice to Presbyteries

INTERIM MINISTRY - A REGIONAL MODEL

Interim Ministry now operates as a regional way of working. It is hoped that this development will enable greater flexibility in, and more efficient and effective deployment of, Interim Ministers, via twice-yearly regional meetings of the groups of Presbyteries in each region.

This change of emphasis retained many of the previous features of Interim Ministry. The same process for application for Interim Ministry support remains, i.e. to the Interim Ministries Task Group by contacting The Interim Ministry Secretary (John Thomson). The same arrangements for support and evaluation also remain through the Transition Support Group set up for each Interim Ministry placement.

In the Regional Model, each group of Presbyteries in an area will have a complement of named Regional Interim Ministers, who will normally work across the area. In order to retain maximum flexibility, those deployed in Regional posts can also be required to work in another area should there not be an expressed need within their designated area.

The Presbytery groups are as follows:

WEST (three Interim Ministers and one Interim Deacon): Ayr Presbytery, Irvine & Kilmarnock Presbytery, Ardrossan Presbytery, Lanark Presbytery, Greenock & Paisley Presbytery, Glasgow Presbytery, Hamilton Presbytery, Dumbarton Presbytery.

EAST (three Interim Ministers): Edinburgh Presbytery, West Lothian Presbytery, Lothian Presbytery, Melrose & Peebles Presbytery, Duns Presbytery, Jedburgh Presbytery, Falkirk Presbytery, Dunfermline Presbytery, Kirkcaldy Presbytery, St Andrews Presbytery

CENTRAL (one Interim Minister): Stirling Presbytery, Dunkeld & Meigle Presbytery, Perth Presbytery, Dundee Presbytery, Angus Presbytery

NORTH EAST (one Interim Minister): Aberdeen Presbytery, Kincardine & Deeside Presbytery, Gordon Presbytery, Buchan Presbytery, Moray Presbytery.

There is also presently one Interim Ministry post allocated to the Southern area of Scotland according to expressed need.

This leaves one Interim Ministry post which will, in the first instance, be a peripatetic post. This post will cover the very Northern and very Southern areas of Scotland, according to expressed need. Should such a need not be brought forward by these Presbyteries, then the peripatetic Interim Minister may be deployed to assist in another area.

Presbyteries will be invited to meet twice per year and engage in discussion about possible Interim Ministry needs which may be emerging or anticipated. This model began in the North-East and West of Scotland regions and worked well. It has now been rolled out to cover the new groupings: the larger West Group, the Central Group and the East Group. Membership of each Interim Ministry Regional Group (IMRG) will comprise two Presbytery Representatives from each Presbytery, the Interim Ministries Task Group Leader, a staff member, the Regional Interim Minister(s) of the area, and another member of the Interim Ministry Team (i.e. another Interim or Transition Minister).

The original groups in the North-East and the former West areas have been a great assistance in planning future deployment of Interim Ministry. This deployment may be full-time to a particular context, or may be part-time across two contexts etc. Interim Ministers can also engage in consultancy work, and have, on occasion undertaken Interim Moderator responsibilities, both in the area of their key appointment, and out with that area.

Action for Presbytery: please send the names of your two representatives to Lynne Hood (lhood@churchofscotland.org.uk). Note: if you are already part of a regional group, there is no need to do this as your names are already held.

If there is anything you wish to discuss, or if you seek further information, please contact John Thomson (jthomson@churchofscotland.org.uk) who is the staff member responsible for this area.

Section 4.7

ROLE AND PURPOSE OF TRANSITION SUPPORT GROUPS

TRANSITION SUPPORT GROUPS – PURPOSE OF GROUP AND OUTLINE OF ROLE OF MEMBERS (TASK GROUP AND PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATIVES)

Each Interim Ministry (IM) has an associated Transition Support Group (TSG). The TSG represents the support and commitment of both the Presbytery and the Ministries Council towards a congregation or congregations. The TSG also allows the Presbytery and the Ministries Council to monitor and evaluate the progress being made in the IM placement.

STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE OF A TSG.

The TSG is set up at the start of the IM placement, and is normally made up of 3 Presbytery representatives, 3 Interim Ministry Task Group (IMTG) representatives (one of whom is named by the Task Group as lead person for the duration of the TSG's existence), and one external Interim Minister. A staff member might attend a small number of these groups. The TSG exists for the length of the IM placement. The TSG is the group which enables both Presbytery and Ministries Council to monitor and evaluate the progress of the IM placement. Presbytery can, for instance, base their decisions as to when to allow a congregation to call a minister on information regularly received from the Presbytery members of the TSG. It is therefore vital that the Presbytery representatives on the TSG have a clear reporting structure to Presbytery which reaches the relevant committees. The Ministries Council, through the IMTG, will use reports from TSG meetings to decide upon the length of the IM placement and the formation of an exit strategy. Each Interim Minister makes a report to each IMTG meeting.

SETTING UP A TSG

Once it has been decided to place an Interim Minister with a congregation, the Presbytery will be contacted by a staff member and be asked to provide 3 names for the TSG. Please note that Presbytery representatives cannot be selected from the congregation(s) involved in the Interim Ministry. It is therefore helpful if the Presbytery has names ready to be involved in a TSG. Some Presbyteries have these names formally approved at a Presbytery meeting, and send in an extract minute. Other Presbyteries have less formal arrangements and give names verbally. The IMTG will also provide 3 members for the group, and the team of Interim Ministers will also be asked for one person to serve on the TSG. Geography is usually an important criterion here. Alongside this part of the process, the staff member will discuss a possible date for the first meeting with the Interim Minister, and will then liaise with the members of the TSG and the external Interim Minister. Future dates can be decided upon by whatever method is the wish of the Interim Minister (some Interim Ministers prefer to set future dates by contacting Presbytery directly, others prefer this to be done through the Ministries Department) but the first meeting date is usually agreed in this way. Staff will ensure that these guidelines are circulated to Presbytery representatives and are able to brief Presbytery representatives if this is required.

TSG MEETING PATTERNS

The five congregational tasks of Interim Ministry are: History, Identity, Transitional Changes, Links with the wider Church and Planning for the Future. In short – Past, Present and Future. An Interim Minister will work with the congregation throughout the placement, which is supported by a Transition Support Group as described in the previous paragraph. Meetings usually take place in the evening – 6.45pm for TSG and Interim Minister, 7.30 – 9pm for TSG meeting with the congregation, followed by a short meeting of TSG and Interim Minister. The TSG will meet several times during the IM placement (which can last from 6 months to 2 years). The Interim Minister determines the appropriate timings of meetings, but a typical pattern would be as follows:

First Meeting (usually in first month of the IM placement): This takes the form of an Aims and Objectives meeting, where the congregation (or congregations) receive a brief input on the tasks of Interim Ministry from the lead person of the TSG (one of the IMTG representatives) and then spends some quiet time considering these. Small discussion groups are then formed, the number being dependent upon the number of people at the meeting. Groups of 5 or 6 people are ideal and each group is facilitated by one of the 7 or 8 members of the

TSG. Each TSG member should come ready to facilitate a small group meeting and summarise key points. A pro forma (suggested questions prepared by the Interim Minister) is usually circulated to each group to form a basis of discussion, and each group submits an agreed written version. This group work takes around 30 - 45 minutes. The meeting concludes with a plenary session to allow anything to be said which has not already been said. The whole meeting takes a maximum of an hour and a half.

It should be noted that the Interim Minister, although present at each meeting, is not part of the TSG and does not take part in the group work or plenary sessions.

The lead person on the TSG, a week or two before the first and subsequent meetings should discuss the format with the Interim Minister (including their own roles) and make arrangements for worship.

The TSG should meet with the Interim Minister for 30 minutes before each TSG meeting. During this time, the format of the meeting should be agreed, and it is a useful time to hear from the Interim Minister as to how the placement is starting or progressing. Presbytery could give an update as to planning or other matters pertaining to the IM.

The TSG should meet for 30 minutes after each TSG meeting. At the end of this time it should be clear to all members who is collating the notes, how and when they will be circulated, where the notes are to go once they are agreed, any follow-up actions for IMTG or Presbytery which arose during the meeting etc. For instance, agreed Aims and Objectives would normally go (via the Interim Minister) to Kirk Sessions and Congregations (and thence perhaps published in a congregational magazine). They would also go to Presbytery (via the Presbytery representatives on the TSG). They would also come to the IMTG (either as part of, or in addition to, the regular Interim Minister's reports).

These arrangements will ensure that each of the members of the TSG has a reporting structure in place enabling both parties (Ministries Council and Presbytery) to satisfy themselves as to the progress of the IM placement, in addition to their ongoing support role.

SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS

These take place at the request of the Interim Minister. The format is often the same as the first meeting but with a focus on progress since the Aims and Objectives were agreed. Again, the written report made should form a basis for the reports to the IMTG and Presbytery. The average number of these meetings is 2 per year.

