

MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP COUNCIL

May 2015

The purpose of the Mission and Discipleship Council is to resource God's people in the Church of Scotland for worship, witness, mission and discipleship; enabling and empowering the Church to share God's love in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, mindful of the changing contemporary culture of Scotland and beyond

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PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the report.
2. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to raise awareness of online mission resources by having www.resourcingmission.org.uk as a link on their Presbytery and congregational websites (*Section 3.5.4*).
3. Commend *Starters for Sunday* and welcome its increased range and resources for special occasions (*Section 2.1.1*).
4. Encourage congregations to make use of the resources and articles on worship produced by *Different Voices* (*Section 2.1.2*).
5. Encourage all congregations to explore the theme of "Living Stones" through the use of the new *Pray Now* publication (*Section 2.1.5*).

6. Encourage congregations and Presbyteries to make use of the classical worship streamed events, held at Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh (*Section 2.1.3.2*).
7. Instruct Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to consider how they might develop training for elders using the *Learn: Eldership* publication (*Section 3.1.1*).
8. Instruct Kirk Sessions to consider how their congregations can engage with the upcoming issues of *Learn* publications relating to Children's Faith, New Communicants and Office-Bearers (*Section 3.2.1.1*).
9. Encourage Presbyteries and congregations to send a representative to the Learn: Learning Disabilities Conference (*Section 3.2.1.5*).
10. Instruct Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to study the "Learning Disabilities Fact-Finding Report" and consider an appropriate response (*Section 3.2.1 and Appendix I*).
11. Encourage Presbyteries and congregations to send representatives to attend the "Going for Growth" Summer School event (*Section 3.3.2.1.8*).
12. Encourage all congregations to promote "Adventures in Prayer" events (*Section 3.4.1*).
13. Welcome the report of the "Life and Work" Review group, noting the findings and instructing the Council to implement a business action plan to meet the challenges of a new communications environment, thank and discharge the Review Group (*Section 3.5.2 and Appendix II*).
14. Welcome the actions taken by CARTA to assume a more pro-active role and improve the service it provides, thank and discharge the members of the Review Group (*Section 4.1.1.1 and Appendix III*).
15. Note the report on the future funding of the National Youth Assembly (*Section 4.2.2.1 and Appendix V*).
16. Encourage congregations and Presbyteries to send young people aged 17-25 to the National Youth Assembly and to consider supporting them by meeting the cost of attendance and travel (*Section 4.2*).
17. Encourage congregations and Presbyteries to make young people aware of the financial help that can be provided when applying online (*Section 6 of Appendix V*).
18. Encourage all Presbyteries to fill their allocated place for a youth delegate to the General Assembly (*Section 4.2.2*).
19. Commend to Presbyteries and congregations the Mission Forum online group study resources focusing on the topic of Mission and Older People (*Section 4.3.1.3*).
20. Instruct congregations to consider the use of *Future Focus* as a helpful tool at appropriate points in their congregational life (*Section 4.4.1*).
21. Commend to congregations and Presbyteries the new website www.evangelismideas.org (*Section 4.5.1*).

REPORT

1. HELPING GOD'S PEOPLE TO REALISE THEIR VISION

1.1 Our purpose is to stimulate and support God's people to sow seeds for a fruitful Church in Scotland that is rooted in worship, growing in faith and serving God in the world.

1.2 A fruitful church is born and nourished by prayer.

1.3 During 2014 our events have provided opportunities for churches to learn from and inspire each other by sharing experiences and ideas. These often focused on a common need that emerged from consultation or research, highlighting resources that we or others had

produced to promote good practice, and revealed how God is at work within our congregations. Feedback suggests that the buzz created by an event, the help provided by a publication and being kept up-to-date by online information are valued by those we seek to support.

1.4 Our common vision will be realised when more are able to worship God and feel at home in their place of worship, more are drawn to follow Jesus and lead others to him, more increase in understanding of their faith, and more are equipped to be church anywhere.

1.5 We hope that this report will help readers to find out more about what others have found useful at <http://www.resourcingmission.org.uk>.

2. ROOTED IN WORSHIP

2.1 Helping people to worship

2.1.1 *Starters for Sunday*

2.1.1.1 The worship resources available through *Starters for Sunday* and the 16,000 hits per month demonstrate the diversity and the depth of appeal of online materials available to worship leaders. The contributors to these resources are local worship leaders, rooted in their local communities.

2.1.1.2 Three years' worth of archived material has now been published. This is in the form of an online library, making authentic, grounded material available for every Sunday. New materials continue to be created each year, with the added benefit of downloadable files, searchable by 'tag'. The 'tag' enables both lectionary and non-lectionary worship leaders to access content through a Biblical character, Church calendar, special theme or Bible reference. This year, in addition to material based on the Revised Common Lectionary passages, we have added materials relating to such topics as Poverty, Mission Forum, Climate Change, Learning Disabilities and Harvest. We realise that with the steady increase of material, volume needs to be matched by ease of access.

2.1.1.3 As we enter the Decade of Ministry we wish to help congregations to pray that people will be called into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. *Starters for*

Sunday will provide monthly prayers that can be used in worship. We hope this will encourage members to reflect upon God's call for either themselves or others who wish to explore and test the calling to ministry.

2.1.2 *Different Voices*

2.1.2.1 It is our hope that *Different Voices* will become the 'go to' resource for worship leaders. Since its launch as an online resource at last year's General Assembly, *Different Voices* has developed considerably. Located on the Resourcing Mission website, it now hosts approximately 40 blog articles (as at the end of February 2015) on music for worship and outreach, several tutorial videos on musicianship, copyright for music, recorded organ music for churches without musicians, downloadable Mp3 files of a wide variety of music, new compositions, sheet music, music suggestions for all seasons, recorded music seminars and many other resources.

2.1.2.2 The Resourcing Worship team remains keen, however, to receive requests and suggestions for additional music resources, eg children's ministries.

2.1.3 *Styles of Worship*

2.1.3.1 *Different Voices* promotes several styles of worship music involving contemporary, children, community and classical through the resources available on the *Resourcing Mission* website.

2.1.3.2 In developing resources for classical worship the Resourcing Worship team is involved, throughout 2015, with a year-long festival led by Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh, who are hosting concerts, inspiring worship and workshops, talks and outreach projects to explore the place of creativity and the arts in Church worship. These locally run events can be experienced nationally, as they are "streamed" online to help others learn from them and develop their worship style.

2.1.3.3 We have also collaborated with other Councils, particularly the Priority Areas Worship Development Worker within the Ministries Council, to create both an

advent education resource and music for all seasons for use with children in worship.

2.1.3.4 If other congregations or Presbyteries are planning worship events in contemporary, children and community styles of worship, please inform the Resourcing Worship team.

2.1.4 Liturgical Group

2.1.4.1 The Liturgical Group has now completed revisions of the *Services of Linkages and Union*.

2.1.5 Pray Now

2.1.5.1 *Pray Now* has proved to be an enduring resource, and last year's issue, *Revealing Love*, is now into its second printing. It is hoped that this interest will be increased by changing its start point to coincide with the General Assembly. This year's title "Living Stones" is based on the theme of the Heart and Soul festival, the Kirk's largest annual event.

2.1.5.2 The book is available in different formats. Print sales up to January 2015 stood at 1,145 copies, with e-book sales (through Kindle and other platforms) standing at 40 copies. As *Revealing Love* is not limited to use over a single year, sales of this title are continuing each month. We hope that linking this valuable resource to the "Living Stones" theme will result in an increasing readership and encourage the Church to reflect on this theme well beyond the Heart and Soul event.

3. GROWING IN FAITH

3.1 Helping leadership develop

3.1.1 A fruitful church is not only rooted in worship but also growing in faith. Faith is described as a gift and calling. A worshipping faith can, in some, result in the call to leadership. Such leaders need to be resourced. We are addressing this through the *Learn* initiative, which was officially launched at the 2014 Session Clerks and Elders Conference. *Learn: Eldership* is the first publication of this initiative, which will produce learning and development opportunities for all areas of Church life. This is a key resource for developing eldership, one aspect of leadership in the Church. Additional support can be found

on a dedicated section of the Church of Scotland website www.churchofscotland.org.uk/learn.

3.1.1.2 The *Learn* initiative seeks to connect, resource and inspire congregations in learning and development through three core activities: publications (*eg Learn: Eldership*), events (*eg* the Session Clerks and Elders Conference) and online resources (*eg* promotional videos on *Learn*). We are delighted that *Learn: Eldership*, now published through Saint Andrew Press, is proving so popular: all 1,100 copies of the pilot edition sold out and subsequently thousands more have been purchased.

3.2.2.3 Elders as Moderators

3.1.1.3.1 The clarity we have sought in the last two years concerning the role of an elder as Moderator of a Kirk Session has now been provided by the Report of the Legal Questions Committee (page 6/1, section 1). Of the two separate Acts regarding elders moderating Kirk Sessions, one permits an elder to moderate his or her own Kirk Session, for which training is provided by this Council; the other allows a suitably trained elder to act as Interim Moderator for another congregation, for which training is provided by the Ministries Council. In accordance with the Legal Questions Committee's re-affirmation of the current Acts, the training we provide will in future be specifically for elders who have been proposed by their Minister and Kirk Session in response to an actual need. This should ensure that the training we provide is utilised for the benefit of the Church.

3.1.1.3.2 The *Learn* initiative continued with the publication in February 2015 of *How will our Children have Faith?* This will be followed by *New Communicants* (September 2015) and *Office Bearers* (March 2016).

3.2 Helping people to belong and participate

3.2.1 Learning Disabilities

3.2.1.1 We believe that growing in faith includes learning how to be a community and make room for everyone. Professor John Swinton, who contributed to *Learn: Eldership*, offered this thought provoking statement for congregations: "The task of church leaders is to create

the circumstances where communities of belonging become a genuine possibility.”

3.2.1.2 There are many people with learning disabilities in Scotland. Our Learning Disabilities Working Group (LDWG) has consulted widely to obtain the evidence on which to base guidance for congregations wishing to develop sustainable ways of becoming communities in which those with learning disabilities can meaningfully belong.

