

Presbytery Meeting Tuesday 7th November 2017 Summary

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

Aberdeen City Council Gomel Trust

Presbytery received a report from the Rev Duncan Eddie, Presbytery representative on the Aberdeen City Council Gomel Trust Committee, following his visit to Gomel along with two others from the Committee.

Gomel is the second largest city in Belarus with a population of about 492,000. It was deeply affected by the Chernobyl disaster in 1986. A twinning agreement was arranged between Gomel and Aberdeen in 1990 and the Aberdeen Gomel Trust was set-up in 1991. It is composed of councillors, medical and scientific specialists as well as representatives of universities and churches. The Trust addresses and helps to resolve the medical, nutritional, social and spiritual problems experienced by the people of Gomel.

Duncan was impressed by the reconstruction of Gomel that had taken place since the destruction during the 2nd World War and was inspired by the Belarusian people who valued the spiritual dimension of life. The medical staff he met also impressed him with their commitment, dedication and care for the whole person, body, mind, and spirit.

Data Protection

New legislation about data protection is due to come into force on 25th May 2018. A new Data Protection Act will replace the Data Protection Act 1998 in the UK and will incorporate the EU's General Data Protection Regulation into UK law. All organisations handling individuals' personal information will be obliged to act in accordance with best practice or face the prospect of significant fines for non-compliance.

Information about the new Act is to be placed on the Church of Scotland web site in due course. The Law Department is working on updating the existing suite of data protection guidance/forms and drafting new policies and forms, including a data retention policy and privacy notices. Everyone involved in handling or storing personal data will require to be aware of their duties under the new legislation.

Presbytery noted that all Presbyteries and congregations are being encouraged by the Law Department of the Church of Scotland to undertake a Data Audit prior to the introduction of the new UK Data Protection Act on May 25th 2018.

The new legislation provides an incentive to consider what information is being held and whether it might be time to let go of anything that is no longer required.

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."

At the October meeting, Presbytery instructed the Business and Finance Committee to bring forward for approval a revised set of terms for the Fund. Consequently, Presbytery approved the following proposed revised terms for the Gilcomston South (Fabric) Fund: "Money transferred from the dissolution of Gilcomston South Parish Church to be used to provide grant assistance to eligible congregations within the bounds of the Presbytery of Aberdeen towards the cost of repairs and maintenance of churches, halls and manses. To be eligible a congregation must have no more

than £50,000 of available unrestricted funds. Except in exceptional circumstances, individual grants will not exceed £10,000.”

Presbytery approved a request from Torry St Fittick's Parish Church for a grant from the Fund towards the cost of roof repairs and a request from St Stephen's for a grant from the Fund towards the cost of replacing their boiler.

Presbytery Post of Mission Development and Planning Worker

Following the approval of the Principles of Presbytery Planning at the June meeting Presbytery agreed the termination of the Mission Development Leader Post and approved the creation of a new full time Presbytery post with the remit to take a lead role in the future of Presbytery Planning as defined by Ministries Council.

Presbytery noted that the post of Presbytery Mission Development and Planning Worker had been approved by the Ministries Council and that the post holder, the Rev Phil Lightbody, who had previously been the Mission Development Leader, had taken up his new appointment. A Job Description for the new post was attached to the report of the Planning and Deployment Committee (PDC).

“Ministry Hubs and Our Shared Future” Presbytery Conference

Aberdeen Presbytery was represented at a Ministries Council Conference on November 1st and 2nd by the Rev Dr John Ferguson, Rev Scott Rennie and Rev Phil Lightbody. They are now more fully appraised of the Church of Scotland proposals for the management of the Ministry and Mission of the church in the future. Details of the Aberdeen Presbytery Conference on 18th November at South Holburn Parish Church had been circulated to all congregations. It will be an opportunity for the hoped for two delegates from each congregation as well as ministers or their representatives to hear about proposals for the future and to share in discussions on these matters.

Presbytery strongly encouraged all congregations across Presbytery to attend the “Ministry Hubs and Our Shared Future” Conference.

Response to the City Centre Review Group Report

Presbytery noted that the Planning and Deployment Committee (PDC) will seek to support the united charge of St Mark's, alongside the Kirk of St Nicholas Uniting, in developing a City Centre initiative, whilst recognising the time that will be needed to consider the human resource implications of City Centre ministry and the exploration of funding sources.

The Committee had agreed that at present it should not be assumed that the 1FTE Minister post, available after the union of St Mark's and Queen Street Churches, would automatically be allocated immediately to the City Centre, nor that it should be allowed to remain unfilled indefinitely.

West End Churches Joint Youth Worker Post

The proposal to set up a post for joint working with young people in the parishes of Holburn West, Midstocket, Queen's Cross and Rubislaw, which was considered during the review of the Presbytery Plan in 2016 (and regrettably was unable to be met from Presbytery resources at that time), had again been considered by the Planning and Deployment Committee (PDC). The PDC proposed that half of the 1FTE Minister Post released as a result of the union between Queen Street and St Mark's be allocated to this new ministry, with the other half of the funding coming from the 5% Ministry and Mission Discretionary Allowance available to Presbytery for distribution.

Presbytery approved the West End Churches Joint Youth Worker Post proposal (3 years fixed term) in the Presbytery Plan. The proposal will be sent to Ministries Council Presbytery Planning

Task Group for consent and thereafter the draft Job Description will be finalised and sent to Human Resources for final approval.