FINAL MEETING AND EXIT STRATEGY

Each Interim Minister will be considering, as their placement progresses, the likely timescales for the completion of the placement. This will also have been raised through their regular reports to the IMTG. Ideally, a final TSG meeting should be set up to make a final evaluation of progress, set against the initial Aims and Objectives and reports from subsequent meetings. The aim is to assess whether sufficient progress has been made, and to assess whether the congregation is ready to move onto the next stage of their development (whether that be to be given permission to call etc.). The Interim Minister will have had general discussions with Presbytery prior to this meeting, with regard to possible ways forward, dates etc.

The format is again often the same as previous meetings, and congregations could be asked:

- In your opinion, what progress has been made so far in achieving the Aims and Objectives of the Interim Ministry period?
- What do you think still needs to be done?
- How are you going to get this done before the end of the IM period?

At the pre-TSG meeting, the TSG can hear from the Interim Minister about their views on progress, areas which would need to be developed after the end of the placement etc., and Presbytery can discuss their own views as to timescales, Presbytery planning implications etc.

At the post-TSG meeting, the IMTG could usefully discuss their impressions as to progress, and agree future steps for both IMTG and Presbytery. Again, a written record should be compiled, agreed and circulated.

It is worth stressing that it is the IM placement as a whole which is being supported, monitored and evaluated, not the individual Interim Minister.

Should the Interim Minister feel that this would be helpful, the TSG can also have a meeting with the Interim Minister, out with the context of a congregational meeting. This has proved to be a valuable support in past placements.

The Ministries Support Officer can be contacted at any time should there be any clarification required regarding the purpose of the TSG or the role of any of its members.

5. TRANSITION MINISTRY

Section 5.1 Transition Ministry Guidelines Paper

The Church of Scotland – Ministries Council

TRANSITION MINISTRY GUIDELINES

The purpose of the paper is to enable the Partnership Development Committee and the Ministries Council (the Council) to make informed decisions about the future shape of Transition Ministry, within a strategic framework which includes other forms of developing ministries. Examples of these would include emerging ministries/pioneer ministries and New Charge Development. Within this framework each of these developing areas would form a toolkit, offering possibilities of effecting and enabling change in the shape of ministry across the whole of the Church of Scotland. Further discussion at strategic level will continue to tease out how these areas may usefully relate to and inform each other.

This paper covers:

- Definition and Objective of Transition Ministry
- Criteria for Transition Ministry
- Responsibility for Transition Ministry
- Management of Transition Ministers
- Support mechanisms for Transition Ministers
- Monitoring and evaluation of Transition Ministry placements.

DEFINITION AND OBJECTIVE

Transition Ministry is a 3-5 year placement across an area which will enable the shape of ministry in that area to change and will enable the sustained future mission of the Church. Transition Ministry will enable a transition from an existing and unsatisfactory situation in a Presbytery to a radically different shape of ministry across an area of Presbytery. This will involve partnership working between the Council and Presbytery, alongside other involved parties as appropriate for example other Councils, Committees and Task Groups of the Church. The Council is of the view that with many Presbyteries facing numerous lengthy vacancies, a pattern of church life which is less full-time parish minister-dependent needs to evolve. A Transition Minister could enable this change in shape, as part of a wider strategy. Within this wide definition, a range of shapes is to be encouraged.

CRITERIA FOR TRANSITION MINISTRY PLACEMENTS

- 1 A Transition Minister will work across an area, leading to a new shape of ministry which will enable the sustained future mission of the Church.
- 2 This will be either to a group of congregations experiencing long-term vacancies, or will involve a single vacant congregation alongside a Presbytery remit.
- 3 The area involved will have been identified and agreed as needing additional leadership to effect change.

Any application from Presbytery should meet all 3 criteria, and should be submitted to the Task Group using the pro-forma for Transition Ministry applications.

Responsibility for this area of work will remain at an operational level with the Interim Ministries Task Group (IMTG). This will have implications for the work of the Task Group, and further thought will be required following agreement about the future shape of Transition Ministry. The IMTG will work within the numerical limit set by the Council. This number will be reviewed at a strategic level by the Council on a yearly basis, taking into account the balance of all the ministries of the church.

MANAGEMENT OF TRANSITION MINISTERS

The Transition Minister will be an employee of the Council. Each individual will be line-managed by the Partnership Development Secretary using the appraisal system recently developed for the Interim Ministries Team. A Job Description will be agreed by the Council and the Presbytery prior to recruitment for each appointment, and will include clear and specific objectives for the Transition Ministry; length of placement deployment, other core work responsibilities/expectations, expenses, accommodation, monitoring and evaluation processes and support mechanisms, including financial support for the placement, for example additional human support. At the end of the placement, he/she may be considered for another placement. A Transition Minister is free to apply to any vacant charge in the Presbytery in which they are deployed. The Council retains the right to remove the Transition Minister should satisfactory progress not be being made with regard to the Aims and Objectives agreed at the initial meeting.

SUPPORT MECHANISMS FOR TM

- Support for the individual Transition Minister is provided by the Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD) programme, and the Transition Minister is part of the Interim Ministries Team. Staff support is provided by the Partnership Development Secretary (including regular appraisal meetings) and the Ministries Support Officer.
- Support for the placement is set out in a Covenant of Support, signed by a representative of the Council and of the Presbytery. Each placement will have distinctive and clear objectives (outlined in the Job Description) and a particular context, and this should be reflected in the Covenant of Support. A named person from the IMTG will be the direct contact for the Transition Minister in the placement, and the Presbytery will provide two names to form the other members of a Transition Group.
- This group will also have a monitoring, reviewing and evaluating role, similar to the Transition Support Group which is set up for each Interim Ministry placement. The Transition Group will decide, in consultation with the Transition Minister, the best way meet the objectives of the placement. Regular reviews will take place, which will include a re-consideration and, if necessary, re-framing of the original objectives.
- The IMTG will receive at each meeting a report from both the Transition Minister and the named contact person. The Presbytery contact people will report to the appropriate Presbytery Committee.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Members of the Transition Group will be responsible for providing feedback to enable Monitoring and Evaluating of the placement, against the initial objectives outlined in the Job Description. A paper which outlines the Role and Purpose of Transition Group is being prepared and will be added to the Interim Ministries Handbook, along with this paper, once finalised.

Section 5.2

MINISTRIES COUNCIL

INTERIM MINISTRIES TASK GROUP – TRANSITION MINISTRY

Application for Transition Ministry – Initial Information Questions

This form should be completed by a representative of Presbytery e.g., Ministries Convener, Interim Moderator etc. as advised by the Presbytery Clerk.

The aim of this form is to enable the Interim Ministries Task Group to make an assessment as to whether or not the situation described would appear to be one which would meet the criteria for a Transition Ministry. Transition Ministry will enable a transition from an existing and unsatisfactory situation in a Presbytery to a radically different shape of ministry across an area of Presbytery.

The criteria for Transition Ministry (TM) are that:

- 1 TM will provide ministry across an area.
- 2 This will be either to a group of congregations experiencing long-term vacancies, or will involve a single vacant congregation alongside a Presbytery-wide remit.
- 3 The area involved will have been identified and agreed as being without the existing leadership necessary to effect change.

An application should meet all 3 criteria. Prior to any application, Presbytery should have explored this possibility with any vacant congregations who may be involved.

As much detail as possible should be given, along with any accompanying paperwork which Presbytery deems relevant e.g., Superintendence Report, Local Church Review, Presbytery Planning documents.

Having considered the application, the Interim Ministries Task Group has a number of options and may:

- Seek further information and reconsider.
- Deem the situation to meet the criteria, should there be space within the limit set on a yearly basis by the Ministries Council and move towards a Job Description in conjunction with the Presbytery.
- Decide that the situation does not meet the criteria for TM, and explore any other potential methods of support e.g., mediation, consultative work.

The questions are set out underneath:

1. Name of Presbytery.
2. Name of Churches in vacancy, or single church in vacancy.
3. Outline as fully as possible the background to this application, for example the circumstances which have led to the application being made (Please include information about the group of churches in vacancy or the single church in vacancy.) and the proposed Presbytery-wide role envisaged for a Transition Minister).
4. If there are buildings issues to be resolved please state clearly the views of Presbytery and what, if anything, Presbytery expects the Transition Ministry to achieve? (see also question 7)
5. Outline the proposed Presbytery-wide role envisaged for a Transition Minister.

6. With respect to the congregation, why do you think that transition ministry rather than other forms of ministry, e.g., a call under reviewable tenure or interim ministry, or other forms of presbytery assistance would be helpful at this stage?