3.2.1.3 The Group’s key findings were:

- There are already many examples of good practice and resources to support ministry in this area as well as individuals who are keen to serve. The latter, however, require access to a variety of modes of learning and development (events, publications and online resources) to support them as they serve.
- Those with learning disabilities have much to contribute to a church community – indeed, there is a gospel imperative to involve all. So congregations should be encouraged to consider the reasons why those with learning disabilities should be involved in the full life of the church.
- There is a lack of clarity regarding the role and remit of Presbytery Disabilities Advisers (PDA). We will propose a new way of working directly with congregational contacts who have a passion for the role.

3.2.1.4 The full fact-finding report can be found in Appendix I.

3.2.1.5 The Council will be hosting a Learning Disabilities Conference entitled “Creating Communities of Belonging” on 6 June 2015 at the University of Dundee. This day event will connect, resource and inspire those with a passion for enabling their churches to be communities where those living with learning disabilities feel that they belong.

3.3 Helping the church to be missional

3.3.1 Mission Shaped Ministry Courses

3.3.1.1 We network closely with those involved in organising and presenting the Mission Shaped Ministry

course. In Glasgow and Edinburgh a total of 75 people have gone through these courses and it is our hope that this will equip them to establish fresh expressions of church in their own communities. We are working with the Ministries Council to support the Decade of Ministry initiative by encouraging churches to focus on prayer or by addressing the legal measures required to accommodate and nurture new life through existing church structures. Further details of this initiative can be found in the section for the Joint Emerging Church Group within the report of the Ministries Council.

3.3.2 Fresh Expressions

3.3.2.1 Going for Growth

3.3.2.1.1 Fresh Expressions is a UK-wide ecumenical agency that encourages God’s people to have the faith to be Church anywhere. Both Mission and Discipleship and the Ministries Council are in partnership with it.

3.3.2.1.2 The Joint Emerging Church Group (JECG) followed up their report to the 2014 General Assembly by launching “Going for Growth”. Under this initiative, over a three year period people from every Presbytery in Scotland will be invited to a *Going for Growth* event in their local area.

3.3.2.1.3 Each of these comprises two parts. The first is an afternoon session with relevant Presbytery office holders, those responsible for Presbytery Planning and Mission and the Presbytery Clerk. The aim is two-fold: to listen to the concerns of those who hold local responsibility and to share ideas on mission and outreach across Presbyteries to provide an opportunity to share and learn from each other.

3.3.2.1.4 The second part is an evening session, to which are invited all those in local congregations who want to find out more about setting up a fresh expression of Church.

3.3.2.1.5 The first three events were held in 2014 in Ayr, Dornoch and Dundee, attended by between 25 and 70 people. It was encouraging to see the amount of interest expressed in exploring and developing this approach to

church growth. These events clearly demonstrated the versatility of Fresh Expressions to engage with rural, suburban and urban settings across Scotland.

3.3.2.1.6 JECG planned Fresh Expressions Vision Days for the first half of 2015 to build on the momentum created by these initial meetings. The first two took place in March in Kilmarnock and Dornoch, with a third due to take place in Perth at the end of May. In each case we will be working closely with our ecumenical partners. In addition, a further Vision Day has been planned by our ecumenical partners in Fort Augustus in March 2015. For more information about Fresh Expressions and Vision Days, go to www.freshexpressions.org.uk.

3.3.2.1.7 A “Going for Growth” Summer School will be held at Westpark Conference Centre in Dundee, 22-25 June 2015. The main speakers are the Rev Canon Phil Potter (Fresh Expressions Team Leader) and the Rev Dr George Lings, a researcher with the Church Army. Details can be found on the events page of the Resourcing Mission website.

3.3.2.1.8 In autumn 2015, the cycle will begin again with further “Going for Growth” events in different regions: Aberdeen, Orkney, Shetland, Midlothian and Stirling, along with two others places yet to be determined.

3.4 Helping faith develop

3.4.1 Retreats in the Highlands

3.4.1.1 The Mission Development Worker for the North of Scotland has continued to deliver a programme of retreats, whose theme for 2015 is “Adventures in Prayer”. Bookings for these retreats have been filling up. Although based in the Highlands, they are open to people from all parts of the country.

3.4.1.2 Planning is also underway for a retreat leaders’ training/resourcing weekend in November 2015, which would also be open to people from anywhere in the country. For details of these retreats see the events page of www.resourcingmission.org.uk or contact the Council on mandd@churchofscotland.org.uk.

3.5 Helping understanding grow

3.5.1 *Life and Work*

3.5.1.1 The magazine of the Church of Scotland continues to be profitable despite operating (in common with all printed media) in challenging conditions. Over 20,000 copies of the magazine were distributed each month during 2014, reaching more than 40,000 readers with every issue.

3.5.1.2 The website www.lifeandwork.org has new content uploaded every working day and visitor numbers continue to grow. The site also includes advertisements from companies already publicising their goods and services in the print magazine.

3.5.1.3 The magazine returned a healthy five-figure surplus at the end of 2014.

3.5.1.4 The *Life and Work* Advisory Committee met on two occasions in 2014 and was utilised on many more occasions between meetings. The Editor remains deeply grateful to this important Committee for its insights and support. In particular, she would like to place on record her grateful thanks to the Rev David Denniston, who had to step down as Convener towards the end of 2014 because of ill-health. His support, both professional and pastoral, has been very much appreciated.

3.5.2 *Life and Work* Review

3.5.2.1 The *Life and Work* Review report (Appendix II) sets out a range of measures the Council needs to adopt if the magazine is to meet the challenges of a new communications environment. These recommendations are as follows:

1. A proportion of current income surpluses must be reinvested in the magazine to fund its on-going development.
2. *Life and Work* must be available on multi-media platforms.
3. It must invest in independent market research.
4. It must develop an effective marketing strategy.

5. The web and social media presence must be developed by its professional editorial team.
6. Resources will be needed for marketing and promotional activities to drive awareness and circulation.
7. The Editor must have capacity to focus on the long-term strategic development of the magazine.
8. The Editor should have access to professional PR advice and support.
9. A Business Manager should be appointed to focus on business development.

3.5.3 Saint Andrew Press

3.5.3.1 Saint Andrew Press is the Church of Scotland's imprint. It is managed in London by Hymns Ancient and Modern Ltd, whose Senior Commissioning Editor is based in central Scotland.

3.5.3.2 A wide range of recently commissioned books include Doug Gay, *Reforming the Kirk*; Ian Bradley, *Argyll*; Johnston McKay, *The Challenge of Change – A History of the Church of Scotland Since 1945*; Donald Smith, *Pilgrim Guide to Scotland*; Harry Reid, *Soul of Scotland* and, for publication in 2016; Steve Aisthorpe, *Reaching the Invisible Church*. In the year it celebrates its 60th birthday, Saint Andrew Press is involved in developing a range of exciting new publications to inform and inspire the Church.

3.5.4 Resourcing Mission website

3.5.4.1 The Resourcing Mission Website (www.resourcingmission.org.uk) enables the Council to showcase the downloadable resources available as part of its work: it includes news about forthcoming events that can be booked online, tutorial videos, CARTA's photo gallery and even a shop. By using this website you help us to help you, since the web data provides information about where there is demand and interest from local congregations.

4. SERVING GOD IN THE WORLD

4.1 Helping congregations with their buildings

4.1.1 CARTA (Committee on Church Art and Architecture)

4.1.1.1 Last year the CARTA Review Group submitted its Interim Report to the General Assembly. This instructed the Committee to take on a more pro-active role and encouraged the Committee and the General Trustees to consider how to improve their service through enhanced communication and collaboration. It also instructed the Committee to resolve the question of its members' terms of service with the Council of Assembly and bring forward a revised remit. The Committee's response is set out in the Review Group's Final Report (Appendix III). Key features include the creation by the General Trustees of a single gateway for all requests for advice and approval relating to church buildings, clarification of the Committee's role, and the proposed revision of the terms of service of its members and its remit. The revised remit can be found in Appendix III of the Report of the Council of Assembly.

4.1.1.2 CARTA's primary purpose remains that of advising congregations at an early stage about alterations which will enhance their worship and witness, while respecting and conserving what is important in their architectural heritage, and approving proposals relating to non-structural alterations. This usually involves a visit by two members, whose report is then considered by the full Committee. Where the proposal is straightforward, uncontentious and well documented, approval may be granted under powers by the Convener and Secretary, subject to homologation of their decision by the Committee.

4.1.1.3 During 2014 CARTA dealt with over 190 cases. Several involved reports on the disposal of the contents of churches due for closure, an area where the Committee expects its caseload to increase as Presbytery Plans are implemented. This was the subject of two presentations, including one by the Scottish Conservation Officer of the War Memorials Trust, as well as consultation with the Law Department, the General Trustees and Historic Scotland.

In the light of this the Committee is revising its guidance to congregations.

4.1.1.4 Other online resources added during the year include *The Setting of Presbyterian Worship*, *Architectural Notes for Congregations* and a revised version of *Church Organs: care, conservation, repair and replacement*, as well as several new Quick Guides and a gallery of images of lighting, stained glass and reordering projects. The Committee plans to develop a set of illustrated case studies, based on projects with which it has been involved, for use by congregations seeking information and inspiration.

4.1.1.5 Another area of increased activity was the work of the Stained Glass Group, which is authorised to approve proposals for the creation, conservation and removal of stained glass windows. This included a revision of the process for inclusion on CARTA's list of approved artists and the commissioning of a set of Quick Guides.

4.2 Helping reach, support and mobilise the young

4.2.1 Children and Young People

4.2.1.1 We have reached a key stage in helping congregations in this area of ministry.

4.2.1.2 Through consultation we are aware of the diverse contexts in which ministry with children and young people takes place. Some work, for example, by reaching out to the latter's communities and are the only contact that the young have with the Church. Others work closely with a congregational team, nurturing the young as they grow up. Whatever the context, we seek to support and equip those who want to serve God by helping children and young people to discover and live out their faith in the world.

