

# THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

# COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY

## 17 December 2018

## MINUTES

The Council of Assembly met within the Church Offices, Edinburgh, on Monday 17 December 2018, and was constituted with prayer. A list of those attending is attached to this Minute as Appendix I.

### 68. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Convener welcomed those present and thanked members who arrived early to attend a coffee morning with staff prior to the start of the meeting. The Convener also welcomed Bob Cowan, attending for the General Treasurer; Chloe Clemmons, attending for the Secretary of the Church and Society Council; Craig Renton, attending for the Secretary of the Ministries Council; and Catherine Skinner who was in attendance. Apologies were noted.

### 69. AGREE AGENDA

The Agenda of the meeting was agreed following some amendment, including the requirement for a meeting of the Trustees.

### 70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no new declarations of interest.

### 71. MINUTES

The Minute of the Council meeting held on 19 November 2018 (COA4 (2018-2019)) was approved.

### 72. MATTERS ARISING

#### 72.1 Safeguarding Committee (Min 58)

Further to a request at the November Council meeting to ensure that complaints policies were accessible, Ruth MacLeod confirmed that content on the Church website required to be re-written. In the meantime the policies had been made available to Council members via the portal. Work was ongoing in relation to appropriate Safeguarding training to be offered to staff and Council members. It was likely that training would be delivered in June 2019 and details would follow in due course.

#### 72.2 Back-to-Back Loan (Min 59.1b)

The Back-to-Back Loan Group had met again on 17 December, prior to the start of the meeting of the Council, to finalise terms and relevant paperwork. It was noted that accrued interest had been considered.

The wording, to be addressed to the bank, was approved as follows:

Please be advised that at the meeting of the Council of Assembly of The Church of Scotland (hereinafter: the “Church”) which was duly convened and held on 17 December 2018 at 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN and at which a legal quorum of three was present, the following was resolved, unanimously:

1. To instruct Bank [REDACTED] (hereinafter: the “Bank”) to transfer on 2 January 2019 the total amount of the proceeds of the deposit in the (principal) sum of US\$ 12,250,000 then existing at the account number [REDACTED] of the Church at [REDACTED] of the Bank (hereinafter: the “Account”) to the account number [REDACTED] of St Andrew’s Galilee Ltd. with Hertzliya business branch (174) of the Bank.
2. To close the Account and to sign all applicable documents required by the Bank in connection therewith.
3. To instruct the Bank to cancel each and all authorizations in the Account, including in respect of regular payments to third parties.

### **73. RADICAL ACTION PLAN**

As indicated at the November Council meeting, a date would be confirmed in the coming weeks for an additional Council meeting to focus on the Radical Action Plan.

A list of the themes identified by work streams as potential areas for inclusion into the Radical Action Plan was presented for discussion. The document forms part of the initial phase of the 3-year plan for the Radical Action Plan as described previously. Martin Johnstone, Acting Council Secretary, thanked those involved in the process of drafting the document.

The Radical Action Plan Reference Group met on 10 December and had a detailed conversation on the proposals. The document was positively received.

Following a full and lengthy discussion on each of the items listed in the document the Convener asked members to pray for and reflect on this piece of work. Members were encouraged to send comments and ideas to Martin Johnstone and Catherine Skinner. It was noted that there were ongoing conversations to ensure that the work dovetails with the work of the Special Commission. The Radical Action Plan Project Team continued to meet weekly, with feed-in from the work streams, and would look at add to the detail and develop the context. The Reference Group was next due to meet on 14 January 2019 and thereafter the details would be presented at the Presbytery Day Conference on 31 January 2019.

Fiona Smith joined the meeting for item 74.

### **74. ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE**

A written update report was received and Fiona Smith reported that, in addition to the planning for the 2019 General Assembly, there was an ongoing review of the size, shape and functions of the General Assembly. Property costs were being evaluated. There has been consideration of digital processes and development of web-based resources. Materials were produced in order to develop effectiveness and to encourage engagement with the business. Each Presbytery is responsible for preparing their Commissioners. Videos are also available to educate people on the General Assembly.

A feedback survey received positive comments in relation to the introduction of circulation breaks and showed that digital access was generally working well, although some had difficulties with accessing certain information. There were some issues around being able to hear and disabled access.

The management function of Hall is not staffed sufficiently which has had an impact on the use of the Hall outside of the General Assembly. Edinburgh University carried out a feasibility study and there were ongoing discussions around the potential to use the Hall as a lecture theatre.

A review of Heart and Soul had received positive comments and critique and a report would be sent to the Council of Assembly as soon as possible in order to inform budget discussions.

