

Presbytery Meeting Tuesday 3rd October 2017 Summary

Mannofield Parish Church was again the venue for the Presbytery meeting. Some of the business was as follows:

South Holburn Parish Church

The Planning and Deployment Committee (PDC) reported to Presbytery in June that talks would take place between South Holburn and Garthdee Parish Churches, about possible union. Following these discussions, it had become clear that union would not be in the best interests of either congregation. Presbytery agreed that the suspension of the Presbytery Plan in relation to South Holburn should be lifted and that South Holburn be granted an Unrestricted Call.

Presbytery noted that discussions continue with regards to the future of **Garthdee Parish Church**.

Helping the Armed Forces Community

Presbytery received a report from the Rev Louis Kinsey of St Columba's Parish Church in his capacity as the Presbytery's Armed Forces Champion.

The Armed Forces Covenant was signed by the Moderator of the General Assembly on 24th June and 14 Presbyteries so far have appointed an Armed Forces Champion. The Covenant represents a promise by the nation that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly. There are around 260,000 veterans in Scotland, almost 6% of the population. When families are added to the number, the Armed Forces community represents almost one in 10 of the country's people.

There are many sources of help for the Armed Forces community and Louis saw his role as helping members of Presbytery to help those in the Armed Forces Community in time of need and he was happy to offer further assistance to Presbyters. Of the agencies providing help he listed three, one of which is:

The Veterans' Gateway, a one-stop portal for service veterans, giving access to a network of organisations, making it easy for veterans and their families to connect with the help, advice and support they need from their first point of contact. Their team of advisors is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Access their help and advice through <https://www.veteransgateway.org.uk> or call 0808 802 1212 to speak to an advisor.

City Centre Review

In March 2014 Presbytery approved a report it had commissioned on the possible development of a mission to the city centre. The report, entitled "Presbytery Report on City Centre Initiative", is available on the Presbytery website under the heading Resources.

In October 2016 Presbytery approved a proposal to set up a City Centre Review Group to report to Presbytery in October 2017 with the remit to:

- Update factual changes to the Presbytery Report on City Centre Initiative of March 2014;
- Propose a justifiable geographical definition for the City Centre;
- Define the mission to the City Centre, given its uniqueness; and,
- Consider how the Church of Scotland can best minister and fulfil its mission to such a geographical area.

At this Presbytery the Review Group reported their conclusions with the observation that the current position, with the Union of the parishes of St Mark's and Queen Street, a vacancy at the new united church, a new Basis of Union agreed, and about to be implemented, had provided

Presbytery with the ideal opportunity to review the position of the City Centre Initiative and its implementation.

The Group was of the opinion that the 2014 Report remained entirely relevant but in the intervening years statistical details had changed.

Presbytery:

1. Noted minor amendments to the City Centre Report of March 2014.
2. Agreed to the adjustment of the City-Centre boundary by the addition of Frederick Street to the NE boundary of the previously agreed limits.
3. Agreed that the mission of the City Centre Initiative should include:
 - a. creating a haven of peace and tranquillity in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the city centre and modern-day living;
 - b. working with other city centre churches, fellowships, and support organisations to the benefit of people of all backgrounds and beliefs who can't find time for, or space within, traditional church structures;
 - c. providing a range of opportunities, based on Christian principles, for worship, prayer, contemplation, community, and hospitality, for all who seek comfort and solace.
4. Encouraged St Mark's Church, when united, and the Kirk of St Nicholas Uniting to consider this review and the original report, both as part of the vacancy process in St Mark's Church and in their future plans with a view to taking a lead role in developing a City Centre Initiative and appoint a Planning and Deployment Committee representative(s) to support the congregation in this development.
5. Instructed the Business & Finance Committee to review, with St Mark's, the progress of a City Centre Initiative after a period of two years.

Gilcomston South (Fabric) Fund

Currently, this money "transferred from the dissolution of Gilcomston South Parish Church can be used to provide grant assistance to congregations...towards the costs of repairs and maintenance of churches, halls and manses."

The Business and Finance Committee proposed and Presbytery agreed that grants from the Fund should be restricted to support congregations without substantial funds, that individual grants should not exceed £10,000 (unless in exceptional circumstances) and that any congregation with available funds of more than £50,000 should not be eligible to apply. Presbytery instructed the Business and Finance Committee to bring forward for approval a revised set of terms for the Fund.

Presbytery Review Pilot

The September Presbytery noted that the Business and Finance Committee had agreed to take part in a pilot scheme initiated by the Church of Scotland 2Legal Questions Committee and the Council of Assembly to trial a new Presbytery Review process. The October Presbytery:

- Noted that, as part of the Presbytery Review Pilot, a team from Stirling Presbytery will review Aberdeen Presbytery; and that Mrs Judith Pearson, Dr Graeme Roberts and the Clerk will form the team to review Hamilton Presbytery.
- Noted the information that Presbytery had been asked to submit for the Presbytery Pilot Review and requested that each Kirk Session provides the Presbytery Office with a description of their congregation in no more than fifty words by 31 October 2017.

- Requested Presbyters to note that, as part of the Presbytery Review Pilot process, Presbytery will hold a conference to discuss its aims and objectives for the next five years (provisional date 20 January 2018).