4.2.1.3 Last year's consultation exercise, "Now you're talking!", included a wide range of representatives from Presbyteries, congregations and other church agencies responsible for ministry with the young; this was augmented by a study of current research. The needs we identified are being addressed by the following initial steps:

- Appointing a Children's Development Worker.
- Hosting a *Learn* event, the Communities of Faith Conference, at the end of February 2015 for those who work in children and youth ministry (whether paid or un-paid).
- Developing a *Learn* publication entitled "How will our Children have Faith? to help congregations reflect, review and develop their ministry with children and young people.

4.2.2 National Youth Assembly

4.2.2.1 During this last year a working group drawn from the Council, the National Youth Assembly (NYA) and members of the Council of Assembly have been looking at how to develop the future of the NYA and to fund it. Their report outlines the history, ethos and vision of the NYA and provides a framework that balances the need for security to allow development and a review procedure to encourage it. This can be found in Appendix V.

4.2.2.2 We continue to develop the way young adults can be involved in decision-making through the NYA and General Assembly Youth Representatives programme. We also seek to develop opportunities for them to be involved in leadership. In addition to the NYA moderator, clerk and youth representatives, two young adults are elected to serve as Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs), representing the views of young people in the Church of Scotland. Recognising the potential for faith development through experiencing a different culture, we also select appropriate young adults to represent the Church of Scotland at events abroad organised by our partner churches, such as the "I Love Taiwan" mission camp in July 2014.

4.3 Helping reach, support and mobilise older people

4.3.1 Mission Forum

4.3.1.1 The purpose of the Mission Forum is to hold mission before the whole Church, enabling it to understand how to serve God in the world.

4.3.1.2 The Mission Forum report accepted by the 2014 General Assembly (GA2104 MDC report – Appendix II) was

produced by members drawn from different Councils and Committees. The Forum has since rooted the report in worship by producing a series of four *Starters for Sunday* to enable congregations to explore the themes of mission during worship. This report also established a framework to encourage the Church to explore different topics from a mission perspective.

4.3.1.3 The Forum identified a five step strategy to ground the report in a specific missional area. First it agreed to look at the topic of “Mission and older people”. To help it do so, additional representation was brought into the Forum. Second, the Forum visited Williamwood House, a CrossReach facility specialising in Dementia, to directly encounter the excellent care offered to residents. Thirdly, a panel of experts was interviewed using the model of “respectful dialogue” to draw on their knowledge and experience. Fourthly, the Forum brainstormed ways in which the Councils and Committees of the Church might respond to the theme. The experience of CrossReach, the Guild’s Golden Age Project, work at a parish level and the insights of other agencies (such as Faith in Older People and Faith in the Community) all helped focus our attention. Finally, we recognised the need to produce material to enable discussion in study groups throughout the wider Church.

4.3.1.4 The Forum has produced a series of online videos on the Resourcing Mission Website, together with a Quick Guide explaining the background and outlining the content. There is also a complementary study guide for small groups who are interested in the topic of mission and older people. These will help congregations and Presbyteries explore mission with older people, to older people and for older people. A short introductory video is available to stimulate wider interest in the material.

4.4 Helping congregations take stock

4.4.1 Future Focus

4.4.1.1 *Future Focus* is a resource to help a congregation to embark on a spiritual journey that explores ways of serving God in their local community.

4.4.1.2 Local Church Review builds on the principles developed through *Future Focus* and embeds its ethos of reflective practice and envisioning within the rhythms of congregational life.

4.4.1.3 There is, however, a valuable role for *Future Focus* as a supplementary process. It is particularly useful for interim review or where there are significant changes in the life of the congregation, such as vacancies, linkages and unions. Since this exercise is best undertaken with the help of an external facilitator, we are seeking to increase the number of trained volunteer facilitators who can be deployed across the Church.

4.4.1.4 Recognising that some may prefer to engage in this activity without external help, we have developed *Future Focus: The Way Ahead*, freely downloadable from www.resourcingmission.org.uk/resources/future-focus. This resource has all the materials need for congregations to take a reflective overview of their life without the need for an external facilitator. To support this, the *Church Without Walls* team continually reviews the resources available.

4.4.2 Equip

4.4.2.1 *Equip* events are workshop-based day conferences covering a range of topics within the Council’s remit. Previous days have included workshops on “Messy Church”, “Worship”, “*Statistics for Mission*”, “Sharing Faith”, “*Fresh Expressions*”, “Sticky Faith” and “Leadership Development”. These events are open to anyone and the variety of talks and workshops has meant that there has been something to interest most congregations.

4.4.2.2 While the costs of these events are met by the Council, we are grateful for the contributions made by local congregations and Presbyteries, whether in the form of practical assistance or free provision of venues. This allows us to deliver more events than would otherwise have been possible. We are keen to work with local churches to shape the contents and practical aspects of future events.

4.4.2.3 *Equip* events are held several times throughout the year in various locations. In 2014 these were Ayr, Kirkcaldy and Inverness. This year the first thematic *Equip* event – “Equip for the Arts” – was held in Motherwell on 28 March. We are also planning other *Equip* events for 2015–16 with several Presbyteries, including Buchan, Argyll, Dundee and Inverness. To find out more, please contact mandd@churchofscotland.org.uk or your local Mission Development Worker: Steve Aisthorpe (North) saisthorpe@churchofscotland.org.uk; Iain Campbell (West) icampbell@churchofscotland.org.uk; Rob Rawson (East) rrowson@churchofscotland.org.uk.

4.5 Helping congregations engage with the world

4.5.1 Evangelism Ideas website

4.5.1.1 A new website called Evangelism Ideas has been sponsored by the Council, alongside other agencies and denominations - www.evangelismideas.org. Its aim is to encourage people to share their good ideas, practices and resources and for other people to access these.

4.5.2 Invisible Church research

4.5.2.1 Our research, carried out in the Highlands and Islands, was published last year. This can be found on the Resourcing Mission website, entitled *Investigating the Invisible Church*. It continues to be the focus of various conferences, both within the Church of Scotland and beyond. A book, published by Saint Andrew Press, based on the findings of the research will be launched at the General Assembly of 2016.

4.5.2.2 Predictably, the research has prompted questions about the patterns of belief and church attendance in other parts of the country, and during the spring of 2015 further sample surveys will be carried out using the same criteria as the original research. The areas to be surveyed will be rural and urban in both the east and west of Scotland, and a further sample taken from the Aberdeen area, as existing research shows that the patterns of church attendance there differs significantly from other areas of Scotland. It is hoped that the initial findings from the additional studies will be available by May 2015, and will be incorporated into the forthcoming book.

4.6 Helping the Church work together

4.6.1 More than Gold

4.6.1.1 In 2014 the Commonwealth Games came to Scotland. The Council identified this at an early stage as a significant opportunity for the Church in Scotland to work with other denominations to demonstrate Christian generosity, hospitality and witness. It decided to sponsor *More than Gold*, an organisation with a proven record of delivering for the Churches at the 2012 London Olympic Games, with a grant of £124,000 over four years.

4.6.1.2 In addition, the time of one of our Mission Development Workers was dedicated to assisting with the preparations for what proved to be a successful event. For instance, over 9,000 people attended “On Your Marks – Get Set” and other vision casting events. Many congregations hosted the Commonwealth sports quiz with a half-time talk, giving thousands of sports people a chance to hear the Gospel. A holiday club resource entitled “Fit for a King”, produced by Scripture Union, was used by many churches.

4.6.1.3 These are some of the activities made possible through our grant support. The depth of their impact is suggested by the comment of the Papua New Guinea Table Tennis Team Coach who visited St. George’s Tron Church: *“These Games were most special for me as I got to watch my daughter play. We will take the blessings of the Scottish church and these Bibles home with us, thank you so much.”*

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 For the first time since 2011 the Council has a full complement of staff in the year that marks its tenth anniversary in its current form. It remains our aim to equip God’s people to worship and witness and to grow in faith, understanding and discipleship. This involves not just creating new programmes or resources, useful as these may be, but also giving people the confidence to believe that by working together in step with God’s Spirit we can make a difference to our communities and to our nation.

5.2 The *Learn: Eldership* publication has after each article a follow-up question: “Why not try...?” This question is really applicable to all of us who seek to grasp what a fruitful church might look like and how we might realise that vision.

In the name of the Council

COLIN SINCLAIR, *Convener*
 NORMAN SMITH, *Vice-Convener: Church Without Walls*
 DAN CARMICHAEL, *Vice-Convener: Resourcing Worship*
 JAMIE MILLIKEN, *Acting Vice-Convener:
 Congregational Learning*
 ALISTER BULL, *Council Secretary*
 LESLEY HAMILTON-MESSER, *Team Leader:
 Church Without Walls*
 RON CLARKE, *Team Leader: Congregational Learning*
 GRAHAM FENDER-ALLISON, *Team Leader:
 Resourcing Worship*

In the name of CARTA

GRAEME ROBERTS, *Convener*
 DAVID LOGAN, *Vice-Convener*
 GRAHAM FENDER-ALLISON, *Team Leader:
 Resourcing Worship*

ADDENDUM

John Hawthorn

John Hawthorn came on to the Council as Vice Convener for Congregational Learning and effectively rebuilt the team back to its full strength. He was in post during the Review of Congregational Learning and saw through the Presbytery Consultation that led directly to the *Learn* initiative. He has overseen the positive development of the NYA, been actively involved in the very effective Session Clerks and Elders Conferences and encouraged resources to be used to develop work amongst children. He has seamlessly managed the transition to his successor.

Throughout this time he had the extra responsibility of being the key person during the vacancy at his local congregation. Undeterred by a lengthy commute from the West to 121, he gave the Council the benefit of his valuable

experience in the Scout movement and teacher development, for which we are most grateful.

We wish him well as he focuses his energies in his local church, supporting his new minister.