It was noted that there has been pressure put upon the Clerks as staff levels have been reduced while work has increased, particularly appeals and judicial processes.

Sandy Horsburgh, Kevin Mackenzie and John McPake joined the meeting for item 75.

## **75. ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

A written update report was received. Sandy Horsburgh reported that the Senior Administrator within the Ecumenical Relations staff team had indicated her intention to retire in May 2019. As the sole administrative support, the Committee was of the view that the appointment of a successor would be business critical. The Church of Scotland remains committed to the Third Article Declaratory and John McPake will lead on the work on ecumenism within the Radical Action Plan. It was noted that both the Acting Council Secretary and the Ecumenical Officer were due to attend gathering of Church leaders in January.

### **75.1 Review of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS)**

The ACTS Working Group Report: "Towards a Scottish Christian Forum" was received. John McPake was thanked for representing the Church of Scotland in discussions and for keeping the Council of Assembly informed of the developments. At the ACTS Members Meeting on 22 November 2018 the proposed transition to a Scottish Christian Forum was unanimously endorsed. John McPake was invited to convene the group which will handle the transition. The Church of Scotland would look to formulate a saving on budgeted contributions in 2018 and payments would be conditional on certain circumstances.

### **75.2 Membership of the Ecumenical Relations Committee**

In 2017 the General Assembly expanded the remit of the Committee without increasing the membership. Council approved the request for two additional members in order to fulfil the remit relating to the promotion of local ecumenism.

## **76. HEART & SOUL 2019**

Martin Johnstone, Acting Council Secretary, confirmed that the Council of Assembly would not host its own marquee at the Heart and Soul 2019 event. Instead, representatives of the Council would be invited to be part of other marquees to serve as roaming ambassadors for the work of the Council.

## **77. FINANCE**

### **77.1 Minutes of Finance Group**

The Council received the Draft Minutes of the Meeting of 3 December (FG6 2018-19).

With the proposed move away from having regionally based stewardship consultants and instead having an office based consultant team which would offer support nationally, Jenny Adams observed that this may seem out of step with the regional teams described in the Radical Action Plan.

### **77.2 Management Accounts to 31 October 2018**

The forecast operating deficit in the Social Care Council had increased to £3.8m per the quarter 3 reforecast as adjusted to reflect the non-payment of Mission and Renewal income and schools' restructuring costs for 2018. A strong action plan was in place in terms of agency and occupancy. Pensions deficit payments remain an issue for the Social Care Council and this remained a focus of the ongoing discussions involving all of the Employing Agencies.

The Social Care Council budget would continue to appear on the agenda for the Finance Group with the use of unrestricted reserves to be considered along with a request for a loan. Viv Dickenson agreed to discuss any financial implications of the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry with the Finance Group as these were known.

### **77.3 2019 Budget**

The Council considered the draft detailed budget for 2019. The deficit to be met from reserves totalled £4,636k across all councils, compared to the earlier indicative budget deficit of £3,841k. Reconciliation between the indicative budget and the detailed budget was provided. The allowance for the anticipated spend for urgent and essential work to the National Offices had increased from £100k to £500k, pending receipt of a costed schedule of works. The General Trustees would be invited to comment on the brief received, which would allow for decisions to be taken on the National Offices.

The Council was concerned with the increased deficit for 2019, albeit assuming savings of around £500k. The Acting Council Secretary reported that approximately £600k of potential savings had been identified recently but had still to be confirmed.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Councils, Committees and Departments should engage in a prioritisation exercise, with consideration of which activities would cease should there be a reduction to income. Discussions would be informed by findings from the review of reserves and the review of grant funding as well as decisions taken during the General Assembly. A timeframe would need to be given to any anticipated efficiencies and reductions to spend along with related resource requirements. Reports setting out the appropriate level of reserves would be received in June from the Councils, Committees and Departments. This exercise should include consideration of alternative options for fund raising.

It was noted that work was underway on the indicative budget for 2020 which would be presented to the General Assembly. Necessarily, this may be revised later in 2019 following decisions of the General Assembly.

### **77.4 Property Sales and Purchases**

Noting the recommendation of the Finance Group, Council approved a proposal to purchase a property, as yet unidentified, at approximately £55k, and up to a maximum of £80k, from which to extend the Dick Stewart service offering. It was noted that sale proceeds of an existing property would fund the purchase.

### **77.5 Funds Reorganisation**

The Trustees noted the details provided and agreed the following applications for restricted funds reorganisation:

- a) Freebairn White Fund
- b) Kerr Travel Scholarship

### **77.6 Funds Reorganisation Resolution**

Further to recent applications for funds reorganisation, authorisation was granted to the Convener to sign the necessary documentation on behalf of the Trustees to pass the final resolution for:

- a) Alexander J Macleod
- b) Hill Memorial Bursary Fund
- c) Hill Memorial Fund

## **78. GOVERNANCE**

The Council received a written report from the Governance Group.

