

## **Presbytery Meeting Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 Summary**

Queen's Cross Parish Church was the venue for the March meeting of Presbytery and the business included the following:

### **Deaf Ministry**

The Rev Diane Hobson, minister at St Mark's Church and Interim Moderator for St John's Church for Deaf People, introduced the two guest speakers, Rev Rosie Addis and Rev Mary Whittaker.

The Rev Rosie Addis is now the new Deaf Development Worker as well as chaplain to Albany Deaf Church. The Deaf Development post is in many ways a continuation of the 1992 report from the Board of National Mission which tried to differentiate between the needs of deaf, hard of hearing and deafened people. Throughout, the Church of Scotland has been ahead of the curve in its recognition of British Sign Language (BSL) as an indigenous language akin to Gaelic. In 1990 the General Assembly invited the Government to give recognition to sign language to deaf people in Scotland. BSL was officially recognised as a language in its own right in 2003 and the General Assembly urged congregations to use sign language, support initiatives for deaf people, and provide resources when appropriate.

In the Church of Scotland there are three BSL congregations:

- St John's Deaf Church, Aberdeen
- John Ross Memorial Church, Glasgow
- Albany Deaf Church

Additionally, other churches which include deaf people have an interpreter or signer translating the service into BSL.

Albany Deaf Church shares the building with Greenside Parish Church in the heart of Edinburgh. St John's meets at St Mark's Church where the Rev Mary Whittaker, locum and Auxiliary Minister, leads worship on the first and third Sunday of the month.

Congregations in Aberdeen were encouraged to acquire an induction loop tester at a cost of about £100 which would establish whether or not a loop system was working properly.

Rev Rosie Addis urged people to get in touch at:

[raddis@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:raddis@churchofscotland.org.uk)

### **Mastrick Summerhill – Basis of Deferred Union**

In May 2013 Presbytery agreed that the congregations of Mastrick and Summerhill would unite to form one congregation as soon as was possible. The retirement of the minister at Mastrick brought that union a

step closer but the two congregations could not be united until such time as Summerhill Church no longer had a minister. However, the next minister of Mastrick Church will be chosen by both congregations and she or he will go on to become the minister of the new congregation when the union takes place. The search for the next minister of Mastrick could not begin until there was an agreed Basis of Deferred Union.

Presbytery noted that at congregational meetings held on Sunday February 28th 2016, the congregations of Summerhill and Mastrick approved a Basis of Deferred Union and Presbytery also approved the Basis of Deferred Union.

Both Mastrick and Summerhill buildings are currently well used by a mixture of business, community and church groups including other denominations and congregations. Following Union the Mastrick building is to be the place of public worship for the united congregation. Presbytery instructed the Planning and Deployment Committee and the Property Committee to undertake a feasibility study for the March 2017 Presbytery meeting with regard to the retention of a building on the current Summerhill site following the Union.

### **Garthdee – Ruthrieston West**

Presbytery noted that discussions regarding a proposed Union within the linkage between Ruthrieston West and Garthdee have now ceased and a possible Union is no longer being explored.

It was agreed that consultation and planning should urgently take place concerning future implementation of the Presbytery Plan for the Garthdee Parish. A Strategy Group was appointed under the convenership of Dr J Graeme Roberts to recommend the way forward for Garthdee linked with Ruthrieston West and to report to the June meeting of Presbytery.

### **Refugee Crisis**

Refugees from Syria are expected to arrive in Aberdeen in March and churches have been invited to play their part in making them welcome and some congregations will be involved.

Presbytery agreed to apply for Corporate Membership of NESCU (North East Scotland Credit Union) to set up a donations account to facilitate the financial needs of the Syrian refugees. A similar model has been adopted by Aberdeenshire Council and is currently facilitated by the Presbytery of Gordon.

### **Other Items**

- The Rev James B Falconer, Hospital Chaplain, intimated that the therapeutic roof garden at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary was now open and thanked all, including churches, who had helped to raise £700,000 for the project.

- The Rev Markus Auffermann, minister at Woodside Parish Church, told Presbytery of an urgent appeal from Instant Neighbour for food donations.
- The Moderator thanked the Readers Prof M D Gray for his many years of service to Presbytery and Mr Gordon Cooper more recently very active at Northfield Parish Church.
- The Rev Ian M Aitken, minister at Stockethill Parish Church was nominated as Moderator of Presbytery for 2016/2017.