In the name of the Council

COLIN SINCLAIR, *Convener*
 NORMAN SMITH, *Vice-Convener: Church Without Walls*
 DAN CARMICHAEL, *Vice-Convener: Resourcing Worship*
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 Resourcing Worship*

In the name of CARTA

GRAEME ROBERTS, *Convener*
 DAVID LOGAN, *Vice-Convener*
 GRAHAM FENDER-ALLISON, *Team Leader:
 Resourcing Worship*

APPENDIX I

LEARNING DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP FACT-FINDING REPORT

Executive Summary

There are many people with learning disabilities in Scotland and it was recognised that there was a need to provide an evidence base from which to develop sustainable ways to connect, resource and inspire congregations to be communities in which these people can meaningfully belong. In response, the Learning Disabilities Working Group (LDWG), operating within the Mission and Discipleship Council (MDC) of the Church of Scotland, engaged in a consultation process.

The findings were that:

- There are many examples of good practice and resources already available for ministry in this area and there are individuals keen to serve. However, a variety of approaches should be employed (events, resources and online provision) to enable individuals to engage in learning and development and be supported as they serve.
- Those with learning disabilities can bring much to a church community and indeed there is a gospel imperative to involve all. Resources should be provided by which congregations can consider the 'why' of involving those with learning disabilities in the full life of the local church.
- There is little to no clarity regarding the role and remit of those appointed by Presbytery to the role of Presbytery Disability Adviser (PDA). MDC will propose a new way of working direct with congregational contacts who have a passion for the role.

Background

The Learning Disabilities Working Group (LDWG) has the following remit from the 2011 General Assembly:

- to encourage and support local churches in the inclusion of people with learning disabilities;
- to establish and maintain a network of people interested and willing to help; and
- to keep aware of new developments and new agencies in this field.

The group has representatives from Ministries Council, Church and Society Council, Mission and Discipleship Council and CrossReach.

There were 26,455 adults with learning disabilities known to local authorities in Scotland in 2013.

[Scottish Consortium for Learning Disability]

People with learning disabilities have a significant, lifelong, condition that started before adulthood, which affected their development and which means they need help to:

- *understand information;*
- *learn skills; and*
- *cope independently.*

[A definition from 'The Keys to Life, Improving quality of life for people with learning disabilities' The Scottish Government 2013]

In order to fulfil its remit the LDWG recognised that it needed to undergo a consultation process so as to better understand the needs and make appropriate evidence-based recommendations. This report describes the consultation process that was carried out, the key findings and proposals arising.

Consultation Process

Aim of the consultation:

To provide an evidence base from which the MDC can develop sustainable ways to connect, resource and inspire congregations to be communities in which those with learning disabilities can meaningfully belong.

Consultation methodology:

The LDWG devised a set of questions that it decided would form the basis for the consultation process. This provided a consistent approach to the information gathering whilst enabling the format of the questions to be adapted to suit different audiences. The questions were:

1. What is happening in our churches and what experiences do congregations have of people with learning disabilities engaging with church life or just coming along?
2. What are the perceived barriers for those people?
3. Are there success stories to share? What works well?
4. What support would be welcomed from the Church?
5. Are there named contacts with a heart for serving in the area of learning disabilities that MDC could work with?

A number of avenues of consultation were utilised, namely:

- A face-to-face gathering on 22 March 2014 of individuals who were identified to the LDWG as Presbytery Disability Advisors (PDA). The delegates provided feedback via facilitated focus groups. 29 attended this event from 21 Presbyteries (from Caithness to England).
- Focus group type meetings with individuals with learning disabilities. This also included seeking feedback from parents and unpaid carers where possible. Focus groups were carried out with:
 - Brightons Parish Church Friends of Jesus group, Falkirk, on 29 May 2014
 - The Haven, Fettereso Church, Stonehaven on 26 July 2014
 - A number of churches from the Dunfermline area on 23 August 2014
 - CrossReach Service Users Forum, Motherwell on 25 August 2014
- A questionnaire for Support Agencies providing care services for those with learning disabilities. Questionnaires were sent out to agencies in:
 - Glasgow
 - Falkirk
 - Scottish Borders
- Seeking insights from experts in the field and other agencies, namely:
 - Colleagues from Prospects (Ivy Blair)
 - Urban Saints
 - Scripture Union
 - SPRED (Special Religious Development) in Glasgow
- World leading academics in this field from Aberdeen University: School of Divinity, History and Philosophy (John Swinton and Brian Brock)
- The Church of England Disability Advisor (Roy McCloughry)
- The L'Arche Community
- The Iona Community
- LDWG members carried out a study of a variety of relevant literature, a sample of which is:
 - Roy McCloughry; *The Enabled Life, Christianity in a Disabling World* (SPCK, 2013)
 - Stanley Hauerwas, Jean Vanier, and John Swinton; *Living Gently in a Violent World: The Prophetic Voice of Weakness* (InterVarsity Press, 2008)
 - Stephanie O Hubach; *Same Lake Different Boat* (P & R Publishing, 2006)
 - Frances Young; *Arthur's Call, A journey of faith in the face of severe learning disability* (SPCK, 2014)
 - Brett Webb-Mitchell; *Beyond Accessibility: Toward Full Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Faith Communities* (Church Publishing Inc., 2010)
 - Brian Brock and John Swinton ed.; *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012)
 - John M. Hull; *Disability, The Inclusive Church Resource* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 2014)

Key Findings from the Consultation

1. **Examples of good practice:** There are many examples of good practice. These encompass situations where those with learning disabilities are involved with various church activities, including the regular diet of worship, and/or with specific 'alongside' ministries established specifically for their needs. Some common 'good practice' themes that were identified are: welcoming; accepting and valuing of difference; a chance to make and meet friends; being able to contribute.

2. **Ample time required:** Building relationships with those with learning disabilities and in turn developing the appropriate provision and modes of involvement can take a good deal of time and it is important to be aware of that.
3. **Variety of needs:** There are needs in every parish, but they can vary considerably. There is no single way to do ministry with those with learning disabilities but the widely varied needs will require varied (possibly individualised) approaches.
4. **Taking an active part:** There is a need to enable all, including those with learning disabilities, to have the opportunity to take an active part in the whole life of a church community. For those with learning disabilities this includes the need to enable participation in the regular diet of worship and in separate provision.
5. **Multidisciplinary approach:** A multidisciplinary approach is required to meet needs. It was noted with concern that on many occasions the spiritual needs of those with learning disabilities are not given appropriate attention in their care plan. However, examples of good practice would indicate that when sufficient time is given to building relationships with care agencies and carers then individual spiritual needs are often given much better attention.
6. **Specialist needs:** There is a clear requirement to enable congregations to better understand how to respond to the often specialist needs of those with learning disabilities, whether in ways of doing things or utilising specific resources.
7. **Awkwardness:** There is a degree of awkwardness around disability such that there can be a fear of 'getting it wrong', for example in communicating effectively. When we understand that loneliness

and isolation are significant experiences for those with learning disabilities then utilising specialist resources etc. is not the only answer, but seeking to build two way friendships can be a significant response. Indeed, approaching all from the perspective of wanting to build friendship is likely to lead onto a natural heartfelt response to meeting any needs through more formal provision as described in the above point.

8. **Growth for all:** Those with learning disabilities can bring much to a church community. As we enable all to be involved in the life of our church communities the mistake can be to approach it in a one-sided fashion, e.g. we should do this because it means others can benefit from what we do. It would seem that for congregations to be truly representing Jesus's body then all need to be truly together. Jean Vanier, founder of the L'Arche Community, described the amazing growth and transformation, as disciples of Christ, that has been experienced by those when they have sought to be with, learn from, grow with and become friends with those with learning disabilities, however profound the disabilities are. The recently launched *Learn: Eldership* publication includes a starter paper touching on such themes, written by John Swinton and titled 'Creating Communities of Belonging'.
9. **Vocation:** There is a good deal of consideration given to inclusion of those with disabilities in many different realms, professional or otherwise. However congregations can go further and, for example, ask: What it is that people with even the most profound disabilities can offer to the mission of the congregation? In other words: What has God called them to do and to be? This moves beyond inclusion. The shift is from considering how people with learning disabilities might be included to the more creative consideration of what their vocation might be in God's mission and how the

congregation might support and partner them in that.

10. **Resources:** There are many helpful resources etc. already available for ministry in this area.
11. **Willing individuals:** There are a number of willing individuals keen to serve the Church to meet the needs of those with learning disabilities. However, they expressed the necessity of being supported and resourced by a Council of the Church as well as through informal network arrangements.
12. **Presbytery Disability Advisers:** When the remit for the LDWG was first agreed in 2011 Presbyteries were asked to appoint Presbytery Disability Advisers (PDA). Unfortunately MDC underwent significant staff changes at that time so that no real collaborative activity occurred between it and Presbyteries. The consultation process has identified that a wide variety of responses occurred following that 2011 directive. For example, some Presbyteries have no PDA whilst others have appointed someone to the role but often the focus has been essentially on physical disability. In most cases there is little to no clarity regarding the role and remit of what was intended to be a Learning Disabilities Adviser. Furthermore MDC has also undergone consultations with Presbyteries in 2013 and 2014 in various areas of its work and one of the most significant findings is that Presbytery appointed roles are often difficult to sustain and often don't serve their intended purpose.
13. **Call to action:** There was a request that MDC should assist by raising awareness and calling to action through Kirk Session and Presbytery contacts.

Proposals Arising

1. Ensure that the LDWG continues to operate in order to support and progress this area of church life.
2. A variety of approaches should be employed (events, resources and online provision) to share working examples of inclusion that are having a positive effect.
3. Provide mechanisms for sharing or signposting resources that are already available.
4. Provide the means by which congregations can consider the 'why' of involving those with learning disabilities in the full life of church, including the gospel imperatives for our church communities and the disciples of Christ that they are made up of.
5. Communicate to Presbyteries the findings about Presbytery appointed roles (including the PDA) and propose a new way of working direct with congregational contacts who have a passion for the role.
6. Raise awareness and call to action Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries concerning their call to enable all to belong to their church communities. This might need to involve developing relationships with care organisations.

