

MODERATOR OF PRESBYTERY

Rev Keith Blackwood

May 2017 – May 2018

PRESBYTERY CLERK

Rev Dr John A Ferguson

ADMINISTRATOR

Mrs Cheryl Watt

PRESBYTERY TREASURER

Mr Alan Morrison

NOTES FOR THE PRESBYTERY YEARBOOK

PRESBYTERY OFFICE

The Presbytery Office is located at Mastrick Parish Church and is usually open on weekdays from 9.30am to 12.30pm. The office is staffed by the Presbytery Administrator, Mrs Cheryl Watt. Cheryl will be the first point of contact for many matters, but if need arises she will refer matters to the Clerk, the Rev Dr John Ferguson.

The office will be closed on the following dates:

- 25th and 26th December, 1st and 2nd January
- Good Friday and Easter Monday
- Local holiday Mondays in April, July and September
- May Holiday Monday

MINISTERS IN CHARGES

Sickness: All Ministers (and others) paid through the centralised payment scheme of the Church must report all absence from work due to sickness (irrespective of how short the absence may be or whether or not a Sunday is involved) to the Ministries Council. Ministries Council staff should be informed by telephone immediately the absence begins. The "Notification of absence Through Illness" form should be returned to the Ministries Council on return to duty or after 7 days. It is necessary to attach a Doctor's Certificate covering the period of illness. Certificates should be submitted regularly and the final certificate will show the date of return to work. When a Congregational Treasurer incurs expenditure in providing pulpit supply as a result of the minister or trainee being absent through illness, full cost of pulpit supply will be refunded, provided application is made in the appropriate pro-forma return and that the absentee has previously advised the Ministries Council. In addition to those regulations Ministers are instructed to inform the Presbytery Clerk of their illness without delay so that Pastoral Care, assistance with Supply, or an Interim Moderator may be arranged if required. There is a Presbytery Sick Supply Fund which operates at the discretion of the Business and Finance Committee to provide assistance in situations, arising from illness affecting a minister, which is not covered by the receipt of State Benefits. The Paton Trust and the Cintra Bequest provides for ministers, who have been ill, to have a recuperative holiday. Application forms are available from the Presbytery Clerk.

Care & Support: The Presbytery operates a Pastoral Care Scheme for all ministers and Ministries Development Staff. This is overseen by the Ministries Committee. Ministers are encouraged to seek fellowship within a local fraternal.

Study Leave: The national Study Leave Scheme is operated under the direction of the Ministries Committee in consultation with the Ministries Council. Application Forums are available from the Ministries Council or via the Church of Scotland website and a copy should be submitted to Presbytery as well as the Ministries Council.

Chaplaincies: Where requests to become a chaplain come from within their own parish, ministers are free to accept such chaplaincies, recognising the advisability of informing their Kirk Session of such acceptance. Where the proposed chaplaincy extends beyond their parish, and/or exists out with their parish, then ministers should (a) inform their Kirk Session, (b) receive the permission of the minister of the parish(es) in which they would exercise that chaplaincy, and (c) inform Presbytery of the proposed appointment. Where any chaplaincy attracts payment for services rendered, the authority of Presbytery must be given before the appointment can be confirmed. In the interests of their health and the good name of the Church ministers are encouraged to follow similar procedures when considering other appointments out with their congregations.

Marriages, Funerals, etc. : A minister should not refuse to perform ministerial functions for a person who is resident in his or her parish without sufficient reason. When a minister is ill, away from home, or otherwise engaged, it is his/her duty to arrange for a deputy and to inform others who need to know of those arrangements. Ministers are reminded of the laws regarding "intrusion in another's parish" and that if they are considering ministering to non-members in another's parish then courtesy demands that they first contact the parish minister. No Church of Scotland minister should charge or receive a fee for a service but an unsolicited gift may be accepted. The Church of Scotland is the National Church and, as such, its ministry and its congregations' parochial responsibilities extend beyond its membership to those who do not profess allegiance to the Church. Marriages should normally take place in church though increasingly ministers are asked to officiate elsewhere and may do so using their discretion. A minister should not allow his or her name to be associated with any commercial undertaking that provides facilities for weddings and should not publicise in any way his or her availability to conduct marriages. (Fuller guidelines may be found in "Code of Good Practice for the Conduct of Marriage Services" in the 1997 Reports to the General Assembly page 1/10). Extract available from the Presbytery Office if required.