**78.1 Minutes of Governance Group**

The Council received the Draft Minutes of Governance Group Meeting of 10 December (GG3 2018-19).

**78.2 Service Level Agreement (SLA) Between The Church of Scotland Safeguarding Committee and The Boys' Brigade**

Council approved the draft Service Level Agreement between The Church of Scotland Safeguarding Committee and The Boys' Brigade. It was noted that there was no charge proposed for at least the first year.

**79. COMMUNICATIONS**

A moratorium on the circulation of all electronic newsletters issued by the Councils, Committees and Departments of the Church was sought whilst a small working group explores a recent complaint received relating to distribution.

**80. MEETING OF TRUSTEE MEMBERS**

*The discussion which took place under this item is contained in a Record Apart.*

**81. TOGETHER WE PRAY**

An update report was received which included some feedback from events held for the National Day of Prayer 2018. It was suggested that the work around the Together We Pray national prayer initiative would form the Church of Scotland's contribution towards the Thy Kingdom Come global prayer initiative. This would be a commitment to a season of prayer.

Norman Smith, Jenny Adams and John McPake agreed to meet with Pauline Wilson, along with a representative from the Communications Department, to discuss themes, resources and branding. It was noted that Gaelic resources were being worked on under the Thy Kingdom Come initiative. Discussions would include consideration of whether a deliverance was required and the potential impact out of the Radical Action Plan as this was developed.

The Council offered thanks to those who have worked on the Together We Pray initiative.

**82. COUNCILS' BUSINESS****82.1 Church and Society Council**

A written update report was received. The Council offered gratitude to both Chloe Clemmons and Andrew Tomlinson for fulfilling Council Secretary duties for the Church and Society Council whilst Martin Johnstone serves as Acting Secretary to the Council of Assembly. It was noted that this staffing arrangement raises issues around resource and implementation and there was need for consideration of the potential to take forward cross-Council pieces of work. Agreement had been given to appoint an Office Administrator for a period of one year dependent on the budget for 2019.

**82.2 Mission and Discipleship Council**

A series of Rural Roadshows undertaken by the Mission and Discipleship Council had highlighted specific issues facing those in particularly remote locations. The Council of Assembly was asked to consider ways of working that take into account the practicalities of attending meetings and being part of ongoing work for those in remote areas of Scotland. Such consideration would include, but not be limited to, teleconferencing and remote inclusion as well as the time and place of meetings. Catherine Skinner agreed to speak with Norman Smith about the issues although it was noted that the current infrastructure had its limitations. It was noted that a proposal for the provision of Office 365 was being drawn up.

Furthermore, Angus Mathieson was in ongoing conversations with the Communications Department regarding the content and resources available on the Church website.

**83. AUDIT COMMITTEE**

The Council received the Draft Minutes of Audit Committee Meeting of 27 November (AC2 2018-19).

**84. ANNUAL REPORT**

In light of the demanding Agenda for this meeting, there was not discussion on the Annual Report and this item would be carried forward to a future meeting.

**85. CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

In light of the demanding Agenda for this meeting, there was no report received from the Central Services Committee. Council was asked to confirm whether the Executive Committee (Staffing) should continue to consider only business critical posts. Members concurred.

**86. SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM**

There was nothing further to report from the Senior Management Team at this time.

**87. MEETING OF TRUSTEE MEMBERS**

*The discussion which took place under this item is contained in a Record Apart.*

**88. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

10.30am, Monday 18 February 2019, in the Church Offices.

**The Meeting was closed with Prayer.**

APPENDIX I

# COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY

17 December 2018

**Sederunt:**

Jennifer Adams  
Ian Alexander  
Sally Bonnar  
David Brackenridge  
John Chalmers  
Viv Dickenson  
Alison Fenton  
Richard Frazer  
Alistair Gibb  
Neil Glover  
Isobel Hunter  
Martin Johnstone  
Anne Lamont  
Elaine McCloghry  
Andrew McGowan  
John McPake  
Mary Macleod  
Ruth MacLeod  
Angus Mathieson  
Norma Rolls  
Norman Smith  
Alan Sorensen  
Bill Steele  
David Watt  
George Whyte  
Ronald Wright  
Raymond Young

**Apologies:**

Derek Browning  
John Corrigan  
Anne Macintosh  
Jayne Scott  
Martin Scott

**In Attendance:**

Chloe Clemmons  
Bob Cowan  
Carron Lunt  
Craig Renton  
Catherine Skinner