APPENDIX II

LIFE AND WORK REVIEW

Introduction

Life and Work has served the Church of Scotland well for more than a century. It has brought the church alive to members across Scotland, and further afield.

It has been a forum for debate about important issues affecting the church and society; it has been a source of news, often dealing with difficult and emotionally-charged stories; it has challenged the church and the members about their faith, and how they live it; and it has given

us a laugh too through the wry observations of its commentators.

Over the years, the magazine has changed and developed in response to changing times - it has embraced new technology and it has updated its look to meet the needs of readers.

Today, in addition to the magazine, there is a website and *Life and Work* has embraced social media too, on Facebook and Twitter.

We are living through one of the most rapid changes in communications technology since the invention of the printing press, and the way we consume media today is radically different to even a decade ago. News is instant, and comes not from trusted institutions such as the BBC or newspapers such as The Herald or The Scotsman, but through tweets of 140 characters or less sent to our mobile phones, tablets or laptop computers.

Where once you had to wait for a magazine to roll off the presses, now you can access content 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

There is greater and greater competition for people's time, and with increasing platforms people are spreading their time between print and online media. As a consequence, the circulations of traditional print publications are in decline, and to survive they need to adapt to the new media environment.

Although it might be tempting to complain about the apparent anarchy of this new environment, there are real opportunities. Jesus would have loved using Twitter. Many of his teachings easily fit into 140 characters or less. "I am the way, the truth and the life. No-one comes to the father except through me."; "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul."; "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God." The Bible is full of simple truths, tellingly delivered.

The purpose of this report is to look at how *Life and Work* might be developed in this new communications environment, to ensure it remains relevant to the church and its membership, and to secure its future in a world that more than ever needs journalism informed by Christian thinking.

Preface

They say it is hard to teach an old dog new tricks. *Life and Work* is a venerable newshound with more than 130 years of service to the Church of Scotland behind it.

It was conceived in an age when pen and ink was still regarded as a technology. The typewriter had been invented less than 20 years earlier, chips were fried potatoes, the Cloud brought rain, Apple was still regarded as the forbidden fruit.

How things have changed. Digital technologies have revolutionised communications and brought print to its knees. Newspapers are struggling to hold readers, novels are now being consumed on electronic devices, and magazines are struggling to keep their heads up amid enormous competition. Business models that have worked for decades, work no more. The demise of the printed page is almost taken for granted.

Life and Work is not immune from the changes sweeping the industry. It is not yet in intensive care, but it is not inconceivable that one day its demise will be lamented by the General Assembly.

Albert Einstein said that in the middle of difficulty lies opportunity. This review is an opportunity for the church to focus on the future of *Life and Work*, and to put in place measures needed to give it a fighting chance in this new digital age.

Claude Shannon, the celebrated mathematician, said; "*Information is the resolution of uncertainty.*" This report is designed to ensure that any decision about the future of *Life and Work* is an informed one.

This report, fulfilling a deliverance of the Mission and Discipleship Council from the 2013 General Assembly, follows an interim report, published as Appendix V of the Council's report to the General Assembly in 2014.

As Convener of the group, I must express my gratitude to all who supported, guided and encouraged me in preparing this report. Their selfless gifts of time, talent and energy remain a source of encouragement and inspiration. The Group's members are Alan Watson, Convener of the Council's Resources Group; Tom Collins OBE, a professional writer, award winning journalist and an honorary professor at the University of Stirling teaching Communications, Media and Culture; John McCallum, a managing director in marketing and advertising; and Marc Jones, a digital director of a branding and website agency.

In addition, I'd like to thank: the Rev David Denniston, Convener of the *Life and Work* Advisory Committee; Lynne McNeil, *Life and Work* Editor; Seonag MacKinnon, Church of Scotland Media Team, Head of Communications; and representatives of National Youth Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Rachel Walker and Lindsay Thompson, who provided us with many valuable insights.

The remit of the review group was to look at the magazine's financing, marketing and future development. It was asked to come forward with ideas to reinvigorate the publication, protecting its subscriber base and boosting its reach. The group included those with expertise in print and electronic media, online marketing and brand development.

From the outset, the members of the group believed *Life and Work* played a vital role in Scotland's media landscape. More importantly, they believed it could use the digital revolution to grow and develop.

This report sets out their assessment of *Life and Work's* needs if it is to be sustainable. And it sets out the milestones it needs to pass to establish a viable business model for itself, allowing it to compete for attention in a challenging and rapidly changing marketplace.

The group has not been afraid to ask difficult questions. It trusts that its answers will be seen by *Life and Work's* stakeholders, including its readers, as offering a viable future for the magazine.

This review was not an onerous task. It was a congenial, productive and motivating experience for people who shared a passion for printed and pixelated communications. The group's own enthusiasm is shared by the people it consulted – including younger members of the church who recognised *Life and Work's* value, even if they could not yet afford a subscription.

Of the many topics discussed, the dawn of this brave new digital world cast an inescapable light across most. This is hardly surprising considering four of the world's top 10 most successful companies (measured by market capitalisation) are technology based. These include Apple, Microsoft, IBM and Google.

The terms *evolving technology* and *uncertain future* interplay and unnerve in equal measure. In a recent interview, Google CEO Larry Page was asked what quality of mind had enabled him to think about the future and at the same time change the present. Page said he'd looked at other companies and asked why they don't succeed as well over time. He concluded "they just miss the future". He said he asks himself, 'what is that future going to be and how do we create it?'

He said his people spent enormous energy focusing on that. Page believes that taking a lateral approach, and not being risk-averse, helps Google to not 'miss the future'.

He gave an example of his early interest in a little start-up company he'd discovered. It wasn't working in the area considered to be Google's core business. Page said he felt guilty devoting so much time and resources on this company - even to the extent of feeling stupid doing so.

Google eventually bought the company. It was Android, Inc. Today, Android rules the mobile world. The Android operating system is found in smartphones, tablets, televisions, cars and wristwatches. Android is the most

widely used mobile operating system. The Google Play store has had over one million Android apps available with more than 50 billion downloads. In 2014 Google revealed there were over a billion active monthly Android users.

What does this mean for *Life and Work* and the wider church? It depends on whether we anticipate or miss the future. The review group has tried to ask the right questions about the future of *Life and Work*. It has not just asked “what is the future going to be like”, it has asked “how do we create it?”

Times are changing for *Life and Work* – and for its supporters and detractors alike. New circumstances present the church with increasingly hard choices, not least about prioritising diminishing resources.

Imagine a sentence reading “*Life and Work* is dead”. A blunt headline like this, signalling the last edition of *Life and Work*, could one day reflect choices made today. In the light of the digital dawn, with diminishing prospects for all printed magazines, the future looks tough. However, the review group believes that with change comes opportunity. We hope this report provides a roadmap to opportunity from which the church can benefit. The group scoped many possible futures for the magazine including the speculative headline: *Life and Work* is dead. Its riposte is unanimous and emphatic - long live *Life and Work*!

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of the report is to look at how *Life and Work* might meet the challenges of a new communications environment that is seeing a shift from print to online platforms. The objective is to ensure *Life and Work* remains relevant and delivers journalism informed by Christian thinking.
2. The long-term future of continuing surpluses is under threat because of the changing media environment. A proportion of current surpluses must be reinvested in the magazine to fund its on-going development.

3. *Life and Work* must be available on those media platforms most relevant to the needs of its readers, and use new media as a promotional tool to support marketing.
4. It must invest in independent market research to better understand the needs of its readers and their broad media-buying habits.
5. It must develop an effective marketing strategy – with an associated digital marketing strategy - detailing its target audience, the channels to be used to reach them and the resources to be invested.
6. The magazine, and the nature of its web and social media presence must be developed by its professional editorial team, informed by the outcome of market research and the agreed objectives in terms of circulation reach on all platforms.
7. Resources will be needed for marketing and promotional activities to drive awareness and circulation of the publication.
8. The Editor must have capacity to focus on the long-term strategic development of the magazine, engaging with its readers and being its ‘brand ambassador’. The editor should have access to professional PR advice and support.
9. A Business Manager should be appointed to focus on business development, implementing an agreed business strategy, engaging with stakeholders and driving circulation.

Background

Life and Work plays a pivotal role in the life of the church. The publication is a platform for discussion and debate by, and about, the church. It also provides space for the analysis of global and societal issues within a religious context, acting as an alternative voice to the secular media.

For the bulk of its existence, *Life and Work* has been available in print form, and this remains the bedrock of its presence in the Scottish media scene. *Life and Work* has

responded to the arrival of new media, and has a presence on the worldwide web. It has also dipped its toes into social media platforms - Facebook and Twitter. It must be said, however, that its new media strategy is not as well developed as other publications.

The church recognised the importance of embracing new media in 2010 when the General Assembly instructed “the Mission and Discipleship Council to seek ways of enabling the magazine to be published in other forms in addition to the current media, and to review this after an appropriate period”.

As a result, the *Life and Work* website was launched (www.lifeandwork.org). The website extends the reach of *Life and Work* to a global audience; it also has the potential to provide a daily service to readers outside the monthly publication dates of the magazine. The site is used to promote subscriptions to the magazine.

Within the limited resources available, the site is effective. But much more could be done to exploit the medium, making the website more dynamic and up-to-date. This is acknowledged by the *Life and Work* team as well as members of the Mission and Discipleship Council.

Life and Work continues to deliver a surplus that is used to support the Council’s work. The long-term future of continuing surpluses is under threat because of the changing media environment. Like all print-based newspapers and magazines, *Life and Work* is facing a significant challenge in maintaining its circulation and, consequently, revenue from advertising and cover price.

In 2013, the Council told the General Assembly that it believed it was time to make a significant investment in the marketing and promotion of the magazine. The General Assembly agreed to establish a group to look at the future of the magazine given the new media environment. An interim report was considered by the General Assembly in 2014, with the final report to be considered in 2015.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

During the Second World War Denis Healey, the future Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer, was a young Oxford graduate. He was tasked with counting the number of uniformed servicemen passing through one of London’s main railway stations. He soon realised this task was impossible. Thousands of people would spill from arriving trains. They were in the station for such a short time, making an accurate recording hopeless.

