

Presbytery Meeting Tuesday 7th February 2017 Summary

The first meeting of Presbytery in 2017 was in February at Holburn West Parish Church having last met there in December 2015. The business included the following:

St Mark's Church and St John's Church for Deaf People

Presbytery noted with sadness that a letter had been received from the Rev Diane Hobson, seeking permission to demit, on the grounds of ill health, from St Mark's Church on 19th February 2017 where she had been inducted in 2010. The request to demit was approved and Mrs Hobson was warmly thanked for her ministry at St Mark's. Presbytery also acknowledged her contribution as Interim Moderator at St John's Church for Deaf People following her resignation from that role.

Presbytery appointed the Rev Scott Rennie to serve as Interim Moderator in the vacancy at St Mark's Church and the Rev Dr Nigel Parker as Interim Moderator at St John's Church for Deaf People.

Path of Renewal

Path of Renewal is an initiative of the Church of Scotland Panel on Review and Reform. It differs from other innovations in that it is explicitly about nurturing discipleship among the Church's existing members with the hope that they will go out and create more disciples. 23 congregations in 2016, from a variety of settings throughout Scotland, embarked on a 3 year pilot scheme in which ministers and congregations undergo a training and monitoring process aimed at discovering how to become missional churches in their communities. A further 15 congregations, which had also applied to take part, are on a less intensively resourced process. There was not a one size fits all programme but each church was putting together a process based on its own situation.

The Rev Neil Meyer, minister at Kintore Parish Church, addressed Presbytery about Path of Renewal and the involvement of his church in the pilot scheme which was aiming to reshape congregations for the 21st century. He recognised that once his church had been at the centre of the community but was now at the edge with the school now at the centre. The idea now is that instead of the old model of the minister being the driving force in the congregation the new model, amongst other things, would have the minister as the enabler to encourage and unleash the talents and gifts of the members to take the church to the people rather than the people to the church.

On Saturday the 25th of March 2017 there will be a Path of Renewal Information Day at Inverurie.

The February 2017 issue of Life and Work has a 4 page article on the Path of Renewal Project entitled "A movement, not a programme."

Congregational Learning

Mrs Ann Smith, Congregational Learning Facilitator spoke about her work during 2016 which is regularly reported by the Presbytery Congregational Support Committee. She is involved in a variety of areas and courses included Exploring Eldership with new elders, workshops on Pastoral Care and Bereavement and a three session course in Leading Funerals. Assisting with "Future Focus" and Local Church reviews were also covered.

Further information is available on the Presbytery website.

Ruthrieston West/Garthdee

The Parish Development Committee (PDC) reported that at congregational meetings held on Sunday 22nd January both Ruthrieston West and Garthdee agreed the severance of their Linkage.

Presbytery approved the Basis of Severance of the Linkage by a vote of 64 for and 0 against and the Clerk was instructed to submit the Basis of Severance to the Ministries Council for its approval.

Presbytery noted that discussions will take place concerning the future of Garthdee and a report will be submitted to Presbytery in March, subject to the Basis of Severance being approved by the Ministries Council.

St Mark's, Queen Street and City Centre Review Presbytery Plan Suspension

The Demission of the Rev Diane Hobson from St Mark's and the subsequent pending vacancy would normally mean that St Mark's be given an Unrestricted Call in line with the Presbytery Plan. However, the question of possible readjustment raised by the Kirk Session of Queen Street, where the minister will retire on April 30th has meant that the Parish Development Committee (PDC) requires time to evaluate the situation with neighbouring congregations being vacant.

In addition, a City Centre Review Group was due to meet with the following remit agreed by Presbytery:

1. To update factual changes to a report of March 2014;
2. To propose a justifiable geographical definition for the City Centre;
3. To define the mission to the City Centre given its uniqueness;
4. To consider how the Church of Scotland can best minister and fulfil its mission to such a geographical area, the Group to report to Presbytery in October 2017.

The PDC believe that the outcome of the City Centre Review Group may have an impact on St Mark's and Queen Street given that St Mark's is within the present city centre area and Queen Street is just outside it.

Presbytery agreed to the suspension of the Presbytery Plan with regard to St Mark's and Queen Street to enable the PDC to enter into discussions with both congregations and to allow time for the City Centre Review Group to present their report to Presbytery.

Church Building Projects

The Presbytery Property Committee reported on projects proposed at Queen's Cross, South St Nicholas Kincorth and St Machar's Cathedral.