7. What do you see as the immediate tasks of Transition Ministry – what would Presbytery want the Transition Minister to do (which could not be accomplished by a Parish Minister or through other means)?
8. a What would Presbytery hope to achieve from the appointment of a Transition Minister?
9. b What would be the ideal situation at the end of the Transition Ministry, and how would you assess whether the aims and objectives of the placement have been met? (A Transition Ministry appointment can be 3-5 years. This is reviewed regularly, and the Ministries Council retains the right to move the Transition Minister during this time should satisfactory progress not be being made.)
10. What steps have been taken so far to address the issues outlined above? Please list the people involved, and any Presbytery or National Councils and Committees involved in discussion. (The IMTG may wish to seek further information from these sources.)
11. a What is the intention for the congregation/area in the Presbytery Plan?
12. b Are there any developments proposed since the Presbytery Plan was agreed which may affect this situation?
13. Confirmation that the Kirk Session(s) has/have completed the procedures contained in Sections 2 and 3 of Act 2015 (as amended) concerning Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages and of the outcome of the decision taken on whether or not “to depart” from the historic and current doctrine and practice.

Is there any other information which you would like to add?

CONTACT DETAILS

Name and title/position of person making the application:

E-mail and phone number of person making the application:

Name of Interim Moderator of affected Charge(s):

SAMPLE COVENANT OF SUPPORT

Noting that the Revd *Transition Minister* has been appointed by the Ministries Council and the Presbytery of *Somewhere* to serve as Transition Minister in the said Presbytery and particularly within the congregation(s) of *Anytown and Anyvillage*, we agree that the duties of the Revd *Transition Minister* shall be:

- 1. To provide the linked congregations of Anytown and Anyvillage with a pastoral ministry while they engage in their five year development plan to provide the ordinances of religion to meet the changing needs of the parishes.*
- 2. To help the Presbytery train and equip lay members of the Church to provide ministry and worship leadership in a Presbytery which finds difficulty attracting full time ministers of word and sacrament to the charges within its bounds.*

The Ministries Council and the Presbytery covenant together to support the Revd *Transition Minister* for the period of the appointment by providing, through its Interim Ministries Task Group one named member (*Named contact person*), and the Presbytery appointing two named members (*Name contact people*) to be a Transition Group providing a direct link between the Ministries Council and Presbytery respectively.

It is agreed that the Transition Group will have a monitoring, reviewing and evaluating role with regard to the Transition Ministry, allowing it to decide, in consultation with the Transition Minister, the best way to meet the objectives of the placement. It is further agreed that regular reviews will take place, which will include a re-consideration and, if necessary, re-framing of the original objectives. In addition, the IMTG will receive at each meeting reports from each of the Transition Minister and the Council-nominated member of the Transition Group. The Presbytery-nominated members of the Transition Group will report to the appropriate Presbytery Committee.

On behalf of the Ministries Council

Signed:

Designation: TG Leader

On behalf of the Presbytery of *Somewhere*

Signed:

Designation:

6. CONSULTANCY MODEL PAPER

INTERIM MINISTRY CONSULTANCY

At a recent meeting (January 2014) of the Interim Ministries Task Group, a consultancy model of Interim Ministry was discussed in principle. A group agreed to meet with the aim of outlining the details of how such a model might work. With this aim in mind, Alan Ward, Sandra Black, Eleanor McMahon, Alan Greig and Moira Whyte met in Glasgow on 2nd April 2014. The conclusion which was reached was that there was merit in developing this model, which is dependent upon the capacity of the individual Interim Ministers at any given time. At the meeting, consideration was made of the various consultancies which had taken place in the past, and of the more recent offers of consultancy.

When could a consultancy model be offered?

When the IMTG considers an application for Interim Ministry in a vacancy, it may reach the conclusion that the case presented is not appropriate for a full-time Interim Ministry placement i.e. there is not the system-wide, far reaching situation which would necessitate a major piece of work, and would meet the criteria set out for an Interim Ministry application. An example would be where conflict is anticipated and Presbytery is seeking to avoid this situation developing, e.g. where a union is proposed. Another example would be where a specific piece of work is required, where national support would be the best way forwards, e.g. where a congregation is feeling isolated and rudderless. A third example would be where a Presbytery makes an approach for consultancy alone, rather than this emerging from an IM application.

In such a situation, the IMTG may decide to recommend an exploration of the possibility of a period of consultancy. Within two weeks of the IMTG meeting, a meeting would be set up at which the precise shape and remit of such a consultancy would be discussed. That meeting would involve, as a minimum, the Interim Moderator and Session Clerk of the congregation, the Presbytery Clerk, and a member of the IM team. All involved would need to be in agreement about all aspects of the proposed consultancy before it could be put in place. Such an agreement would be circulated round the group (by the Interim Minister), and sent to the Secretary of the IMTG.

Broad principles of an Interim Ministry Consultancy.

The consultancy would:

- Use the specific skill set of the consultant Interim Minister(s)
- Involve 2 Interim Ministers working together
- Have a set time-scale (probably shorter than an average full time Interim Ministry)
- Have a clear remit, objectives and review date
- Work within a regional framework
- Take into account other core work of the individual IMs
- Be available within a shorter time-scale than a substantive placement appointment
- Work creatively across distance
- Utilise a coaching/facilitation approach which focusses on the needs of the whole congregation (and so differs from Place for Hope which offers a coaching model for a contained situation)
- Report to the IMTG and to Presbytery

Fine details of each consultancy.

Details of each consultancy would be agreed at the initial meeting, and would include, prior to the start of the consultancy period, clarity and agreement about:

- Specific aims and objectives for the congregation, and the tasks of the consultant Interim Minister
- Nature and duration of contact between the IM and the congregation e.g. one day per week, or one meeting every month etc.
- Timescales including a review date
- The responsibilities and tasks of other team members e.g. Interim Moderator, locum etc. (It is possible that the IM could be the Interim Moderator, but this necessity would arise through the particular context of the consultancy rather than being the standard situation.)
- Membership of Presbytery
- Lines of communication e.g. between the consultant, the Interim Moderator

Model of consultancy

The usual model would involve the formation of a Process (or Reference) Group, which would accompany the Consultant Interim Minister(s) in the process of designing and implementing a systemic change process. This group would number from 5 – 7 people. This group, which is recruited by the Consultant Interim Minister(s), is able to draw from a wider pool than eldership, involves a shorter-term commitment from members, and can become self-sustaining rather than relying on the leadership of the CIM(s) for the duration of the consultancy period. The group would work towards SMART goals, taken from the initial Aims and Objectives. The group will assist in data gathering and assessment, and will work with the Consultant Interim Minister(s) to analyse data and develop appropriate recommendations. Ground rules would be established at the start of the consultancy period. The consultancy period could start with more input (both in time and in leadership) from the Consultant Interim Minister(s), which would lessen over time as the Process Group and the congregation gradually took over their responsibilities.

An alternative, or adapted, version of the model outlined above, would be more akin to the Lausanne model of a monthly contact between the Interim Minister and the congregation, supported by an Interim Moderator and a locum. This version is particularly dependent upon a strong relationship between the Interim Minister, the Interim Moderator, and the locum, although effective lines of communication are essential for all consultancy situations.

7. REGIONAL MEETINGS – there are two meetings held per year.

REGIONAL INTERIM MINISTRY

<p>East Region</p>	<p>Edinburgh Presbytery West Lothian Presbytery Lothian Presbytery Melrose & Peebles Presbytery Duns Presbytery Jedburgh Presbytery Falkirk Presbytery Dunfermline Presbytery Kirkcaldy Presbytery St Andrews Presbytery</p>
<p>West Region</p>	<p>Ayr Presbytery Irvine & Kilmarnock Presbytery Ardrossan Presbytery Lanark Presbytery Greenock & Paisley Glasgow Presbytery Hamilton Presbytery Dumbarton Presbytery</p>
<p>North East Region</p>	<p>Aberdeen Presbytery Kincardine & Deeside Presbytery Gordon Presbytery Buchan Presbytery Moray Presbytery</p> <p>Interim Minister External Interim Minister Interim Ministries Task Group</p>
<p>Central Region</p>	<p>Stirling Presbytery Dunkeld & Meigle Presbytery Perth Presbytery Dundee Presbytery Angus Presbytery</p> <p>Interim Minister External Interim Minister Interim Ministries Task Group</p>

8. SETTING AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Following the first meeting of the Transition Support Group, a set of Aims and Objectives is developed for the whole congregation, the Task Group, and Presbytery, to own. Some suggestions are as follows:

The setting of Aims and Objectives should be done with care – set too many and the tasks look impossible but too few and people are not challenged. Objectives which are too difficult may be discouraging, but if they are too easy then they lack meaning and depth.

One useful tool is to set SMART objectives. Objectives should be:

Specific (stating exactly what is to be done)

Measurable (how will success be measured or determined)

Achievable (should be possible to achieve the goal)

Resourcable (are resources available e.g. manpower, finance)

Time-bound (there may be steps, but there should be an end-date)

In an Interim Ministries context, it may not be possible to make all objectives SMART. For example, where healing is recognised as a goal in situations of hurt, regret and resentment, it can be hard to apply timescales or measures of success. There may be differing perceptions among the members of the congregation as to what has happened. A carelessly worded Aim could be very damaging. Care should be taken not to allude to any individual or group of people who may have contributed to a difficult situation, leading to an IM placement and similarly any pejorative statement should be avoided.

