

## **Presbytery Meeting Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016 Summary**

The first Presbytery meeting of 2016 was on 2<sup>nd</sup> February at Queen's Cross Parish for ordinary business which included the following:

### **Tribute**

The Rev Diane Hobson, minister at St Mark's Church, led tribute to Miss Margaret Donald for her many years of service to St Mark's and to Presbytery first as Commissioned Elder then as Balancing Elder. A former teacher and Educational Psychologist Margaret died at 86 years of age whilst still active on the Presbytery Malawi Committee. The church at Mpachika in Malawi named a kitchen after her and at her funeral service over £1,000 was raised for Malawi.

A memorial service will be held at 2pm at St Mark's on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February.

### **Cairns Counselling**

Miss Claire Moggach, Head of Counselling and Ms Denise Mair, Senior Counsellor, spoke to Presbytery about the work of the Cairns Counselling Service. They have a management team of professional people from many walks of life under the Chairmanship of Rev. Kenneth Petrie.

Cairns Counselling offer the best service possible in order to help people dealing with a wide range of issues such as anxiety, depression, bereavement, anger management, stress and much more. Their aim is to ensure clients are given the ability to deal with problematic situations they may find in their life.

In addition to 4 salaried staff including Miss Moggach and Ms Mair they have over 20 counsellors who each provide between two and six counselling sessions per week each lasting up to 50 minutes. Referrals can be made through a GP or other professional body but this is not essential. Most clients refer themselves.

NHS Grampian provide a third of the funding. For the rest, Cairns relies on public donations to help with the survival of the service. All clients are encouraged to give a donation towards the service they receive no matter how small. Other funding comes from a number of sources including Aberdeen Presbytery. A Support Group called the Friends of Cairns organise fundraising events and offer practical support to the service as required.

### **The Business and Finance Committee intimated:**

- A resource pack had been received at the Presbytery office which offered information on the initiative by the NHS, Breathing Space Scotland plus partners for the 2016 "Year of Listening". The object of the initiative is to raise awareness throughout 2016 that listening

and being listened to is good for mental health, the initiative offering an opportunity for individuals and organisations to demonstrate their commitment to being better listeners. The resource pack contains CDs, leaflets and advice. Further information may be obtained from

<http://breathingspace.scot/news/2015/year-of-listening-2016/>

- The Community of Faith Conferences entitled "for churches with few or no children" will run in Glasgow, Dumfries and Inverness for those that are involved in ministry with children and young people from across Scotland. The aim of the conference is to explore new and exciting ideas to resource and inspire ministry in congregations that have few or no children or young people. Each day will be very similar with a keynote speaker, some workshops, times for people to share what is going on in their own situations and lunch will be provided. Conferences to be held on Saturday 13th February in Glasgow, Saturday 12th March in Dumfries and Saturday 23rd April in Inverness. Booking available at: [www.resourcingmission.org.uk/events](http://www.resourcingmission.org.uk/events)
- The Aberdeen Passion 2016: A light undimmed. To be performed at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre on Saturday 26th March at 2.30pm and 7.30pm, tickets cost £10. The organiser writes - The Aberdeen Passion is a non-profit theatrical production drawing together over 100 amateur performers from across the North-East of Scotland. This year the production is supporting Teen Challenge North East Scotland's campaign to raise funds for the purchase of the building housing their female addiction recovery centre, Benaiah. This will be a brand new production featuring original songs written by Christian musicians, including David Lyon, the Scottish Christian recording artist. A prayer meeting for the performance will take place at St Columbus Bridge of Don on Monday, 7th March 2016, from 7:30 – 8:30pm and further information about Aberdeen Passion can be found at [aberdeenpassion.com](http://aberdeenpassion.com)

### **Presbytery Office Refurbishment**

The Presbytery Office serves an important function in the Presbytery. It was accepted that it is in need of upgrading primarily due to poor insulation and a heating system no longer functioning well. A refurbishment of the office was agreed at a cost of £19,318.31 including VAT.

If the refurbishment goes ahead the Presbytery Office will relocate to an alternative venue, which was still to be determined, for about six weeks.

### **Alcohol Support Designated Place of Safety**

The Designated Place of Safety (DP) was set up in Aberdeen in 1983. Housed at Albyn House, it is for people who are deemed to be drunk and incapable and is an alternative to being arrested and spending a night in

police cells. It ensures the safety and well-being of people under the influence of alcohol.

Yet despite its unique place within Scotland, the over-whelming commendations from politicians, Police Scotland, social workers, community workers and its users, the decision has been made by NHS Grampian, the Scottish Government and Police Scotland to withdraw the funding that is needed to sustain the facility in Dee Street.

Concerns are that both the Police in Aberdeen and the A&E department of Aberdeen Royal Infirmary will need to deal with an increased caseload of patients who till now were handled through the DP. Furthermore, the facility and support at Albyn House gave users the opportunity not only to 'dry out' overnight, but to reflect on their actions and behaviour without being criminalised with it consequences.

Presbytery recorded its sadness at the closure of the Alcohol Support Ltd Designated Place of Safety in light of the obvious positive impact and unique contribution it has given to the city; expressed its continued support for the work of Alcohol Support Ltd in seeking to offer practical and on-going help to those dealing with alcohol issues.

### **Review of Mission Development Staff Posts**

As part of the requirements of ongoing review of the current Presbytery Plan, the Presbytery Planning and Deployment Committee (PDC) is carrying out a review of the 6.5FTE posts currently held by 8 Mission Development Staff. A letter had been sent to all Session Clerks setting out the process of review with a series of questions to consider. Responses are required by the deadline of 18th March, and thereafter PDC will bring a report to the May meeting of Presbytery.

### **Guild Action Plan**

The General Assembly of 2015 instructed all Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to discuss the Guild Action Plan and to consider their response to it. Two members of the Guild spoke to Presbytery about the plan and the reasons for it. They emphasised that these are exciting and challenging times for the Guild and that the contents of the Action Plan which is for the years 2015 – 2017 should be seen in that way.

The challenges faced by Guild groups are those faced by the Church of Scotland as a whole. They exist to varying degrees in different places and can be met in different ways as well, depending on the numbers of people involved, the location, the congregational context and other factors. In broad terms the Guild has these:

- Ageing membership
- Falling numbers
- Difficulties in recruiting leadership
- Fatigue

- Loss of confidence

Details of the Guild Action Plan are available at:

[www.churchofscotland.org.uk](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk)

**Presbytery also:**

- Noted that the Rev Daniel Robertson had been elected minister at Davidson Mains Parish Church, Edinburgh and that he will therefore resign as Community Minister of Cove and Kincorth. Daniel was warmly thanked for his services within the Presbytery and wished God's blessing in his new charge.
- Noted that Jean Boyd, Probationer at Dyce Parish Church was voted Minister-Elect of Drumoak-Durriss Parish Church on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2015 and wished her well for the future.
- Noted the resignation of Mr Stiubhart MacChoille as a corresponding Member of Presbytery and warmly thanked him for his many years of service in a number of capacities within Presbytery.
- Noted with sadness the passing of the Rev Professor I Howard Marshall, teacher of New Testament at Aberdeen University for over 40 years.