Queen's Cross

Presbytery:

1. Agreed in principle to Queen's Cross Church proceeding with a project estimated to cost £250,000 involving the repair of the external fabric, associated internal repairs and redecoration work and the installation of a glass viewing panel, subject to funding being in place, at least three tenders being sought, the approval of the General Trustees and, where applicable, CARTA (Church Art and Architecture Committee).
2. Granted permission to Queen's Cross Church to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund

South St Nicholas Kincorth

Presbytery:

1. Agreed in principle to South St. Nicholas Kincorth proceeding with a project estimated to cost up to £230,000 to replace windows and upgrade kitchen and toilet facilities and install new sanctuary doors, subject to funding being in place, at least three tenders being sought, the approval of the General Trustees and, where applicable, CARTA.
2. Gave permission to South St. Nicholas Kincorth to make application to various sources for funding including the General Trustees and local and wider funding sources

St Machar's Cathedral

Presbytery:

1. Gave permission to St. Machar's Cathedral to proceed with the initial stages of a project estimated to cost £6,000,000, to replace the pews, carry out repairs to the roof, the stained glass windows and the towers and to build an extension to the east of the current church.
2. Noted that when the tendering process has been completed, St Machar's Cathedral will bring full details of costings and sources of funding to Presbytery for its approval.
3. Granted permission to St Machar's Cathedral to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Rev Barry Dunsmore, minister at St Machar's, gave further explanation for the reasons for the proposals:

- First and foremost, St Machar's is a place of worship
- As a tourist attraction, St Machar's attracts 25,000 visitors a year. The Session would wish to see that continue and develop. They consider that there is an opportunity to extend the Interpretation and display facilities which tell the story of the church and community to an even wider audience.
- As a performance venue, St Machar's hosts many concerts every year, with the Bach Choir, Con Anima and the Scottish Ensemble being among regular users. There is currently a lack of storage and green room facilities. Provision of these facilities would allow the cathedral to attract more performers. Audiences currently suffer from the discomfort of the pews and the lack of toilet accommodation.
- The cathedral serves a wide community, many of them students
- The ancient building needs attention

Recognising the existing limitations, the congregation wish to build an extension to the east of the current church, which will be set on the old position of the ancient transepts which fell down in the 17th century. This extension will be on two floors (with a lift) and will house, on the ground floor, toilet accommodation, a new and enhanced shop, and an area for interpretation and display of artefacts. The extension will link into the church at the north east corner. On the first floor there will be a café, a meeting room and replacement office and vestry provision. The café area will be capable of subdivision to allow use on Sundays for Sunday School etc.

The congregation had been advised that these works will cost around £6,000,000. They have developed and are refining a funding strategy. They propose to look for support to a number of funding bodies and to individuals and businesses.

Property Inspections

Property Inspections are an important part of the stewardship of church buildings. It can be a costly exercise yet invaluable to congregation to ascertain the urgent work required, and the long-term planning for maintenance. The Presbytery Business and Finance Committee proposed to put in place a sliding scale of charges to congregations receiving an Inspection based on the level of church income. It was to be noted that Property Inspections for a particular congregation usually cost Presbytery more than £750, so Presbytery continued to support all congregations through paying the difference between the charge made on the congregation and the actual cost of the Inspection.

Presbytery approved the following bandings for receiving payment from congregations for Quinquennial Property Inspections: Congregational income up to £50,000: £250; Congregational income between £50,000 and £100,000: £500; Congregational income above £100,000: £750.

Syrian Refugees

During December, support in practical and hospitable ways continued to be shown to the Syrian Refugees who have arrived in Aberdeen. Brimmond Primary School invited them to the Bucksburn

and Newhills Community Carol Service held at their school, and around 25 Syrians attended. A Service of 9 Lessons and Carols held at St Andrews Cathedral on 18th December gave the opportunity to celebrate the partnership between the church and the Council in the on-going welcome. The Lord Provost spoke in warm terms of the wide practical support given by so many across the city, and the Rev Hugh Wallace, Convener of the Presbytery Church, Society and World Mission Committee was also able to convey the churches' appreciation of the commitment and dedication of Council staff.

Jump Conference

Amongst the intimations was the third annual Jump Conference will take place on Saturday 18th March from 9.30am – 4.30pm at Sheddocksley Baptist Centre. This is a day for all those involved in raising children in Christian faith. The theme of this conference will be 'Jump Into Action', where delegates will be thinking about outreach and mission with Ms Lucy Moore, the founder of Messy Church, in addition to a range of workshops. The conference poses as an opportunity for worship and networking with others. Lunch and refreshment options are included within the £20 ticket price. More about the Conference can be found the Jump! Website <https://jumpaberdeen.org/>

Presbytery also:

- Noted that the former Gilcomston South (dissolved) church building and hall would be sold by the General Trustees to the Gilcomston Trust on March 31st 2017
- Noted that the Rev Matthew Rodger had been appointed as Locum Minister at Garthdee Parish Church from Wednesday 1st March 2017
- Thanked Mr Gordon Cooper for his service at Northfield Church and encouraged him in ongoing service as a Reader
- Congratulated the Rev Daniel Too on successfully fulfilling the necessary programme of familiarisation organised by the Ministry Training Group
- Noted that Mr Bill Mitchell had been appointed to the half time MDS post at St George's Tillydrone as Community Development Worker and that a Service of Introduction would take place at St George's Tillydrone on Sunday 5th March at which the Moderator will preside.