It can be a useful strategy to compile a secondary list of Aims and Objectives so that valuable insights are not lost. This allows the main document to be of manageable size.

It is good practice to have regular reviews of Aims and Objectives. 'How are we getting on? Which ones have been achieved? Do we need to review completion dates? Are there any new Aims to add?'

The Aims and Objectives document is a living document documents which should be revisited and modified. Each member of the team should include the Aims and Objectives document in their first report to the Task Group, and continue to refer to it throughout their placement.

9 Towards a distinctive Interim Ministry for the Church of Scotland – historical paper by John Christie for information only

It is becoming clear that, an Interim Ministry develops in the Church of Scotland, is evolving in a different manner to that from which it was born – the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America.

Key elements of Interim Ministry values are

- Positive support and trust offered to local congregation and leaders
- Working for consensus within congregation's leadership
- The Value of different models of ministry
- Risk-taking is part of a dynamic faith journey and it is all right to make some mistakes
- Redemption and restoration are the essence of God's work among us

The use of the term 'path finder' instead of 'trouble-shooter' is enthusiastically endorsed. It emphasises ongoing process, co-operative team-work, and choices in direction and workings.

Beginning to address this whole area insights were drawn from serving Interim ministers and former interim ministers the latter were asked to complete the under-noted questionnaire and subsequently address these at a conference.

Questions for former interim ministers

1. How did you start – what was your approach in the first three months?
Was it the same in all cases?
2. Where was God in it?
How did you sustain yourself;
Where was the congregation spiritually?
What faith resources/Biblical passages were valuable or informed the journey?
3. What perceived negatives might there be about Interim Ministry, and how can these be transformed into positives?
4. If you were to change anything – what would you have done differently?
5. What were the positives from your experience in Interim Ministry?
6. How do you see what's happening in Scotland as distinctive or different from the North American experience of Interim Ministry, either from personal knowledge of the North American scene, or from your reading of the literature?

What follows has flowed from subsequent discussion and thinking

Congregational Leadership during the 'In Between Times'

When there are circumstances that require more than a sustaining ministry, an Interim Minister may be appointed. Interim ministry refers to the appointment by the Presbytery of an ordained and specially qualified minister for a specified period of time of anything up to twelve years. Such ministry will include a statement of Aims and Objectives prepared in consultation with the Kirk Session, Congregation and with members of the Transition Support Group who represent the Ministries Council and The Presbytery to which the congregation

belongs. Persons who accept the role of interim minister in a congregation are not eligible to candidate for a call in that congregation.

Rationale for Interim Ministry

Interim ministry is an intentional short-term ministry designed to help a congregation get over a particular hurdle in order that it is ready to begin the next chapter in its story. It is a deliberately temporary ministry usually but not always in a time of vacancy or of transition..

Interim ministry recognises that a transition time, with proper leadership, can be a time when a congregation grows significantly in its self-understanding and ability to minister effectively to its community. However it may also be a time of emotional upheaval. For example, in the time between settled ministers, the task of bringing closure to one relationship and preparing to begin a new one requires sufficient directed opportunities to experience, understand and commit to the reality of the change that is occurring.

Moving too rapidly to the calling of a new minister may short-circuit the congregation's ability to address the developmental tasks that the particular circumstances require. Outlined above is the reality that Interim ministry is a mechanism to help a congregation to resolve, for example, grief and conflict, to work out problems and to make changes so that it is as ready as it can be to welcome a new minister. It is a mechanism for providing assistance through an Interim Minister who, by training and experience and training, can help a congregation prepare for a new ministry so that is refocused and energised in the task of its ministry

The temporary nature of interim ministry is critical to its effectiveness.¹ Interim Ministers are strictly ineligible to be called to the pastoral charge where they are serving as interim ministers. The realisation that the Interim Minister cannot stay keeps the congregation aware that it is in a time of transition. As uncomfortable as the sense of being unsettled may be, that awareness may greatly increase the congregation's capacity for change beyond its normal expectations. Change is an essential part of every interim ministry. The temporary nature of interim ministry also brings the potential for freedom and objectivity to the Interim Minister and thus Kirk Sessions and Congregations as there is no vested interest in a long-term Call to the congregation, the Interim Minister is free to focus on enabling the congregation to make the shifts in understanding, relationships and leadership for which the particular interim ministry has been designed.

When is Interim Ministry Appropriate?

Interim ministry is appropriate whenever there are specific goals or changes that a congregation needs to accomplish before preparing a congregational profile and searching for a minister to Call. When the congregation is in extraordinary circumstances (that may include trauma or elevated levels of conflict) the Presbytery and/or the Kirk Session may deem that interim ministry is essential but the Congregation is required to agree to this as well.

The range of circumstances in which interim ministry may be appropriate includes the following:

- 1 There has been a long ministry
- 2 The pastoral charge is experiencing considerable grief over the departure of a minister who has been much appreciated.
- 3 The pastoral charge has experienced the death or long-term disability of its minister.
4. Uniting congregations face the challenge of becoming one worshipping community with common identity and mission.
5. The Congregation needs to change the functioning of its non-ministerial leadership before issuing a Call.
6. The Congregation has experienced a number of short-term ministries
7. There has been significant conflict or polarisation.

8. The minister has been deposed from ordained office or removed from his or her charge.

10. The minister has been charged and placed on an extended leave of absence during an investigation, or has been found guilty of misconduct of an ethical or moral nature and has demitted the Charge.

11. The pastoral charge has not yet come to terms with past ethical or moral misconduct on the part of its leaders.

Qualifications of an Interim Minister

Interim ministers need skills in healing, conflict resolution, management of change, organisational development, setting short-term objectives, team building and entering and exiting a situation. Though all interim ministers are to be ordained, not all ordained ministers can serve effectively as interim ministers.

They need to be:

1. ordained ministers in good standing of the Church of Scotland.
2. clear about their own identity and being called to this role to facilitate the Church's mission.
3. willing to prepare the way for the next ministry.
4. aware of being a significant but limited part of the Congregation's history.
5. able to honour and affirm the work of others, past and present.
6. a non-anxious presence in the midst of transition, grief and conflict.
7. able to join congregational systems quickly and with ease.
8. able to diagnose a situation accurately and develop action plans quickly.
9. able to provide honest and accurate feedback.
10. able to communicate clearly to the Congregation that interim ministers are ineligible to be considered for a Call to that congregation

A significant amount of satisfactory experience as an ordained minister is essential.

Presbytery Process and Accountability for Interim Ministry

The Presbytery process and accountability for interim ministry is grounded on the reality that the Presbytery has responsibility for the care and good order of the congregations within its bounds. This means that decisions about an interim ministry appointment in a particular congregation rest ultimately with the Presbytery.

A positive view of the role of Interim Ministry by the Presbytery is needed. Sometimes Presbytery does not notice (or deal with) emerging difficult situations soon enough, and sometimes adds to problems by injudicious interference or judgments. Sometimes the tool of legal form just adds to the polarity of opposing views. Offer the idea of mentoring where an experienced colleague is linked to a minister starting out as Ordained Minister.

Comment on the dynamics of Presbytery and the supply of Interim Ministers. Attitudes to vacancies by Presbyteries: crucial that Presbytery faced with a large number of vacancies do not yield to pressure "to get the vacancy filled as soon as possible" but evaluate the situations where a careful look at wider issues and take time-

out for evaluation and reflection on Church identity be taken. Presbytery needs to tackle difficult issues emerging in congregations through ongoing support and supervision, and not off-load them to IM. Then at the end of the IM period a careful link-up with Interim Moderator and Presbytery support to ensure the gains made during IM are not subsequently lost through continuing vacancy or inactivity of Presbytery.

Endorse the statement that the Interim Ministry is part of an ongoing process, and not a quick fix. It has to be seen as an element in the permanent shape of ministry within the Church. The Presbytery has to be closely involved at every stage, so that a comment such as 'Interim Ministry never fixed this situation' should not occur. One hopeful element in the ongoing strategic planning process is the Presbytery Plan in which the central focus is to place congregational issues within the range of resources of an area together with clear decision-making and accountability seen in Presbytery committees and local parties.

Nevertheless the process involves the Kirk Session and wider Congregation being involved in preliminary discussion with representatives of the Ministries Council. Both Kirk Session and Congregation have to agree to accept an interim minister.

However, an interim ministry appointment is not a Call, and the signed agreement of members of the congregation is not required. In all cases and at all levels, good communication about decisions is imperative.

The Presbytery should conduct an exit interview with the Kirk Session and with the departing minister, review Presbytery visitation reports, and discuss the selection of an appropriate interim moderator.

Working with the Presbytery

- Interim Ministers are not always welcome, understood, supported sometimes seen as a threat
- Presbytery Plans may help to establish positive and affirmative working together

Initial Enquiry Screening Questions

Following a request for Interim Ministry the under-noted questionnaire is issued and this becomes the basis for subsequent discussions between the Kirk Session and Congregation on the one hand and representatives of the Ministries Council and the Presbytery on the other.

