

Presbytery Meeting Tuesday 7th March 2017 Summary

The March meeting of Presbytery was in the unusual setting of Aberdeen Town House where Presbytery was welcomed by Andrew Lawtie, Vice Lord Lieutenant Aberdeen. The business included the following:

Work Place Chaplaincy Scotland (WPCS)

WPCS aims to offer relevant pastoral & spiritual support to people where they are – in the setting of their daily work and individual lives. The chaplain is available to all of all denominations or none, from the managing director to the new-start apprentice.

Before introducing the Rev Ron Flett, a chaplain with WPCS, Chic Lidstone of WPCS told Presbytery that the organisation was growing with over 100 chaplains throughout Scotland and 12 full time staff. Ron Flett had come to Aberdeen in 2013 and spoke of how he had developed relationships with the City Council, where he now has access to all areas, staff in the shopping centres and the Fire and Rescue Service along with others. Surprise to see a work place chaplain had been the initial reaction when first making contacts but now he is welcomed in all the places he visits.

A package of information about WPCS was given to each congregation. It had details of an Introduction Evening to be held at the Salvation Army Citadel in Aberdeen on Tuesday 25th April from 7-9 pm.

Malawi Partnership

In 2007 the Presbyteries of Aberdeen and Blantyre entered into a formal Partnership Agreement to strengthen the relationship between the Presbyteries which was expressed through congregational linkages and exchange visits. The Partnership served both Presbyteries well and many congregations and individuals greatly profited from it.

By agreement, the Partnership was reviewed every three years and where appropriate renewed, the last time being in 2014. It was due to be renewed or expire in September 2017. The Aberdeen Presbytery Malawi Partnership Committee proposed that to more effectively strengthen and support congregational relationships, support church projects and improve exchange visits between the two countries, a shift in focus was necessary.

Presbytery supported the shift in focus of the work in Malawi from the Presbytery level to the congregational level and agreed the natural expiration of the formal partnership between Aberdeen City Presbytery and Blantyre City Presbytery.

New Committee World Mission and Partnership

After a period of discussion between the Presbytery Church and Society and Malawi Partnership Committees agreement was reached on the way forward for Presbytery's ongoing oversight and support of national and worldwide issues including partnerships. Following further discussions and a review, a new World Mission and Partnerships Committee is to be formed which will continue the work of the Malawi Partnership Committee and include any other partnerships between congregations in Presbytery and those overseas.

Presbytery:

- Approved the readjustment to the Presbytery Committee Structure.
- Noted that the sections of the Church and Society Committee's remit relating to World Mission matters would be remitted to the new World Mission and Partnerships Committee.

- Noted the decision of the Malawi Partnership Committee to dissolve and pass matters relating to congregational partnerships with Malawi congregations to the new World Mission and Partnerships Committee.
- Approved the new remits for the World Mission and Partnerships Committee and the adjusted remit of the Church and Society Committee.

City-wide Prayer Gatherings

The Prayer Gatherings, which take place on the third Friday of the month, were started on 5th August 2014 in response to the sufferings of peoples in Iraq and Syria. Since then, events have been held at 27 different venues with 9 different denominations represented. The last Gathering was at St Ninian's Episcopal Church with 14 different congregations attending representing 7 different denominations. The next Gathering is at Newhills Church on Friday 17th March.

Presbytery welcomed the spread of denominations and churches participating in the city-wide Prayer Gatherings and continued to commend them to all congregations.

Refugees

The Presbytery Church, Society and World Mission Committee reported that the weekly Drop-in for Syrian Refugees continues at the Citadel, and requests for donations still result in a positive and generous response. At Mastrick Church a Pop-up Café takes place for pre-school children on a monthly basis. It should be noted that this facility is not just for Syrians but for all who have found their way to Aberdeen.

A Radio Workshop was arranged at Crown Terrace Methodist Church from 25th – 27th February when refugees were encouraged and enabled to tell their stories as they have fled their country.

Presbytery noted with interest the continuing work of the churches in support of refugees into the city and encouraged all to pray for this work.

Ministry and Mission Discretionary Allowance

In September 2016, Presbytery agreed that from 2017 the conveners of Business and Finance, Planning and Deployment, Congregational Support and Congregational Stewardship, along with the Presbytery Clerk, would meet annually to provide an agreed framework of priorities within which decisions about the use of the Presbytery's Ministry and Mission allowance are made.

The Congregational Stewardship Committee, in considering applications for support, will therefore work to the following prioritised framework in 2017 -

1. **Mission** – any church, or churches carrying out a new mission project. Churches would have to demonstrate that the cost of the project would take funds away from ongoing expenditure
2. **Unexpected Repairs** – any church facing expenditure which could not have been anticipated at the start of the year
3. **Forecast shortfall in M & M contributions** – any church forecasting an inability to meet requested contributions should demonstrate why these cannot be met.

