

Presbytery Meeting Tuesday 6th October 2015 Summary

Holburn West Parish Church was the venue for the October Presbytery meeting and the business included the following:

On-going Response to Refugee Crisis

The Convener of the Presbytery Church, Society and World Mission Committee and the Deputy Bishop were invited to attend a planning meeting of the Refugee Crisis and Syrian Resettlement Scheme on 14th September at Marischal College. In attendance were representatives from Council Departments - Education & Children's Services, Communities, Housing & Infrastructure, and Health & Social Care. John Tomlinson representing the Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations (ACVO) and Dr Haque of the Islamic Centre also attended. It was stated that refugees arriving in the UK from Syrian Refugee Camps would be received under the Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme. This would mean a five year protection from public funds and assistance with family reunion and access to the labour market.

A "multi-agency taskforce" has been formed and a meeting on 1st October attended by representatives from Presbytery was told that around 100 refugees would be allocated to Aberdeen over the next five years. Aberdeen City Council is looking with Housing Associations to find appropriate locations within communities. It has been decided that there is too much risk to have refugees staying with families. A Welcome Pack is to be produced in English and Arabic – most refugees are only Arabic speakers. The Muslim community expressed its willingness to work with other faith communities in offering welcome and support to whoever arrives in Aberdeen. It is expected that the first group of 8 – 10 should arrive in Aberdeen before Christmas.

Presbytery welcomed the opportunities for the Faith Community to work with other agencies in providing a warm welcome to refugees arriving in Aberdeen from Syrian Camps, and encouraged on-going discussions and plans to ensure a compassionate and appropriate integration into communities around the city.

Dig It! 2015

Presbytery received a talk from Dr Jeff Sanders, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Project Manager for Dig It! 2015 which is a year-long celebration of Scottish archaeology. It is co-ordinated by two charities – the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and Archaeology Scotland. The Society promotes research into the past and Archaeology Scotland focuses on education, promotion and support of our archaeological heritage.

During the year, Dig It! 2015 has offered a wide variety of events giving young people and adults the chance to discover and tell Scotland's stories through archaeology. Over 365 events were scheduled with more added

from the Orkney Islands to the Scottish Borders. It is expected there will have been over 1,000 events by the end of the year. The overarching theme is "identities", the connection of people to place over time – a theme that has given the opportunity for everyone to get involved.

Dr Sanders spoke about events ranging from excavations in Orkney to theatre productions with an archaeology connection and an archaeology photography competition. Also mentioned was a Jacobite exhibition which finishes on the 24th October at the Tolbooth Museum Aberdeen.

Next year there are plans for a MOOC (massive open online course) focusing on pilgrimage in the north east of Scotland.

Ministry and Mission Contribution 5% Retention

Presbytery noted that the Conveners of the Congregational Stewardship, Congregational Support, Ministries, Planning & Deployment and Visitation & Oversight Committees will produce a discussion paper exploring how Presbytery might best use the 5% retained from the annual Ministries and Mission contribution (£83,000 in 2016) in a strategic way to address the opportunities and challenges facing congregations in Aberdeen over the next five years.

Queen's Cross/St George's Tillydrone

Queen's Cross Church had sold the house it owned on Forest Road, Aberdeen. 5% of the amount accrued from the sale required to be donated to the Go For It Fund and 5% to a local project at the discretion of the Presbytery.

It was agreed that the 5% local project allocation, amounting to £35,000, should be given to St George's Tillydrone Church for its plans to refurbish and upgrade the building.

Training in Leading Funerals

The Congregational Support Committee plans to offer three workshops in late February/early March 2016 in response to the need for people other than Ministers to be equipped to lead funerals. A leaflet with information for a church magazine article and guidance for Kirk Sessions was issued.

Learn Materials

The Congregational Support Committee reported that the Mission and Discipleship Council has released a new Learn booklet, 'How Will Our Children Have Faith?' This is a discussion starter document aimed at Kirk Sessions or groups working with children in churches in order to promote discussion about this area of mission and ministry.

A second Learn booklet, 'Exploring Faith', is available for pre-order with special introductory pricing. This is a larger booklet aimed at new communicants or enquirers groups.

Both of these publications can be ordered from <https://www.resourcingmission.org.uk/shop>.

Presbytery encouraged Kirk Sessions to utilise those materials.

Mission and Older People

The Mission Forum of the Church of Scotland has created a resource to enable a greater dialogue about mission with and to older people. Online videos are provided free by means of introduction with more information at <https://www.resourcingmission.org.uk/mission/mission-and-older-people>.

A full Study Guide is available to purchase at a cost of £7.50 including DVD from <https://www.resourcingmission.org.uk/shop/mission-and-older-people-study-guide>.

Local Church Review: Proposal for Follow-Up

As part of Presbytery's support for Local Church Review, the Visitation and Oversight Committee and the Congregational Support Committee proposed to pilot a series of follow-up visits to those churches which were reviewed in the first round. These visits would be primarily pastoral – to find out how the Action Plan is progressing and to offer support where appropriate.

It was envisaged that these follow-up visits would be led by a member of the team which reviewed the church plus a member of the Congregational Support Committee. They would meet with the minister and session clerk to find out how the church's plan is progressing and, where there are particular challenges, to consider how these might be addressed and any implications for Presbytery.

The outcome would be a brief report, agreed by both parties, for consideration by the two Committees and by the Kirk Session.

Presbytery approved the proposal to pilot a series of follow-up visits to Dyce, Holburn West, Northfield, St Columba's and St Stephen's to find out how their Action Plans are progressing and to offer support where appropriate.

Presbytery also:

- Was informed that the Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Angus Morrison urges congregations to sign a petition in support of the #UpForSchool - <http://www.aworldatschool.org/upforschool> campaign. And to view

a short video specially commissioned by the Church

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0xcN9j_Ttc

- Warmly congratulated Miss Moyra McCallum on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of her commissioning as a Deaconess on 17th October 1965
- Received an email from Anne Woolridge of Tern Television with regards to Songs of Praise to be recorded at St Machar Cathedral in November
- Noted that the Ministries Council Training Task Group has sustained the Probationary Period for Dr Joseph Somevi for the Ordained Local Ministry
- Agreed that Dr Somevi will be available as a Presbytery wide resource for six months with a focus on his Ministry of Prayer, thereafter his deployment to be considered as part of the review of Additional Ministries
- Agreed that the Service of Ordination of Dr Joe Somevi as an Ordained Local Minister will take place at Newhills Parish Church on Wednesday November 11th 2015 at 7.00 pm.
- Welcomed the launch of the Living Well Cafes in Newhills and Oldmachar Churches bringing support to those dealing with memory loss and dementia, along with their carers.
- Encouraged congregations to consider the possibility of Living Well Cafes in their areas and parishes in the future.