1. Name of Congregation
2. Presbytery
3. What is the background to this application?
4. What steps have been taken so far to try to address the issues? Please list people involved and Presbytery or National Committees approached.
5. Why do you think that Interim Ministry, rather than other approaches such as Presbytery assistance, would be helpful?
6. What outcomes from Interim Ministry would you hope to achieve? Ideally, how would you like matters to be at the end of Interim Ministry?
7. What exactly would you want an Interim Minister to do? What are the immediate tasks?
8. How long do you think this will take?
9. Any other information you want to add:

10. Contact person for initial discussion of the above:

11. Signature:

12. Title/Position:

13. Address:

14. Date:

15. Telephone number:

16. Email address:

Initial Presentation

In consultation with the Transition Support Group the Kirk Session and Congregation will agree the Aims and Objectives for the Interim Ministry relating these to the 5 Tasks of Interim Ministry. The importance of Aims and Objectives exercise in any congregation's life. It forces a congregation to evaluate where they are and what central tasks are needing to be tackled. Prior to the arrival of the interim minister. The involvement of the interim moderator, should:

- assess ministry needs
- review ministry options
- consider the type of leadership required during the transition time.

The Presbytery shall approve a period of interim ministry for the congregation and in consultation with the Ministries Council an interim minister may be appointed – depending on availability. The interim minister is Moderator of the Kirk Session.

The Presbytery and Congregation should approve the Aims and Objectives. The interim minister is a full member of the Presbytery in which he or she is working as Interim minister.

The Presbytery shall arrange for a Service of Introduction to recognise the beginning of the interim ministry.

Key aspects of the Interim Minister's task

Working with the Congregations:

- Helping them toward a common shared view of the reality of the situation.
- Good Communication
- With members of the Congregation but on the side of the process
- Opportunity to be honest and bold
- Raising Morale
- Being there
- Permission to laugh

Working with the Presbytery

- Interim Ministry not always welcome, understood, supported Sometimes seen as a threat
- Presbytery Plans may help to establish positive and affirmative working together
- Monitoring to go into first year of the new ministry or vacancy
- Interim Locums to be developed

Working with Ministries Council

- Training - A need to create a *distinctive* training with particular emphasis on
 - conflict resolution
 - teambuilding
 - Working on CORE elements of training
- Appraisal - to aid exit strategy for reflection of work leaving
to develop strategy for new work

Reporting

The Presbytery shall receive reports on the interim ministry from the interim minister and or the Transition Support Group. Regular reports should include ways in which the goals and objectives of the interim ministry are being met and identification of any support required from the Presbytery. When the Presbytery has delayed the search for a settled minister, the interim minister must obtain the approval of the Presbytery to lift the *sist* on the vacancy process. The congregation should then be permitted to begin its search for a new minister. It may be the case that, after Presbytery has agreed that the Vacancy matters may be progressed that the Interim Minister may be appointed as Interim Moderator.

Ineligibility for the Charge where a minister has been an Interim Minister

The temporary nature of interim ministry is critical to its effectiveness. Interim ministers are ineligible to be considered for calls to the congregations where they are serving as interim ministers. The rationale for the 'no candidacy rule' is as follows:

1. The temporary nature of interim ministry may greatly increase the congregation's capacity for change. The realisation that the interim minister cannot stay keeps the congregation aware that it is in a time of transition. As uncomfortable as the sense of being unsettled may be, that awareness may greatly increase the congregation's capacity for change above its usual level. Change is an essential part of every interim ministry.
2. The temporary nature of interim ministry also brings the potential for freedom and objectivity to the interim minister. With no vested interest in a long-term call to the congregation, the interim minister is free to focus on enabling the congregation to make the shifts in understanding, relationships and leadership for which the particular interim ministry has been designed.
3. Consideration of the interim minister as a candidate for the call might short-change the search process. When the possibility of calling the interim minister exists, some in the congregation will likely try to influence the search committee to "stay with what we already know". However, when a search committee decides to consider the interim minister, the natural tendency will be to focus on the personality of the interim minister, rather than on the congregation's goals for the future and the skills, strengths and abilities needed in the next minister. When the search committee decides to find a way "to keep the interim", it can no longer be objective in the crucial task it is performing on behalf of the congregation.
4. The Church needs to be fair to all possible candidates, and to protect the concept of what an intentional interim ministry can provide for congregations. Allowing the interim minister to be considered for the call is unfair to others who might wish to be considered for it. The interim minister will have a decided advantage in the

call process. If interim ministers become the called ministers, this trend will engender distrust of interim ministry and do irreparable harm to the concept of intentional interim ministry.

5. It is risky to call an interim minister when there may be underlying opposition to that individual by persons in the congregation. The interim minister may be liked by many, but usually there are some people who do not like the interim minister for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the interim minister has needed to push, confront, challenge or strongly discourage certain behaviour, actions or policies. This may have angered or alienated the interim minister from some individuals or groups. The anger or hostility can usually be tolerated knowing the interim minister will one day (not too far in the future) be leaving. But if the interim minister is called, there will likely be strong opposition and undermining of the interim minister's ability to be effective over the long term.

6. It is best to keep clear the strictly interim nature of the congregation's covenant with the interim minister, and not complicate the relationship with considerations of her/him being a candidate for the call. Suppose the interim minister is considered as a candidate for the call and then is not chosen by the decision-making bodies during the process? This situation will likely make it extremely difficult for the interim minister to continue as an effective interim minister in that congregation. Feelings experienced by the interim minister and those who either supported or opposed her/his candidacy cannot be discarded easily after a decision has been made.

7. Trust that persons keep their word is essential in covenant relationships; changing the 'rules of the game' may foster distrust in the minister and the congregational leaders who 'changed the rules'. When an interim minister becomes a candidate for the call, it changes the terms of the covenant under which he or she was appointed to the congregation for a specific term and for specific tasks. Interim ministry covenants are signed by the session on behalf of the congregation, with the approval of the Presbytery. Usually there has been no general congregational involvement in the process. Therefore if the interim minister is called to the congregation, some people may feel betrayed, fooled or manipulated, and distrust may permeate the climate in which the new long-term relationship will begin.

DEVELOPING AN INTERIM MINISTRY COVENANT

The interim minister serves at the request of the Kirk Session and Congregation following a service of Introduction by the Presbytery.

GOALS AND TASKS FOR INTERIM MINISTRY

These goals and tasks should flow from the statement of ministry needs that was developed by the interim moderator and the session and was presented by the interim moderator to the Presbytery as part of the process for authorisation of an interim ministry. They reflect areas of concern and/or ministry that are to be the primary focus during the interim period.

In his book *The Interim Pastor's Manual*, Alan Gripe describes five developmental tasks of congregations seeking to "develop greater maturity in self-understanding and greater skill in doing what needs to be done" prior to calling a new minister. These five developmental tasks may provide a useful framework for the development of the goals and tasks of the interim ministry.¹

1 Coming to Terms with History

Congregations often need "to come to terms with history, to review it, and to acknowledge it, beauty and blemishes alike. Then, having acknowledged the past, ... (they need to consider) what it means for the present and how it can be understood to help to shape the future productively."²

2. Discovering a New Identity

Following the departure of a minister, some congregations are left wondering who they are and who they will be. The in-between time provides an opportunity for the congregation to assess its current ministry and its potential for ministry in the present and immediate future. It is an opportunity for the congregation to look not only at itself, but also at the challenges of the community it serves.

3. Allowing and Empowering New Leaders

Congregations often need to become aware of the various forms and uses of power in the congregation and to ensure effective leadership in the congregation. This frequently involves managing leadership shifts.

4. Renewing Denominational Linkages

This task involves the strengthening of communication and the renewal of relationships between the congregation and other bodies in the church, especially the Presbytery. The desired outcome is a congregation that is able to acknowledge its sense of pride in its heritage and its membership in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and to reaffirm its responsibilities to the denomination.

5. Committing to New Leadership and a New Future

Throughout the in-between time, the congregation needs to be working consciously towards its future, a future in which the interim minister will not have a leadership role. As the first four tasks are completed, the congregation prepares itself to make the commitment its new future will require.

Additional or revised goals and tasks may be established during the term of the covenant by mutual agreement of the session and interim minister and with the approval of the Presbytery.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INTERIM MINISTER

The interim minister is responsible for providing leadership in two key areas: the work of the session and congregation on the specific goals and tasks of the interim ministry; plus all the tasks associated with Parish ministry.

Working with the Congregations:

- Helping them toward a common shared view of the reality of the situation.
- Good communication
- With the congregation **but** on the side of the process
- Opportunity to be honest and bold
- Raising Morale
- Being there
- Permission to laugh

Conflict Resolution

80% of cases can be settled out of court 20% go to judgment In most cases congregation team of minister/leaders/congregation works. Interim Ministry is tackling situation where there is a higher risk of failure. We must see risk and failure as part of a divine plan and testing is part of spiritual enterprise we are doing in being the Church today. There is a tremendous pressure on ordained ministers and leaders to take on the whole range of responsibilities **at once** on entry into pastoral charges.