Nervously Healey simply guessed at the numbers, not knowing if he was even close to being accurate. He later confided in a colleague his predicament. The colleague told him he’d had exactly the same problem and had also guessed at the numbers. With some relief they then discovered that everyone involved in the analysis had done the same.

Later, when Healey became an MP and joined the government, he realised he could not rely on any of the analysis and statistical information he was given. He knew, from personal experience, that it too might have been predicated on guesswork.

No guessing was required when preparing this SWOT analysis. It is a qualitative assessment of the current position, based on available information. It has also been informed by discussions at regular meetings of the review group, discussions with readers, industry professionals and individuals involved in the production of *Life and Work* and the work of the Church of Scotland. SWOT is a useful tool for identifying those areas where a business or organisation can be pro-active in driving forward their enterprise. It also gives an opportunity to develop strategies to minimise weaknesses and deal with threats.

Strengths

Brands are important because they provide differentiation within a crowded marketplace. The *Life and Work* brand has been established over more than 100 years. It is recognisable to many, not just readers or those actively involved with the Church of Scotland. *Life and Work’s*

longevity is one of its strengths. It has the status of an institution and remains a voice to be listened to.

Although *Life and Work* has come under pressure as the media environment has changed, it remains very popular. Of magazines published in Scotland only the *People's Friend*, a weekly magazine, sells more copies, *Life and Work* sells considerably more copies in Scotland than *Scottish Field*, *Scots Magazine* or any religious publication. Although circulation has fallen, the magazine's market presence remains good given the type of media platform it is.

Life and Work carries and produces unique content. There is no other source - printed or otherwise - for the news, features and analysis it offers its readers. This 'niche' position is a great strength.

The magazine's relationship with the Church of Scotland is its single biggest strength. The ability to speak 'for' the members of the church, and its capacity to carry information, opinion and insight from the church to its members is unique.

Editorial independence is another real strength. It gives the magazine a greater degree of credibility with readers than if it were purely a mouthpiece for Church of Scotland HQ. In a world increasingly wary of 'official' sources, *Life and Work* provides a platform for independent debate and dialogue within what is a broad church. *Life and Work* is seen as a voice for all within the church. Being a space where dissenting voices are not only tolerated, but actively encouraged, is a huge strength.

The cover price is another strength. The magazine is competitively priced when compared with publications such as *Scottish Field* (£3.75) and the *Scots Magazine* (£3), both a similar size and design to *Life and Work*.

Weakness

The downside of being a 'niche' publication is lack of reach beyond regular readers and those connected with the Church of Scotland. The magazine is not widely available

outside churches. It is also a concern that it is not well-publicised inside some churches.

The magazine is not easily available to the general public. It has little or no presence in newsagents or supermarkets, reducing the opportunity to reach many people who might be interested in the news and features it carries.

To some degree, the magazine is taken for granted. There is little pro-active marketing and promotion. Advocacy depends on the enthusiasm of individual ministers or members of the church who manage sales within their congregations.

A financial incentive is offered to churches to encourage sales, but there is a lack of transparency over how this incentive is used: for example, whether it is used to raise money for the church or passed on to subscribers as a discount.

Life and Work is put together by a small team, with limited resources to manage the business side of the operation. There is no dedicated individual tasked with business development - sales, marketing, promotion, development of new business.

Although there have been dramatic changes in the media environment, with the all-pervasive influence of the internet and the worldwide web, the explosion in social media platforms, and the erosion on sales in most print-based titles, there has been little additional investment in staff needed to drive forward the 'new media' arm of *Life and Work*. There has been investment in the online infrastructure, most notably the development of a website. But in internet terms the site is relatively static.

Opportunity

Newspaper circulations have been in steep decline for years, however the public's appetite for news is as strong as ever - what has changed is its appetite for paper.

The internet opens up a host of opportunities for *Life and Work*. It already has a website that offers visitors access to some content and an e-newsletter that can be subscribed

to free of charge and is sent to your email address. However the digital world offers so much more.

A digital version of *Life and Work*, available for Kindles, iPads and similar devices, is surely inevitable. The website could contain much more information and articles, it could be used to react to topical events and news immediately as opposed to waiting until the magazine is published.

One of the big changes to news generation is the advent of reader-generated content. Readers are no longer limited to the traditional letters page. Many now contribute articles to websites, post videos, comment on stories (often in a moderated forum) and participate in web chats, webinars and other forums. A more dynamic website would allow *Life and Work* to capitalise on this.

Liberated from a print-only platform, *Life and Work* could have a dedicated channel on platforms such as YouTube, alongside its own site, hosting video content such as interviews, footage from trips abroad or from church groups across Scotland. It doesn't need to remain a 'magazine' as we understand the term. Podcasts could also be deployed, allowing people to engage with content at a time of their own choosing.

The internet also opens up the possibility of stretching the reach of *Life and Work* beyond its current readership. Articles and stories on the website can be found and read across the world allowing the 'magazine' to engage with new audiences.

An online strategy would also allow *Life and Work* to develop new income streams through online advertising. The magazine is popular with advertisers, and there is no reason to believe this could not continue online.

Professional communicators, with an understanding of the potential of new media, could animate the site, driving traffic to social network platforms.

The current team needs to look at its capacity in this area and skill up. But the review group believes it also needs to invest in additional professional skills. The *Life and Work*

brand could be extended to other areas too: conferences and debates, workshops, seminars and training programmes are the type of events used by other companies to generate income and profile.

The Edinburgh Festivals provide an excellent and international profile to build brand identity.

At a grassroots level, much more could be done to promote the publication in parishes around Scotland as well as broadening the readership to the wider public.

In the region of one in 10 regular churchgoers currently subscribe to the magazine. Even allowing for couples and families, that leaves a sizeable number of members of the church who don't currently buy *Life and Work*.

If one in five regular attendees bought a copy of the magazine, the circulation would double, and its long-term viability would be significantly increased. An increase of this magnitude would make the magazine even more attractive to advertisers, and it would generate additional income that could be reinvested in developing its online and social media presence.

The employment of a Business Development Manager would bring someone to the team who had direct responsibility for increasing *Life and Work's* impact and reach.

Increasing secularism means those who still seek the influence of Christianity in their day-to-day lives find it harder to find. It is largely absent now from mainstream media, yet that doesn't mean there isn't a demand for it.

The opportunity to provide Christian thought in mainstream modern Scotland still exists, and it is largely untapped just now. With *Life and Work*, the national church has the opportunity to fill this gap - in the process making it easier for the church to retain its relevance in 21st Century Scotland.

Threats

Time poverty is the single biggest threat to *Life and Work*. In a world where people increasingly get their information

from the worldwide web, social media and other sources, print publications are increasingly seen as being irrelevant.

In addition, with an aging readership, there's a need to bring on new subscribers.

Societal changes, including the decrease in church attendance, and the decline in the number of people identifying themselves as Christian will also have a negative impact on the magazine's capacity to hold on to sales. It relies heavily on the church-going membership for its sales.

A future reduction in circulation/readership will inevitably lead to a reduction in the number of copies being printed and at some point economies of scale will become an issue too. The unit cost to produce each magazine rises as fewer are produced. This will lead to pressure to either increase the cover price or reduce production costs to avoid a further eroding of the profit margin.

Never in human history has there been more access to news and information. People are deluged daily with thousands of messages. With multiple platforms online, the proliferation of television channels, and social media outlets, people are finding they cannot read and see everything. As a result, they are being more and more discriminating about what they consume.

Life and Work carries content people cannot get elsewhere, for a well-defined community of believers. But unless it adapts to the changing news consumption habits, and makes itself available to new and younger readers, the paid-for title can expect to see an inevitable decline in sales.

Unless *Life and Work* develops an integrated multi-media strategy that manages the interface between paid-for print and online platforms, its decline is inevitable, to the point where the publication might not be able to survive without subsidy from the church.

Another threat to *Life and Work's* unique market position is the Church of Scotland itself.

The church website already contains daily updates including articles, news stories, appeals and general information. If, as we assume, this site continues to grow, what role will *Life and Work* play? There is clearly the possibility that people will not turn to *Life and Work* in the future as they'll get the information they want directly from the church's own website.

Going forward, it is important that the church's communication needs and *Life and Work's* needs are managed in such a way that one enhances the other, rather than undermines it.

Views of Church of Scotland Youth (COSY)

In its remit, the group was asked to ensure younger members of church had the opportunity to make their voice heard. Younger readers are traditionally sought after by newspapers, magazines and broadcasters. They are seen as essential to ensuring the long-term stability of a publication. In addition, they tend to be attractive to advertisers. A straw poll of Church of Scotland Youth members indicated they were aware of the magazine and had access to it through family subscriptions.

They were reluctant to take out subscriptions themselves for a number of reasons: they were not comfortable committing to long-term subscription because of uncertainty over their income; their information needs were met by other sources. They acknowledged that *Life and Work* provided a greater depth of coverage, but noted that there was not much content on youth/children's issues.

COSY liked the variety of coverage in the magazine, and the chance to see what was happening around Scotland and further afield. They said a lot of COSY members felt isolated – some were seen and treated as the 'token' young person. They were keen to see the whole church have a greater sense of community. *Life and Work* was a vehicle to help achieve that. They felt strongly that the magazine was focused on the members of the church, and welcomed that. It did not have a corporate feel, but they felt it did need younger voices.

The COSY representatives who met the review group said they got most of their news now online. They said there was an opportunity for *Life and Work* to build profile on the COSY Facebook page that has 500 members.

They felt that new media could foster a greater dialogue within the church by providing a comment facility and an opportunity for people to connect and build networks. The church was not currently taking full advantage of what new media could do. They felt the church's own website was "not that user friendly".

They were keen to be involved in the development and delivery of a digital strategy, believing a youth blog could drive readers to *Life and Work's* online presence. "We've got a lot of passion and enthusiasm," they said, "and we're willing to help."