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 October meeting, Presbytery noted the balance of available funding of the 5% of Ministries and Mission contributions retained by Presbytery was £42,579 or £37,579 if an allowance for South St Nicholas Kincorth was used. The November meeting agreed reductions in M&M Contributions for Oldmachar Church and Queen's Cross Church and noted additional funding reserved for the West End Churches Joint Youth Worker Post. This left a balance of the 2017 Discretionary Allowance of £13,579.

Presbytery approved the 2018 Ministry and Mission Allocations and noted that the Presbytery Discretionary Allowance in 2018 will stand at £80,441, plus any funds carried forward from 2017, as of 1st January 2018.

Together We Pray and the National Day of Prayer

The 2017 General Assembly agreed to:

"Issue a call to the Church of Scotland to pray that God will do a fresh work amongst us as God's people and instruct Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to consider how best to respond to this call."

Together We Pray is a national prayer initiative that has been set up by the Council of Assembly in response to this call to prayer. A website has been set up with further resources and ideas at www.churchofscotland.org.uk/togetherwepray

As part of the response to this call to pray, the Council of Assembly has announced a National Day of Prayer. Presbytery commended the "Together We Pray" programme, and encouraged congregations to hold a prayer event for the National Day of Prayer on 25th November.

2018 Year of Young People

The Presbytery Congregational Support Committee reported that the Church Toolkit from the Church of Scotland for Year of Young People was now available. The toolkit has ideas for events, activities and ways to involve young people in connecting with churches. The toolkit is only available to those congregations who are willing to sign a pledge card committing to be involved in Year of Young People. Further details at http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/children_and_youth/year_of_young_people/toolkit_request

The committee reminded congregations to ask their young people for any ideas of events or activities they would want presbytery to host during the year of young people.

Presbytery noted that the toolkit for the Year of Young people is now available for congregations and invited congregations to register through the pledge card.

Annual Inspection of Records: Property Register & Manse Condition Schedule

The Presbytery Property Committee reported that the 2016 annual inspection of Property Registers and Manse Condition reports had been completed.

Of the 36 congregations within Aberdeen Presbytery 2 have no Church building, but Manse Condition Schedules were provided. Only 2 churches failed to produce any of the appropriate reports. Of these both have been found to have maintained their properties appropriately and all documents will be available for 2017.

A number of churches asked that further clarification be provided as to which documents should be available for inspection of the audit. As a result, the Committee had produced an Annual Due Diligence Audit Report guideline document which was issued to congregations and is on the Presbytery website (within Resources section). Presbyters were asked to ensure that congregational Property Convenors are aware of the document.

Presbytery noted that before Office Bearers approve both the Property Register and Manse Condition Schedule, greater attention should be paid to their accuracy and completeness.

Presbytery Also:

- Welcomed to Presbytery the ministry candidates Dr Amy C Bender, Mrs Joan Thorne and in his absence Mr Martin Greig. Mrs Thorne had transferred from Kincardine and Deeside Presbytery to Aberdeen Presbytery before commencing her probation for Ordained Local Ministry on the advice of the Ministries Council.
- Agreed to renew the award of an annual grant of £4,000 to Work Place Chaplaincy Scotland for the next three years.
- Received the Local Church Review Report on Summerhill Parish Church.
- Commended to all ministers the petition “Locked in Limbo”, campaigning to raise awareness of stateless persons to highlight the injustice of arbitrary detention for immigration purposes and consider community-based alternatives.
- Noted the initial plans for holding two “Meet your MP” events to allow congregations to showcase their work in engaging with communities.

Intimations included:

- Those unable to attend the showing of the film “Black Gold” on Friday 3rd November at Queens Cross, information of which shared from Eco Congregations Scotland, may be interested in accessing the website for further information and to download the film. This being a film exploring issues around the coffee industry. Please access <http://blackgoldmovie.com/>
- Mrs Anne Smith, Congregational Learning Facilitator, will lead a workshop on Learning Disabilities using the LEARN material from the Church of Scotland, Mission and Discipleship Council. This workshop will be an opportunity for anyone interested to explore and discuss topics such as ‘What is a Learning Disability’, ‘What does the Bible Say’ and ‘Community of Belonging’ and consider their relevance within congregations and communities. This session will be held at Holburn West Church on Tuesday 21st November from 7.30 – 9.00pm. Please register by e-mail to Mrs Smith at smithanneg@tiscali.co.uk or through the Presbytery office on tel. 01224 698119
- Aberdeen Centre for Protestant Theology Inaugural Lecture. A public lecture will be given at the University of Aberdeen by Dr Simeon Zahl (University of Nottingham) entitled ‘The Future of Protestant Theology’. The lecture is to take place in room KCF 7 in the King’s College Quadrangle on the evening of Monday 27th November from 5.15 pm, and will be followed by an informal drinks reception in the Divinity Library. The lecture will serve as the

inaugural event of the Aberdeen Centre for Protestant Theology. All are welcome to attend. Further information about the Aberdeen Centre for Protestant Theology may be found at the following address - <https://aberdeencentreforprotesanttheology.wordpress.com/> alternatively, please contact the Presbytery Office and this information will be forwarded in paper form.