We need to allow time for assessment, and offer appropriate support and advice in a real way and not too distant formal way.

Outline for attempting Conflict Resolution²

² Adapted from Conflict Management for Senior Church Leaders: Bridge Builders Conference 21-23 September 2004 led by Speed Leas

The Transition Support Group has a key role in identifying some of the issues and personalities involved as well as the basic information about the Congregation for example what are the issues as they are understood, how far the issues have extended into the wider congregation and so on.

Good information is essential without it the Interim Minister may have a distorted view of what is happening for example

- If one speaks only to the Kirk Session then the only view one can have is that of the Kirk Session which may be skewed or partial
- The Kirk Session often is not representative of the Congregation the only way to find this out is to talk with members of the Congregation.
- There are seldom quick fixes
- Unrealistic expectations mean that problems remain and/or people get frustrated and leave

Role of interim Minister

- The Interim Minister is not an advocate for one side or the other.
- The Interim Minister cannot make people behave 'properly'
- The Interim Minister cannot make decisions for those involved in a fight

The interim Minister can help people to understand and own their problems. When one doesn't own his or her problems then that person believes

- The problem is caused by certain people
- The problem is inherent in the system or an outside force for example the prevailing religious climate of the day

The Interim Minister should be able to recommend a processes doe decision making and resolution of the conflict which is fair.

Tools for the Task

1. Comment on Gaelic word 'posadh' which applies to marriage and to induction to a charge.
2. One helpful task element to help both Interim Ministers, Interim Moderators and Ministers is the working through the 'Pastoral Cycle' the experience: articulated into words to describe it : questioned and evaluated : reflected on with Biblical and contextual models, passages, images action taken, further experience encountered and case studies

3. Some Biblical resources which may be helpful:

- The Joseph story
- lessons in God's providence
- The Abraham story
- I Corinthians
- Galatians

4. The questions used by some Interim Ministers are worth repeating.

Group A questions

- This congregation is
- This congregation needs
- This congregation should
- This congregation will become

Group B Questions

- What is good here?
- What is difficult here?
- What would you like to see changed?
- What would this Church be like if changes took place?

5. Listening process is vital in early months for both Interim Minister and Interim Moderator as they make contact with a congregation.

The similarities faced could enrich both with outlining the tools/resources useful for helping and assisting congregations in time of vacancy.

The use of the term 'Path Finder' instead of 'trouble-shooter' was enthusiastically endorsed. It emphasises ongoing process, co-operative team-work, and choices in direction and workings.

Useful Tools

Appreciative Enquiry – contributed by Rev Dr Gordon McCracken

First: A Definition

Appreciative Inquiry is an organizational change methodology pioneered by David Cooperrider, and is intended as a viable alternative to traditional 'problem-solving' or 'troubleshooting'

strategies which often focus on 'the blame game'. The basic idea is to build organisational success around what works, rather than trying to fix what doesn't.

What is noteworthy about the AI approach in comparison to other organizational development models is that it doesn't require a detailed analysis of problems or deficits. Consequently AI is less prone to initiating negative, blaming and judgmental atmospheres than problem focussed interventions.

(www.clergyleadership.com/appreciative.ai.html)

AI has its basis in theoretical approaches that view organisations as essentially social constructs and emotional or organic systems. It therefore seeks to develop strategies around personnel rather than structures, and works at discerning participants' perceptions of the way things are and how they would like them to be.

It also starts from a perception that 'people' are reluctant to change unless and until they are satisfied that the outcome of change is likely to have more positive benefits than staying the way things are. This has sometime been called perceiving change as 'a blessing' rather than as 'a curse.' (The tendency of organizations – via their personnel – towards the *status-quo* is often referred to as *homeostasis*.)

This is one of the key principles underlying the philosophy, and a five-stage tried and tested methodology has been developed to make change a positive experience, and to make it happen, on the basis that "what we focus upon becomes our reality." This methodology we shall turn to shortly.

Firstly, though, I would like to share with you what I term an 'Inadvertent Appreciative Inquiry' approach, and then reflect on how awareness of the strategy might have added to the success.

Encounter

I was appointed as Interim Minister at Dennistoun in March 2006. For some considerable time one of the two congregations concerned had been without a Minister, the Presbytery of Glasgow declaring Dennistoun Blackfriars to be a continued vacancy following a successful appeal to the General Assembly overturning a decision of the Presbytery to dissolve the congregation. Less than 250 yards along Roslea Drive sat the congregation of Dennistoun Central, which became vacant on the retirement of its previous Minister in 2004. During the intervening period the Presbytery had been unsuccessful in brokering an understanding between the two congregations as to the way ahead.

As the months rolled by I began to get a clearer understanding of many of the factors that had prevented progress: at least part of which was due to the congregations not taking too kindly to what they regarded as the high-handedness and incompetency of the Presbytery at various levels.

In the sense that I discovered this over time, it had no immediacy with regard to what was achieved, but I am convinced that an Appreciative Inquiry approach might have surfaced some of this at an earlier stage in an organized rather than *ad-hoc* manner.

But to our story.

For reasons that are not entirely clear I was some time into the charge before the usual Aims and Objectives for the Interim Ministry were drawn up, but I was aware from things said at my Introduction that the Presbytery desired an early Union of the two congregations (albeit the Presbytery Plan suggested a ten year time scale as being likely.) It soon became clear that the Blackfriars congregation was anxious to press ahead, whilst some office-bearers in the Central congregation were more reluctant, due in no small part to the fact that their previous minister, on leaving, had 'assured them' that they would have no trouble in getting to call a minister. The Blackfriars congregation had, after all, been vacant when Central had been allowed to extend a call to her. On the face of things little had changed. It therefore came as a bolt out of the blue to some of them at least, that this was not the case, and Presbytery sought to pursue the question or readjustment. To compound matters, previous talks about Union faltered when at the last gasp the congregation of Blackfriars voted down the terms of the Union on the basis that they were unwilling to accept the then incumbent of Central as their minister.

I was therefore faced with two congregations coming from very different perspectives, albeit, that as a device to allow them to share an Interim Ministry, they had been formally 'linked' against their inclinations. One was clear that immediate Union offered their best hope of moving on, the other reluctant to see such radical change as an urgent necessity and finding it hard to accept that they should not be allowed a Call.

So what to do?

Well, I basically asked myself: Firstly, "What unites them?" and secondly, "If a Basis of Union is to be accepted, what would the acceptable conditions be?" And to the latter, there were in essence three substantial questions. What would the congregation be called? Which building(s) would be used, and how would they operate?

I therefore set about organizing a strategy for getting the office-bearers together to discuss such matters. The basis of linkage allowed for joint meetings, but it was clear that at that stage 'business' meetings were likely to be fractious events, and a more informal forum was required.

I therefore decided that a series of Seminars offered the best hope. And these followed.

The first of these took place at the end of June 2006, three months or so into the Interim period, and was aimed at Vision building. I felt if they could agree on a shared vision of the Church that would be a good starting point. And so using the Vision and Values template drawn up by the Committee on Review and Reform as a tool, and with the help of an ice breaker I devised as a 'get to know you' cum 'put the vision together' approach, we managed to work through a number of issues, and indeed arrived at a common Vision and Values statement that was put together by the office-bearers with minimal input from myself.

So we now had a common statement of purpose.

The summer months were just about upon us, but I knew the next stage had to be to begin to put flesh on the bones, and so I advocated a further Seminar in September at which we would work on a strategy as to how we might realize this 'Vision'.

At that Seminar, which began with an unsuccessful ice-breaker (many felt too old for it), we looked at the four basic models of Church organization as drawn up by Loren Mead), the

objective being to concentrate minds on the fact that both churches would of necessity be moving to a different *modus operandi* simply because numbers would be much larger and we were moving from a *family* based model in one case, and a *pastoral* based model in the other, into something more approximating to the *programme* church model.

With those models in mind, we then used the Concept or Mind-mapping techniques of Tony Buzan² to work on graphic modelling of how the two congregations presently operated, and then shared these.

At the same time I had in advance distributed papers comparing the Model Deed of Constitution with the Unitary Constitution, as I was about to propose that we set up a shadow administration based on the principles of the Unitary constitution, whilst ensuring that in the meantime each Kirk Session and Congregational Board would be responsible for its own affairs.

To cut a long story a bit shorter, the vast majority of office-bearers (with one notable exception) agreed to try this as a way of working, and in the end it proved successful, both as a means to them beginning to share concerns and realize they could work together, and in the end as a model they were happy to accept as providing the constitutional basis for the subsequent Union.