Making the most of new media and digital platforms

Communication is critical to our existence as human beings, and while some may use that gift more enthusiastically than others, we all still have something to say. It is no surprise then to see that ways of communicating have become more and more sophisticated. This can be seen no more clearly than in the digital realm - a realm becoming more diffuse with every passing day.

People can consume content wherever and whenever they like. We can now instantly buy, read, watch, listen, and discuss pretty much anything, and do that anywhere. This dramatic change presents challenges to those creating this content, but it also brings opportunities.

No longer do people wait 24 hours to read the news. Breaking news arrives within 24 seconds. We also expect to be able to read or watch on the move on portable devices.

Such is the proliferation of platforms, it is important to prioritise where you put your energies when developing a new media strategy - while always being open to new arrivals in the marketplace.

In moving forward, it is important to look at the platforms most relevant to the needs of *Life and Work* and its readers, and use them as a promotional tool to support the marketing of the magazine, as well as a means of carrying the magazine's content.

Marketing online

Online, everything can be measured. This can transform the effectiveness of marketing. If campaigns are properly tagged, and page events tracked, you can see how many people have seen them and responded to any 'calls to action'. For these measurements to mean anything, however, you need an effective marketing strategy that details the target audience, the channels to be used to reach them and the resources to be invested. Critically, it should also set out the key measures of success.

The most obvious channel is the magazine's website, currently used as both a marketing and content delivery tool. The web is an increasingly effective carrier of content, and people are now comfortable with consuming their information on screen - PCs, tablets, smartphones and dedicated e-readers such as the Kindle.

But it is also a critical marketing tool, a platform for selling the magazine to prospective readers, generating interest, and securing subscriptions. In addition to the magazine and church's own site, products exist to promote the magazine on appropriate third-party sites. A marketing strategy would set out the priorities for online advertising and promotion, ensuring 'calls to action' support specific goals for the publication.

Because it operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, online activity allows publications to build a community of interest, and to develop a two-way relationship with existing customers, and those who share the magazine's interest. It also allows a publisher to create opportunities for readers and potential readers to connect with the title, increasing brand loyalty in the process.

Feedback mechanisms, opportunities to contribute stories, and to take part in discussion and debate, are all easy to manage online, with appropriate moderation to

ensure the site is not hijacked by special interest groups. Forums rarely work, but comments on single articles are good for starting conversations and leading to discussion series.

There is a limit to what can be done with existing visitor numbers - part of the on-going strategy will be to attract new users to the website. Promotion on social media, such as Twitter, is a tool that can help improve traffic.

Other elements of a digital marketing strategy include Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) – essentially the use of keywords and phrases used by search engines such as Google to prioritise content on the web highlighted in searches. A carefully thought-out and well-researched SEO strategy will ensure site content is appropriately optimised and any investment in PPC (pay per click) advertising is maximised.

Video is another huge driver of traffic, and therefore an essential part of any online marketing strategy. When they are selling themselves, nearly all marketers use video in their campaigns. It is quick to consume and easy to share, and production costs today are relatively small.

By increasing the proportion of marketing through online channels *Life and Work* will attract a more digital-aware audience. With this comes a greater openness to new technologies, and fertile ground for testing new ways of delivering the magazine itself.

Delivery

There are lots of different ways of delivering content digitally. There was a time when creating a PDF copy of a magazine, and sticking it on a website, constituted digital delivery. Now the sites themselves are the magazines, with articles containing embedded video interviews and sample music tracks.

Thanks to responsive web design these sites work across all devices so users can read and watch wherever they are. The current *Life and Work* website is built in this way, but it does not fully use the functions available.

Magazines can also be purchased on subscription, or in single copies, on e-reader devices. Apple's Newsstand and Google Play's equivalent allow users to subscribe to newspapers and magazines without going near a newsagent. Making a digital version of the current magazine to existing and new subscribers in this way would be a relatively simple first step down the digital publishing road.

Many third-party apps such as Feedly and Flipboard take copy from publications across the web and allow their users to read the latest news from their favourite websites without ever visiting them. This delivery mechanism presents challenges to site owners if visitor numbers are key for advertising revenues or to secure investment opportunities. There are ways to encourage these users to the core website - whether through the offer of related content, extra functionality or other incentives.

In addition to using video for marketing purposes, there is no reason why a *Life and Work* YouTube channel could not become a standalone outlet for magazine content.

In looking forward, incremental change would allow for innovation, without threatening the security of the existing product. This approach has been used elsewhere. For example, the University of Edinburgh took their alumni magazine, *Edit*, online. It was felt this would open new opportunities to exploit digital media, as well as reducing print costs.

With a circulation of more than 150,000, and a hugely varied readership, simply switching everything online was not an option. Instead they created a micro-site (edit.ed.ac.uk) with a small number of featured articles.

This allowed them to test the waters and see how many readers warmed to this alternative format. For a relatively small investment the University was able to lay the groundwork for further exploration into the digital realm. *Life and Work* has already dipped its toes into the online marketplace. It needs to build on that.

The development of a microsite as a delivery mechanism for content (as opposed to marketing the title and selling subscriptions) might be a viable approach for *Life and Work*.

If this foray into digital publishing proved popular, there would then be a mandate to explore more radical avenues, like subscription-based delivery through a service like Newsstand.

Life and Work's weekly e-newsletter is a positive step down this road, and something which could be built on. The ultimate goal should be to take the magazine from a monthly publication to one that is producing content daily, making it topical and engaged in the major stories of the day.

Building The Subscriber Base (Marketing, Advertising and Sales)

Our ambition is to increase the readership and reach of *Life and Work*, but it's worth remembering that *Life and Work* has the second highest circulation of any paid-for monthly magazine published in Scotland. Considering the lack of promotional activities undertaken on behalf of the magazine, that is an incredible statistic. That, however, should not be cause for complacency. In line with all printed publications, its circulation is falling and unless something is done to arrest this it will only continue with a downward trajectory.

From a marketing perspective it is clear *Life and Work* still has an audience and, as such, it has potential to grow.

The most likely sources of new subscribers are Church of Scotland members and regular attenders who do not currently buy the magazine. It is currently estimated that only around 10% of church members purchase a copy of *Life and Work* - this is not particularly high in penetration terms, and it should be an area of marketing focus. Through our churches, we have a network to reach these potential readers, and with their membership of the church, they should have a strong motivation to buy.

People who have previously subscribed need to be reminded about *Life and Work* and what it has to offer, with a clear invitation to purchase the magazine. For those who have not seen it or read it, strategies need to be devised to introduce them to *Life and Work*.

In most churches, the best *Life and Work* can hope for is a mention in Sunday morning service intimations that a new issue is available. This is not enough to drive sales. At the moment, little promotional material is supplied to individual churches, and there is little contact between individual churches or Presbyteries and the magazine's publishing team.

The current system of offering 'commission' to churches to sell the magazine is not well policed. It is unclear whether the commission is retained by individual churches or if it is being passed on to subscribers.

One of the most significant impediments to the development of a deliverable, and effective, marketing strategy is the limited data held on the existing readership and the lack of data on potential readers. The last Reader Survey was done in 2012, but only 3% responded so it cannot be regarded as a representative sample.

Before any marketing strategies can be considered, more information is needed about the current readership and the distribution. A full-scale quantitative and qualitative analysis of the current readership, providing a breakdown of readers by age, gender and location, should be carried out. The market research should explore their attitudes to the magazine, likes and dislikes, their media habits including access to the internet and usage of social media. It should also try to assess the level of their commitment to the magazine.

Market research should also identify groups of non-readers - in different age bands and from different backgrounds - and explore why they do not currently read the magazine, and try to discover what might prompt them to take out a subscription. This should be done as a matter of some urgency and would inform the basis of all future marketing and promotions.

When a greater level of understanding of the readership exists then a number of marketing and promotional activities can be considered. These should include:

- Providing marketing materials for churches to promote the magazine to their congregation.
- Promotional visits to present *Life and Work* to individual churches, church groups and organisations.
- Reviewing the commission system, and looking at how best to incentivise the sale of subscriptions.
- Targeting certain demographics or geographic areas.
- Introductory subscriber offers.
- Increasing direct contact with subscribers through direct mail or more likely digital sources such as email and e-newsletters.
- Active promotion of *Life and Work* on social media platforms.
- Exclusive subscriber 'offers'.

Time must also be spent investigating other means of making *Life and Work* available to readers and potential new readers. Assuming *Life and Work* continues to grow its digital and internet presence (and it must), a number of new avenues open up to promote and introduce the magazine to new readers.

These include basic advertising channels like Google Adwords where key search words and terms can be targeted, cookie based interactive advertising on specific and appropriate websites through to integrating a sophisticated Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) system into the backend of the website to aid turning visitors to the website into subscribers to the magazine.

Life and Work should also consider enhancing its profile. Targeted advertising can help achieve this, as can engaging professional PR expertise. Using these methods correctly will see an increase in awareness and perception of *Life and Work*, and should lead to an increase in sales and interactions.

The Editor of a publication with as strong a readership as *Life and Work* should be in demand from broadcasters as a commentator. Many issues of public policy deal with significant ethical and religious issues. Positioning the Editor as a trusted commentator is an important way of building brand, and reach. This could only be done, however, if the Editor had additional resource to shift the focus of the workload from dealing with day-to-day operational issues to more strategic ones.

Working with a professional PR consultant should allow the magazine to be promoted each month. *Life and Work* should be breaking stories that are followed up by mainstream media. The quality of the writing is high, articles deal with topical issues and the breadth of views contained might surprise a few people. Making an impact on the wider news agenda will also help to deal with the misperception that the publication is only of interest to people attached to a church.

All the above require investment of time and money. It is unrealistic to expect the current team to deliver what is needed without additional resources.

The scarcity of resources currently available fully explains why much of what has been outlined here hasn't been happening. In addition, the team lacks marketing and sales expertise, and it does not have ready access to people who understand new media and how to maximise its potential.

An individual focusing on the 'business' side of the magazine would make a difference. *Life and Work* needs someone tasked with implementing an agreed business strategy, engaging with stakeholders and driving circulation. Content is the primary battleground in the development of online platforms. With the business side being developed, the Editor and editorial staff would be able to focus more clearly on content.