CONGREGATIONS

It is the responsibility of the Presbytery Elder to pass on information from Presbytery and its Committees to their congregation and to ensure that deadlines are met with regard to Annual Statistical returns, Inspection of Records, Nominations to Presbytery, etc.

Property Regulations: Presbytery requires that all proposed alterations, together with any repairs exceeding £12,500 per annum for Category 2 Buildings* and exceeding £25,000 per annum for Category 1 Buildings* should be submitted to the Presbytery Property Committee in good time for its meeting, along with relevant forms and plans. (As of June 2008 all current buildings are classed as Category 1, but this may be subject to future revision). All alterations and any repairs costing in excess of £50,000, including expenditure on repairs over the preceding three years and the coming three years, are required to be transmitted by Presbytery to the General Trustees for their approval.

Ministry and Mission Contributions : Attention is drawn to all congregations to the arrangements for Ministry and Mission payments. Each congregation should transmit its required contribution in ten or twelve equal monthly payments during the financial year by bank standing order, unless permission is granted annually by Presbytery to allow payments to be made under some other arrangement. If a shortfall in payments should arise, Presbytery will record these annually in the Presbytery Minutes and shall consult with the office-bearers of the congregation/s concerned. It is important that congregations keep the Congregational Stewardship Committee fully informed of any anticipated shortfalls in contributions. A congregation may request a reduction in its contribution against the following criteria: A new mission project, unexpected repairs, or if a congregation is forecasting an inability to meet requested contributions and can demonstrate why these cannot be met. Such requests must be submitted in writing by the first week in August each year to the Congregational Stewardship Committee.

ALL applications to the Property Committee must be accompanied by a full description of the proposed works, a set of drawings where appropriate and the relevant application forms (available from the Presbytery Office, electronically if required). Failure to submit completed forms can result in delay at Presbytery or the

General Trustees. Early contact helps to ensure that timely advice is given.

In the event that repairs are urgently necessary in the interests of safety or to maintain the building in a wind and water tight condition, the work can proceed without prior consent but must be reported to the Presbytery Property Committee as soon as possible, evidence of three competitive tenders must be produced.

Where there is doubt whether work is an alteration or a repair, the matter should be raised with the Presbytery Property Committee for clarification. Congregations are reminded that expenditure on property is approved by Presbytery without prejudice to any future negotiations on readjustment. When work on a heating system is involved, prior consultation with the Church's Energy Consultant is mandatory. Where work on lighting or sound systems is contemplated then it is recommended that advice be sought from the Consultants on these matters appointed by the General Trustees.

Congregations must maintain an appropriate level of Buildings Insurance on all buildings in its care. Decisions on this should be recorded in the Property Register. The Register should be kept up to date and the year's log of inspection and work completed. The Register should be submitted to the Congregation's Financial Court at the first meeting of the year prior to submission for Presbytery's inspection. Five yearly inspections of property by Professional Surveyors are also made according to an approved rota. Congregations are normally expected to meet the cost of these. Attention is drawn to the need to complete and maintain a Manse Condition Report (Act XII 2007)

Examination of Records: During the last week of February the following congregational records are inspected: Kirk Session Minutes Book, Congregational Roll and Supplementary Roll, Baptismal Register, Minutes Book of the appropriate Financial Board where applicable, Property Register and Safeguarding Register. If Statements of Accounts are ready, three copies, duly signed by the auditors and approved at a meeting of the Trustees, may be transmitted via the examining committee for the use of Presbytery. If Statements of Accounts are not ready, then, as soon as possible and not later than 31st March, the Congregational Treasurer should send three copies to the Presbytery Office marked for the attention of the Secretary of the Congregational Stewardship Committee. On the same date, a set of accounts must also be sent to 121 and, once approved by the Committee, a set should be sent to OSCR not later than the 30th September.