Ministry and Mission (M&M) Contributions

At the March 2017 meeting of Presbytery, it was agreed that the Congregational Stewardship Committee assess bids for a reduction in Ministries and Mission contributions against the following priorities:

1. Mission Projects
2. Unexpected Repairs
3. Shortfalls in M&M contributions

At the September Presbytery meeting reductions in M&M contributions were agreed for two churches and following a further round of requests, including clarifications from previous requests, the Congregational Stewardship Committee felt that sufficient evidence was provided by another three churches to also merit a reduction. Presbytery agreed the reductions and noted an additional funding allowance reserved for St Nicholas South of Kincorth contingent on the approval of its proposed refurbishment by the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland.

Presbytery noted the balance of available funding of the 5% of Ministries and Mission contributions retained by Presbytery as at October 2017 was £42,579 or £37,579 if the allowance for South St Nicholas Kincorth is used. Any funding unused at the end of December will be carried forward to 2018.

2018 Year of Young People

2018 has been designated Year of Young People by the Scottish Government. The Church of Scotland Mission and Discipleship council is currently working on a 'Toolkit' of resources and ideas for congregations to mark the year. This toolkit will be available in autumn 2017.

Presbytery noted the information on 2018 Year of Young people and invited congregations to speak to their young people's groups and group leaders and seek suggestions for an event or activity which could be organised across Presbytery.

Presbytery Youth Delegate to General Assembly 2017

Last year only 27 of the 46 Presbyteries of the Church of Scotland sent a youth representative to the General Assembly, and that figure was up slightly on previous years! For the last three years Aberdeen Presbytery has sent a youth representative and the Congregational Support Committee are keen to continue this trend. This is a worthwhile experience for the young person, and previous Presbytery representatives had given very positive reports to Presbytery of their attendance at the General Assembly.

Presbytery encouraged congregations to identify a young person (18-25) who can represent Aberdeen Presbytery at the General Assembly 2018 as the youth representative and to contact the Congregational Support Committee convener for an application and role description.

Presbytery Also:

- Warmly congratulated the Rev Dr Henry Sefton on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of his Ordination on 15th September 1957.
- Warmly congratulated the Rev Andrew M Douglas on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of his Ordination on the 18th of September 1957.

- Noted the distribution of funds totalling £3,500 from the former Malawi Committee to various charities in Malawi.
- Encouraged congregations to engage with the World Mission Theme for this year - Women in the World Church.
- Encouraged all congregations within Presbytery to consider Twinning.
- Received the report of the Local Church Review of Bridge of Don Oldmachar Parish Church from the Visitation and Oversight Committee.

Intimations included:

- The Scottish Bible Society, Aberdeen Action Group Annual Fund-raising Quiz Night which will be held at the Hebron Evangelical Church, Summer Street for 7pm on Saturday 28th October. This will be a general knowledge quiz, with the quiz master Mr Alan Millar, There will be a charge of £5 per person with refreshments available during the interval. Teams of four (or more) are welcome and all are encouraged to consider attending this worthwhile fundraiser to support the work of the society.
- On behalf of the Rev Ron Flett, Aberdeen City Centre Chaplain for Workplace Chaplaincy Scotland, a gentle reminder of their work within the city is offered as is an invitation to anybody who may wish to consider involvement with the organisation or to any congregation who may wish to hear more of the work of Workplace Chaplaincy. Please contact Mr Flett direct at the following email address - ron.flett@wpcscotland.co.uk alternatively, please telephone Mr Flett on 07508 654 423 or contact him via his office at the Aberdeen Citadel, 28 Castle Street, Aberdeen, AB11 5BG. Further information on Workplace Chaplaincy can be accessed at www.wpcscotland.co.uk
- Sue Ryder Care provide a free service for people with neurological conditions (such as MS, Stroke or Parkinsons disease) who are living at home. The aim of the service is to reduce social isolation and improve the general well-being of people living with a long term neuro condition. Assistance is available to aid those who require help with accessing groups and activities in their local area. Furthermore, the charity offer information and signposting to relevant services to service users and their carers. The charity is keen to source volunteers across the city who might assist them in their self-management service. Please share the contact details for the charity as follows telephone 01224 896 339 email: outreach.support@sueryder.org
- A reminder is offered to all to be aware of potential internet and telephone scams. A recent reminder has been received from the Law Department of the Church of Scotland with regards to a group identifying itself as "Child Safety" and/or "Children's Advisory Services" ("CAS"), who may be targeting churches and businesses across the UK for financial gain. This issue came to light in September 2016 and it appears that the same tactics are being used once again. The Law Department advises that congregations should be vigilant with regard to any approach from any third parties and should as a matter of good practice consider the background of any organisation requesting funds or proposing business dealings with them. The Law Department advises that a check of Companies House can offer some information as to the authenticity of a company, as can a check for fraudulent scams on www.actionfraudalert.co.uk. If in doubt, please consider contacting the Law Department of the Church of Scotland for further advice.
- A request has been received from the Rev Markus Auffermann from Woodside Parish Church to query if any congregation may have pew cushions that may be surplus to

requirements to consider passing these to Woodside. Please contact the Rev Markus Auffermann at MAuffermann@churchofscotland.org.uk to discuss further.