The current balance of funds stands at £66,329.

Presbytery encouraged any church, or group of churches, to consider using the Discretionary Allowance for mission oriented projects and to apply for funding.

Local Church Reviews

The Presbytery Visitation and Oversight Committee was pleased to report that it had completed

reviews of thirteen churches since October 2013 and was due to complete the reviews of a further ten by the end of 2017. Presbytery approved the recommendation that Queen's Cross, Ruthrieston West, St Machar's Cathedral, St Nicholas South of Kincorth and Torry St Fittick's Parish Churches be reviewed in 2017-18 and also approved that follow-up visits be paid in 2017 to Cults, Mannofield and South Holburn Parish Churches.

Mission and Older People Study Guide

The Presbytery Congregational Support Committee reported that this publication and DVD resource produced on behalf of the Church of Scotland Mission Forum is designed for group use to think about how we minister to and think about mission both by and to older people. In congregations that are in large part comprising an aging membership this is a relevant theme to consider.

Video resources are provided along with discussion questions and other activities which can be used in different settings. Currently the Study Guide is on special offer at half the usual price (£3.75 +P&P). More at <https://www.resourcingmission.org.uk/shop/mission-and-older-people-study-guide>.

Presbytery commended the Guide to Kirk Sessions and congregations.

Community Heat System

Presbytery noted that The General Trustees' Fabric Committee have agreed to make available a grant of £15,000 from the Priority Areas Budget to enable St. George's Tillydrone to meet the costs of connection to Aberdeen City Council's new community heat system.

The system which St George's will connect to is called the City Combined Heat and Power Network. It provides energy efficient, low cost, low carbon heating in 33 multi storey blocks, 2 sheltered housing blocks and 15 public buildings in the city.

The schemes provide electricity to the national grid or to local buildings and district heating Networks; providing more affordable running costs, and reducing the CO2 emissions from properties connected within the schemes. Buildings connected to the schemes have seen emissions reduced by approximately 56% and fuel bills by up to 50%.

Uplift of Waste, Garden Waste and Recycling

Presbytery noted the new arrangements from Aberdeen City Council for the collection of Waste, Garden Waste and Recycled products and further noted that the new arrangements came into operation on Monday 6th March 2017. Each church from then is entitled to 1x180L domestic household waste black bin, 1x240L garden waste brown bin and 1x 240L mixed recycling bin. Anything additional would need to be paid for.

Presbytery also:

- Nominated the Rev Keith Blackwood, minister at Mannofield, as Moderator of Presbytery for 2017/2018
- Approved the request of the Rev Dr Graham Deans to demit his charge on April 30th 2017. He was warmly thanked for his ministry at Queen Street Church and service to Church and Presbytery in many ways.
- Warmly congratulated the Rev Duncan Eddie on the 25th anniversary of his Ordination on January 16th 1992
- Thanked the Readers, Gordon Cooper and Prof MD Gray for their ministries and services to Presbytery
- Approved the appointment of Dr Graeme Roberts as Convener of the Business and Finance Committee from May 1st 2017 and the Rev David Stewart as Convener of the Congregational Support Committee from June 1st 2017
- Approved the nomination of the Rev Dr Flora Munro as Presbytery's representative on the Aberdeen Endowment Trust.
- Received the Report of the Presbytery Safeguarding Contact Mrs Eunice McConnach who

- thanked Mrs Ann Hepburn for her work as Safeguarding Trainer
- Noted that the severance of the linkage between Garthdee and Ruthrieston West had taken place, after approval was received from the Ministries Council. Discussions had begun between the Presbytery Planning and Deployment Committee and Garthdee Kirk Session with a proposal to be brought to Presbytery as soon as possible
 - Noted that all congregational records were inspected on February 22nd 2017 and the majority were found to be satisfactory and thanked the Inspection Team and Presbytery Administrator for organising the Inspection.

Intimations included:

Faith, Family and Film Evenings

St George's Tillydrone are to host "Faith, Family and Film" evenings starting from Tuesday 28th February at 7pm. This will be a regular, monthly, screening of a mainstream movie that will help promote discussion of many varied aspects of faith. Mr Bill Mitchell, MDS would welcome any queries regarding the idea and programme and is keen to welcome and explore options for working with other churches and faith groups. Please contact Mr Mitchell at FFF@Tillydrone.Church

Luther for the Church – 500 Years On

The Centre for Ministry Studies will host a conference titled 'Luther for the Church – 500 years on'. This day conference will take place at the Sir Duncan Rice Library within the University of Aberdeen on Saturday 20th May 2017. Booking is available by contacting the Centre on 01224 272138 alternatively, please access the website at www.abdn.ac.uk/sdhp/centreministrystudies