One big outstanding question was the matter of buildings: and this we began to tackle in the month of November with the assistance of Russell McLarty and his extensive slide show of physically changed churches. On the day, and subsequently, we worked through the issues: and it became clear that the one thing almost everyone was concerned about was the inadequacy of the present buildings, and the fear that Union might lumber them with something worse than what they had. The unifying Vision was therefore of something new or renewed, and so we embarked upon a strategy for commissioning a feasibility study which resulted in an outcome that was acceptable to the vast majority of participants: a Basis of Union without settlement of the buildings question, that to be decided by the Kirk Session with the benefits of the commissioned study.

The only remaining obstacle to a Basis of Union that could be accepted by all was the name: and in the end that proved to be the easiest decision of all - the name of Dennistoun New being readily accepted as indicative of the new start desired by all in the midst of a community that was itself often being branded as 'New Dennistoun' by the sellers of modern housing in the parish.

Job achieved? Well almost, although the 'jel' needs time to set.

An Appreciative Approach?

So, how does all this relate to Appreciate Inquiry?

Well, as I mention at the beginning, there is a basic five stage methodology associated with Appreciative Inquiry, the 4th step of which is effectively making use of something known as the

² Tony Buzan, *How to Mind Map*, Harper Collins, 2002; and *Mind Maps at Work*, Penguin 200 (I personally prefer to use the term 'concept mapping' when working with congregations on structures etc.)

A-B Change Model: where 'A' represents the 'where we are now' position and 'B' the 'where we want/need to be' position and the arrow the resources needed to move from 'A' to 'B'.



Basic A ► B Change model

**Where are you?
Where are you going?
What do you need?**

The basis of appreciative inquiry (assuming that 'A' is not - or at least not any longer - the desired position) is basically not to waste time and effort asking how we got to where we are (A) but how are we going to get to where we want to be (B).

If the ultimate Aim of the period of Interim Ministry was to effect a Union – although it was by no means clear that actual accomplishment as distinct from steps in that direction was considered possible – then we had to begin to fix our attention on setting an achievable set of goals.

What I was hearing strongly from some of the leaders at Central was not a “No” but a “Not now/not yet,”³ and it took some time to surface the underlying concerns: this in parallel to the planned seminars.

There were issues of concern around that were based on past experience, particularly perceptions of individual characters, that needed to be addressed, and this was done out with the seminars: principally by way of reassuring reluctant participants that strong individuals would not be allowed to dominate proceedings at later stages of development.

Nevertheless, given that a greater number were willing to see some progress, the series of seminars that were organized enabled the two sets of offers bearers to come to a set of agreed aims, an agreed method for working out how to realize their aims, and an agreement as to how to proceed in the matter of necessary changes to infrastructure. These in effect established the collective 'Bs' for an A-B change model.

³ At a later stage I surveyed the Elders as a group on how they felt about the prospect of Union, offering five levels of view ranging from 'I can readily accept the proposal' to 'I am utterly opposed to it'. 66% of the office-bearers chose 'I have reservations about it, but I will not oppose it.' 14% said they readily accepted the proposal, whilst the remainder were split equally between 'I can accept the proposal, but it is not m preferred option' and 'I can live with the proposal'. No-one selected the 'I am utterly opposed to it' box. Had such a survey had been carried out at an earlier stage involving not only Elders but members of the congregation, as part of an Inquiry process, it would have offered valuable insight. In retrospect I would love to know what the responses would have been.

There have of course been efforts on the part of some to seek to apportion blame for past failures in relationships between the two congregations, and these have from time to time led to restlessness if not unrest. It has therefore not always been plain sailing in getting everyone to focus on the future prospects for the congregation: but without these established aims I reckon it would have been impossible to proceed.

An Appreciative Appreciation

On reflection, it might have been useful to have been able to establish at the outset that I was going to adopt an Appreciative approach, in order that the office-bearers might be encouraged to focus more specifically on the future rather than the past. That was what we in effect did, without having a designated framework in which to do it: but I feel that transparency in most (if not all) things is key to a successful outcome. Especially in this situation 'hidden agendas' and perceived 'Presbytery authoritarianism' have been obstacles to progress in the past. It has only been in working alongside the congregations and providing them with the tools to largely determine their own futures, that I believe it has been possible to unlock the impasse.

The 5-D Model of AI



The Basic process of Appreciative Inquiry are commonly referred to by the Five-D* Model of development, the five phases of which are:

1. Define
2. Discover
3. Dream
4. Design
5. Deliver

1: Define: Awareness of the need for development.

Preparing for an appreciative process.
Committing to the Positive

2: Discover: What in God's name is going on in your church?

Interview process and gathering of life-giving experience within congregation.
Valuing the Best of What Is

3: Dream: What is God and the community calling us to be?

What would our church look like in 5 years' time?

Developing common images of the future.
Visioning the Ideal

4: Design: Aligning ideals, values, structures and mission.

Developing achievable plans and steps to make the vision a reality.

Dialoguing What Should Be

5: Deliver: Doing Christ's Work in the World.

Co-creating a sustainable, preferred future. Who, What, When, Where, How?

Innovating What Will Be.

(* an alternative to this is the Four-I inquiry: Initiate, Inquire, Imagine, and Innovate.)

Stages One and Two were carried through to the extent that the initial period of Interim Ministry is designated for that purpose: to define and discover, or as is more commonly referred to: “joining the system” and “analysing the organization as a system.”⁴

However, an up-front **AI** approach, with the methodology being shared with office-bearers and congregational members, might have been useful in ensuring that everyone involved new exactly what was intended at this stage. I think to some extent this was implicit and understood by the more discerning, but a specific framework might have added some momentum to the process from the outset.

Stages Three, Four, and Five – the latter being a work in progress – were in fact set in place without the conceptual framework, the writer not even being aware of anything called ‘Appreciative Inquiry’ until attending a course offered by the Ministries’ Council and run by Rob and Kim Voyle until a month after the third significant office-bearers seminar.

A Remaining Concern

One of the traditional approaches to Interim Ministry has involved ‘dealing with the past’ with the suggestion that grievances need to be surfaced and aired in a way that everyone hears them. Appreciative Inquiry seriously calls that methodology into question, and this has put me in a quandary at times.

At an early stage it became clear that at various times Presbytery representative had urged the office-bearers to put the past behind them and move on: and there was a sense in which that needed to be honoured. At the same time quite a number of people on both sides were anxious to tell me the story of what ‘really happened’ when previous talks broke down. Quickly realising that these stories were equally valid but in some ways contradictory interpretations of events, I decided not to create any specific platform for these to be aired, fearing that they would exacerbate the tensions between them as well as risking an agenda somewhat at odds with the Presbytery’s guidance in the matter.

However, I fully realize that the traditional approach to Interim Ministry aims at bringing to the surface issues that participants – possibly Presbytery included – might prefer to bury; and is also clear that this is intended to be therapeutic.

Not having had the benefit of training in a specific Appreciative Inquiry approach to Interim Ministry, this is one area that I would like the opportunity to explore further.

Nevertheless, I would commend the general approach as one of many tools useful for Interim Ministry, assuming you see a likely ‘fit’ between ‘situation and solution’.

Note:

⁴ Alan G Gripe, *The Interim Pastor’s Manual*, Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997

Rob and Kim Voyle have produced “Core Elements of the Appreciative Way,” extracts from “The Appreciate Way Series,” copies of which are available for purchase through their www.clergyleadership.com resource link.

Team Building – contributed by Rev John C Christie

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The use of teams in Interim Ministry is a significant tool in terms of engaging people in the task of achieving the goals and tasks required to prepare a congregation for its future.

A team is defined as ‘small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose performance, goals and approach for which they hold themselves accountable’⁵

The purpose of having teams is to get a task done, a project completed or a set of objectives achieved. The most effective teams number around 10 and should involve complementary skills.

An effective Team requires the following:

- good communication
- an open atmosphere where each member’s views and insights are valued
- relationships within the team are based on trust and mutual respect
- disagreement about issues is seen to be natural and constructive in the decision-making process.
- decisions should be reached by consensus
- each person contribution should be affirmed
- power is shared
- motivation encouraged by a sense of belonging.

The benefits of team working are

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Resources
- Decisions and solutions
- Commitment

The Team Contract.

This is a useful tool to use when establishing a team. Particularly so when trying to resolve conflicted situations where there has been (or there is the potential to be an unhappy atmosphere) Members are invited to define the parameters under which the team will operate: for example confidentiality, honesty, listening, non-confrontation, humour, keeping to the point, not being personal.

⁵ The Wisdom of Teams : J R Katzenbach and D K Smith

The Team Leader

Leadership in the context of the Church and within the Interim Ministry process is demanding. Clearly there are two aspects to this and while each has characteristics in common, for example there are probably three main team leadership tasks

- Creating the appropriate working conditions
 - Defining the task and ensuring the appropriate resources are available
 - Bringing clarity about who is a member of the team
- Building and maintaining the team
 - Identifying skills and abilities for the task in hand
 - Managing the team, decision-making
- Supporting and encouraging
 - Developing skills
 - Being a 'non anxious presence'

The prime leadership skill of the Interim Minister is probably to be found as one offers support encouragement as the process develops but particularly, perhaps, in the early stages, especially if there has been conflict issues or if the previous minister has left under cloud.