Please note that approved congregational accounts must be received by a congregation at the Stated Annual Meeting, or equivalent Congregational Meeting in the case of congregations not having the Model Deed of Constitution, such Meeting to be held not later than the 30th day of June following the financial year-end date

Annual Assessment: Assessment for Presbyterial Expenses is made at annually approved rates.

Pulpit Supply: The General Assembly has determined that the payment of pulpit supply shall be at a standard fee of £55 where there is only one diet of worship on a Sunday; £15 for each additional diet of worship; and in all cases necessary travelling expenses to be paid at the rate of 25p per mile. Congregational Treasurers are asked to make payment of appropriate fees and expenses on the same day as supply is provided.

Commissions to Assembly: The Rota for Kirk Sessions to appoint Commissioners to the General Assembly is printed on page 13. Other Commissions may be granted to Ministers and Elders Elected by Presbytery subject to them having attended at least five meetings of Presbytery for ordinary business in the previous twelve months. Due allowance is made for illness or special circumstances. Applications for any other vacancies which may occur may be made by other Elders, not members of Presbytery, and will be approved according to order of application.

Vacancies & Calls: Guidelines for Nominating Committees and Interim Moderators are sent by the Ministries Council on intimation of a vacancy. Details of vacancy procedures and schedules are printed in the Church of Scotland Year Book but may be obtained electronically from the Presbytery Office. An Interim Moderator cannot be expected to cope with all the requirements of another Parish. Kirk Sessions should consider what pastoral provisions can be given from the congregation and whether or not a Locum should also be

appointed.

The Vacancy Procedure Committee has been entrusted to act on non-controversial vacancy matters and will seek to expedite matters by issuing an edict to the congregation with the intended action and informing full members of Presbytery. Where this is done electronically, Presbyters receiving the notice should ensure that all other Presbyters in their congregation are informed without delay. The action will be final unless four members object within the time stated in which case proceedings will be cited and will be dealt with at Presbytery. In consultation with Interim Moderator and Advisory Committee a Kirk Session should prepare a detailed profile of their congregation and parish with attention being paid to their vision of their ministry and mission in the foreseeable future. Attention is drawn to the 2007 Discrimination Act. The Manse will be inspected prior to an Induction date being finalised to ensure that all necessary works have been completed and the Call will not be sustained unless the manse meets all requirements.

Minutes: By taking part in a debate all contributors (whether a member or not) are deemed to have given permission for a minute of their contribution to be taken and recorded as required by Church Law. The minutes will also be available on the Presbytery website (behind a password) which will be issued to members and corresponding members. Others may be granted access at the discretion of the Business & Finance Committee. Care should be taken to ensure that minutes are used only for church purposes and in accordance with the Data Protection Registration. Presbyters are instructed to draw this to the attention of their Kirk Sessions and any delegations attending Presbytery meetings. The Clerk and Administrator as permission to issue Extract Minutes to other courts of the Church and to organisations and individuals as the business of the Presbytery requires.

Presbytery Mission Development Leader: The post of Presbytery Mission Development Leader has two roles:

1. To help the Presbytery as a body develop its mission to the whole of our city and
2. to assist congregations in their mission.

The Development Leader is therefore available to help local congregations through inspiring, training, facilitating and supporting them as they develop new initiatives or redevelop existing ones.

Civil Law & the Church: Please consult Law Circulars issued by the Solicitor of the Church on all manner of areas where the civil law impinges on the Church. This can be accessed online from the Church of Scotland website.