Leadership skills which the interim minister brings are

- Commitment
- Confidence
- Sensitivity
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Adaptability
- Intuitive
- Emotionally intelligent

Emotional Intelligence is a recent behavioural concept developing from ideas about bringing humanity into the business world. The basic premise is that to be effective, people need to be able to be emotionally self-aware and to manage these emotions as well as understanding the emotions of other people.

Daniel Goleman wrote about emotional intelligence describing four aspects as

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship management

Additionally he offers the view that leaders need to be 'resonant' and 'emotionally intelligent', describing 6 Leadership styles as

- Visionary – moving people to shared dreams
- Coaching – connects a person with organisation's goals
- Affiliative – creates harmony by connecting people to each other
- Democratic – values individuals' input and builds commitment through participation.
- Pacesetter – meeting challenging and exciting goals
- Commanding – give clear direction in a crisis.

Leadership skills extend to those involved in teams within the congregation. Many of the above will apply especially when, for example, creating a team structure in the context of the Unitary Constitution. Selected team leaders from within the congregation will be required to carry the task forward into the next ministry.

Interim Ministers operate in the context of the in-between times. By definition, therefore, interim ministers operate in the context of changing times. William Bridges is an American consultant and lecturer. He was formerly a Professor of English but during the 1970's he made a shift to the field of transition management. He works with organisations and individuals, helping them take control of change when it affects their lives.

In particular he has written an article about organisational change using the Old Testament story of Moses describing it as 'an excellent account of a leader's successful transition-management project'! The free article can be downloaded from his website www.wmbridges.com

Bridges believes that change and transition are not the same: the former is situational and external e.g. the new job; the latter is psychological and internal. He highlights three stages

- Endings – coming to terms with loss
- Neutral zone – time
- New beginnings – new values, new attitudes, new situations

In terms of Interim Ministry one of the most useful insights comes under the heading 'Why things can go wrong'

'People in organisations will experience endings, neutral zone and new beginnings at different times. Those who have been working with the new structure will have gone through endings and neutral stages long ago and will be excited about the new beginning. It is easy to forget that others are only at the stage of letting go of the past and feel scared or unsure. People can also be overwhelmed by the picture of the future and cannot identify with it so that they feel intimidated and uncertain of their ability to cope with the new vision.

Bridges **4 Ps** for the transitional stage are

- Purpose – communicate the purpose behind the outcome sought
- Picture – draw a picture of how the outcome will look and feel
- Plan – explain the plan step by step phase of how they will get there
- Part – give each person a part to play in the plan and outcome

Checklist for managing endings.

- Have I thought about change carefully, identifying exactly what needs to change?
- Who will lose what? – and what am I going to lose?
- Have I allowed people to grieve and expressed my own sense of loss to them?
- Do I understand people's losses even when it seems over reaction to me?
- How have I acknowledged these losses
- Am I giving people good and regular information?
- Have I found how to mark the ending?
- Do I demonstrate that I respect the past?
- Have I clarified why this ending is necessary to protect the future of the organisation?

Checklist for managing the Neutral Zone

- Have I explained to everyone that it is normal to experience the neutral zone as a difficult time and that difficult times can actually change things for the better?
- What am I doing to make people feel valued just now?
- Have I given people milestones or short term goals to help them along the way?
- Have I reflected on how this transition could be put to good use and encouraged others to do the same?
- Am I encouraging new ideas and risk-taking?
- Am I setting an example by my own behaviour?
- Have I set up ways in which people can communicate how they are feeling?

Checklist for managing New Beginnings

- Have I ensured that people have gone through their ending and neutral zone?
- Am I trying to create a new beginning before it can be achieved?
- What have I done to communicate the reason and aim of the changes?
- Have I thought out and planned the three stages of transition?
- Have I helped others see the bigger picture and find their place in the new system?
- Have I checked that priorities and procedures are appropriate for the new beginning?
- Am I role modelling the new behaviours or ways of working?
- Have I celebrated the new beginning and the end of the transitional period?
- What have I done to publicly acknowledge people's efforts to come through a long and difficult journey?
- How am I going to symbolise the new identity for the organisation that is emerging?

Appraisal

The Presbytery shall conduct appraisal of the interim ministry which has taken place. These may occur near the end of the period of interim ministry, but in no case should they occur later than one month after the period of Interim Ministry. The Presbytery shall receive and consider the report of such appraisal. It is recognised that there is significant potential in the Transition Support Group being in place and working with the congregation before the arrival of the Interim Minister and continue in a support role through the first year of the new ministry or vacancy in the latter situation the possibility of the development of Interim Locums has significant potential in maintaining the morale of the Congregation.

Section 10

SAMPLE LITURGY

A service of Introduction conducted by the Presbytery of installing as interim minister, the Reverend

Presbytery may conduct a regular service of worship, including the following liturgy during the response part of the service

ACT OF Introduction

Narration of the Steps **Interim Moderator**

The Preamble and Questions **Moderator**

Prayer

The Declaration

The Right Hand of Fellowship **Members of Presbytery**

Signing of the Formula **Presbytery Clerk**

Suggested Hymns

Narrative (adapted from that of PCC) which could usefully be used.

Session Clerk or Session Clerks if a Linked Charge: The session with the guidance of the Presbytery and Ministries Council has determined that our congregation will be well served by a time of interim ministry. The Kirk Session has committed itself to undertake the special tasks of leadership that belong to them and to the congregation during this 'in-between-time'. We have agreed to search for Christ's direction for the future of this congregation, to examine who we are and what our mission is, to support and to pray for the Nominating Committee when it is elected and to prepare for and to welcome the next minister of this congregation..

We gather today to welcome and affirm the Rev. (insert interim minister's name) as our interim minister.

The Moderator reads the Preamble and addresses questions to the interim minister and to the congregation, as outlined below

PREAMBLE TO THE ORDINATION VOWS

The Interim Minister to be introduced takes his or her place before the Presbytery

The Moderator says:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the King and Head of the Church,
who, being ascended on high,
has given gifts for the edifying of the body of Christ,
we are met as a Presbytery
(to introduce *N.N.* to the pastoral charge of . as interim minister)
by prayer and to confirm *him/her* in his appointment as . . .)
(and to welcome/introduce *him/her* as . . .).

In this act, the Church of Scotland,
as part of the Holy Catholic or Universal Church,
worshipping one God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit -
affirms anew its belief in the Gospel
of the sovereign grace and love of God,
wherein through Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
incarnate, crucified, and risen,
he freely offers to all people, upon repentance and faith,
the forgiveness of sins,
renewal by the Holy Spirit,
and eternal life,
and calls them to labour in the fellowship of faith
for the advancement of the kingdom of God
throughout the world.

The Church of Scotland acknowledges the Word of God
which is contained in the Scriptures
of the Old and New Testaments
to be the supreme rule of faith and life.

The Church of Scotland holds as its subordinate standard
the Westminster Confession of Faith,
recognising liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine
as do not enter into the substance of the Faith,
and claiming the right,
in dependence on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit,
to formulate, interpret, or modify its subordinate standards:
always in agreement with the Word of God
and the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith
contained in the said Confession -
of which agreement the Church itself shall be sole judge.

13 The Moderator addresses the Minister to be introduced

QUESTION TO THE INTERIM MINISTER

Do reaffirm the promises you made at your Ordination?

QUESTIONS TO CONGREGATION AND INTERIM MINISTER

Moderator: We come now to specific questions about the interim ministry **A** and its relationship with its interim minister. Would the members and adherents **A** congregation please stand?

Congregation: During this 'in-between time' we have agreed to search for Christ's direction for this church; and to examine who we are and discover our mission. We ask the presbytery to proceed in appointing **X** to be our interim minister, and we are ready to promise our support.

Moderator: X, do you, before God and in the presence of these witnesses, commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility as interim minister of **A**

Interim Minister: I do.

Moderator X, will you serve the people of **A** with energy, intelligence, imagination and love, and will you offer them guidance, challenge and encouragement in your journey together?

Interim Minister: I will, and I promise to pray for them and support them as we serve God in this important and changing time in the life of **A**

Moderator: Do you, members and adherents of **A** acknowledge and welcome **X** as your interim minister?

Congregation: We do.

Moderator: Do you agree to undertake the special tasks that will be yours during this 'in-between time' and will you regard **X** as a fellow servant of Christ and work with him in the ministry of this congregation?

Congregation: We do, and we also promise to pray for and honour **X** and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Jesus Christ.

Members of Presbytery: We are witnesses to the promises you have made as you enter into this 'in-between time'. We recognise the paths you have travelled in the past and the journey you are embarking upon as you look to the future.

Be assured of our prayers and support as you minister together and discover the plans God has for you during this interim time at Arisaig and the Small Isles linked with Mallaig and Knoydart

The Lord bless you and keep you:
The Lord make his face to shine upon you ,
And be gracious unto you:
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you.
And give you peace.

may be used.