Even in today's multi-media environment, content is king. The best way for *Life and Work* to grow its readership is to continue to produce well-written, relevant and interesting stories.

It is the job of marketing to draw people's attention to the content and encourage them to try the magazine. At the end of the day, it's the quality of the publication itself that will determine if they remain regular readers.

With a circulation of more than 20,000 copies, *Life and Work* has a healthy readership. As identified in the SWOT analysis the number of sales compares favourably to commercial publications.

It sells to a committed customer base therefore it does not have to compete issue by issue for customers.

As a business model, subscription is a strong and successful one. Many commercial magazines put considerable effort into building a subscriber base, often offering lavish inducements to new subscribers. Subscription makes sense from a number of perspectives. It:

- establishes a core base of committed readers;
- evens out fluctuations in circulation by reducing reliance on one-off sales;
- maximises income to the publisher by cutting out costs of sales through third parties.

By reducing risk, magazines with a strong subscriber base are better able to plan, stay within budget, and offer advertisers security that they will be able to reach their target market.

In theory, the *Life and Work* subscription model should also provide a network of 'volunteer' sales people across Scotland. If properly motivated, they provide an important route to market the magazine to new readers.

It is important to recognise that the print industry is undergoing considerable change with the advent of new media platforms. Although some of these platforms are a threat - not least by soaking up discretionary time available to people to consume traditional media - they also offer an opportunity to promote existing publications, and to reach new readers.

Print is undergoing profound change, but it is likely to remain part of the overall media landscape for some time to come. The advent of new media platforms is not unique to the 20th and 21st centuries. History suggests that new and older media platforms can happily coexist. Indeed, with time some media platforms can reassert themselves in the consumer's consciousness. Radio, for example, has fared particularly well in recent years; vinyl recordings are currently making a comeback as a premium alternative to music that is downloaded digitally.

Publishers now make use of multiple platforms, with their publications wholly or in part available in print and digitally. The most recent figures on the economic value of the UK publishing sector put its value at £9.7 billion. It employs more than a quarter of a million people, and that figure is rising.

Objectives

While there are clearly challenges, it is important that the church recognises that *Life and Work* is in a strong position. Although there is some attrition due to the age profile of its core readership, there is no sense that the magazine is in a circulation free fall, or that it has outgrown its purpose and usefulness to the church.

Thus far, it appears to have weathered the challenges faced by other titles by the advent of new media. Again that is in part due to the nature of its readers. In spite of that, it is crucial that the title does not become complacent. A failure to address new media as part of the long-term vision and strategy for the title will lead to an inevitable decline and fall.

Therefore the first objective is necessarily defensive. *Life and Work* must protect its existing subscriber base, ensuring it does not suffer a gradual erosion in sales - either through the attrition of age, or because readers no longer feel they are getting value for money from their purchase.

The second objective springs from the observation that attack is the best line of defence. It may be counter-intuitive to suggest that *Life and Work* could realistically

increase its monthly sales given the broader environment. As has been well-rehearsed publishing is going through a revolution; as is the church. Much energy has been expended on analysing trends in church-going, the position of the church in society today, and its relevance in the modern age. We do not intend to deal with them here, other than to say we are optimistic about its capacity to meet the challenges. In addition, we believe *Life and Work* has not yet achieved what might be called 'saturation point' in terms of circulation.

On that basis, the objectives can be stated as a:

- determination to maintain current circulation levels;
- desire to increase circulation in real terms year on year.

Defence

Regardless of the media platform used; the layout and design of pages, in print or online; the quality of the print stock, or the complexity of coding used for a website design, a magazine stands or falls on its content, and the relevance of that content to the reader. It is remarkable what readers will put up with if the content is something they value. It is also the case that style over substance is not a recipe for success in publishing.

Life and Work has the advantage of being produced by a professional Editor who understands the readership, in all its complexity. Its Editor knows the type of stories and issues that are of interest to readers; the Editor is well connected internally and externally, and understands the church and where it sits within Scottish society.

Although it is part of the church's Mission and Discipleship Council, the Editor has complete independence in making judgements about the content of the magazine. This is as it should be. Magazines do not tend to succeed if they are put together by committee. They require an individual heading them with a vision for the publication; a willingness to take tough decisions about what to cover, where necessary, and the inner strength to stand up to pressure from special interest groups.

Independence gives *Life and Work* credibility with its readers. Were it to be seen as an extension of the church's public relations machinery, its medium and long-term future as a paid for publication would be in doubt.

One of the magazine's unique selling points (USPs) is its role as being the voice and champion of individual members of the church, rather than the church as a corporate entity. In that it has a challenge function, should it be needed. It says much about the astute way the relationship has been handled by the Editor and the church that *Life and Work* has not come into conflict with its parent in recent years.

It is critical that *Life and Work* remains clearly identified with the membership of the church, and is seen to be directly concerned with the issues that affect them through their lives as people of faith. A magazine survives only through the active support of its readers. Getting even closer to the readers must be a priority in the battle to sustain the current subscription base, and to increase it.

Among the changes brought about by emerging technologies, perhaps the most significant is the way the wall between publisher and public has been broken down. Once the wall was breached only by a letterbox. Letters to the Editor were the traditional means of communication, and even then the Editor always reserved the right of final reply. Today the walls are porous, the dialogue is two way, and no-one has the last word.

While there are real dangers in the ability of people to have unfettered access to the airwaves, the momentum is unstoppable. The imperative today is to ensure that the voices of those who would misuse their access to the media are not allowed free-rein. In any case, debate is healthy and criticism can be seen as an opportunity to learn, or to make your own case more clearly.

From *Life and Work's* perspective, the consequence of this change in behaviours is the need to embrace direct engagement with its readers, more fully than at present. But that cannot be done with the current resource, in particular the time pressure on the Editor that means the

Editor is confined to the office for too much of the time and doing work that takes the Editor away from journalistic engagement, or reduces the opportunity for direct engagement on issues of current concern through social media. The benefits of this type of activity are clear. They include building the *Life and Work* brand and its visibility, actively promoting the publication and encouraging more subscriptions, building reader engagement and reader loyalty.

With the development of reader-generated content online, and the establishment of a lively *Life and Work* community on Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms, the magazine can be liberated from its monthly cycle and establish itself as a lively hub for discussion and debate about and with the church throughout the week.

While the opportunities afforded by this type of engagement are significant, it should be recognised that this cannot be done in a half-hearted way. It is better to do nothing than to approach it in an ad hoc way. There is nothing worse for readers than to find themselves involved in a one-sided conversation.

Attack

A decision has to be made about the key underlying principle for *Life and Work's* marketing strategy. One option is managed decline - a reality for many businesses that have traditionally made their money through mass distribution. The newspaper industry is a good example - stripping out costs and identifying new market niches or products, while developing their new media offerings, is giving many established businesses hope that they will be able to ride out this economic challenge. With costs already at a minimum, the scope for *Life and Work* to do the same more cheaply is limited.

A second more bullish approach is to look at opportunities to increase circulation, generating more income to invest in the product. This course assumes that the publication has not reached saturation in the market place. If just one in five members of the church could be persuaded to subscribe, the circulation would nearly double, generating more income from the cover price and from advertising.

On the basis that the church is on a mission to evangelise, and significantly increase engagement among its members, it would seem logical to use *Life and Work* as a key tool in that task. Communications is a key skill, and *Life and Work* not only provides a channel for communication, but it also has a professional understanding of how that might be best done. If this approach were to be adopted, a number of key questions have to be asked through a properly funded and comprehensive market research project. Questions include:

- What is the awareness of the magazine within the church? Regular attenders and occasional attenders? In other churches? Among key opinion formers?
- Is *Life and Work* valued?
- Do people know how to subscribe? What would persuade non-readers to subscribe?
- What price would they be prepared to pay? Would they be willing to pay a premium given the intrinsic support the magazine provides for the church's mission?
- How many subscribers read publications online? What are the platforms they use? Would they be prepared to pay for an online version of the title rather than a print version?
- What is the penetration of tablets, smart phones, Kindles and other devices among the current readership? Among potential readers?
- How many readers are involved in social networking?
- What inducements are necessary? Gifts to take out a subscription? Reduced cover price?
- Is there demand for single copy sales?
- If the magazine were available through newsagents, what would its potential sale be?
- Given the church's leadership role in Scotland's faith community, does it have a role in reporting broader religious, ethical and moral issues?

This is not an exhaustive list of questions.

The strategy can only be set once these questions have been answered. The market research should be both qualitative and quantitative, with the findings used to inform future planning.

From that, a decision can be taken about the sales/subscription targets to be set for the Editor and the *Life and Work* team, and the associated marketing strategy to help them deliver on those targets.

Action

This report does not set out to dictate how the *Life and Work* team should approach the specific strategy and tactics to build the subscriber base. Those decisions are best left to those responsible for implementing them. Nonetheless, it is worth rehearsing here some of the key steps that will need to happen. It should be noted that the review group does not believe that managed decline should be an option, nor is it necessary. The group believes that with vision, and a coherent set of strategies - business, marketing, and editorial - designed to deliver the vision, *Life and Work* can grow in terms of its subscriber base, and its influence. It also believes that an online dimension, properly resourced, is critical for the long-term future of the magazine.

Key steps that need to be undertaken are

- A comprehensive market research project designed to get a better understanding of the current readers and their needs, and to assess the potential to grow the subscriber base.
- The development of a marketing strategy designed to build awareness of the brand, increase *Life and Work's* sphere of influence, grow subscriptions (with the establishment of realistic, but stretched targets).
- The development of a deliverable new media strategy, with the publication of the magazine online (paid-for, or free), platforms to include web, tablet, smart phone and Kindle.
- The development of a comprehensive social media presence for *Life and Work*, delivered as part of the new media strategy, with the intention of ensuring the

magazine is seen as a constant presence in the lives of subscribers and online followers.

In addition to editorial responsibilities, the Editor should be seen as the magazine's chief marketing officer, responsible for building the brand, and accountable for that. To support the editor, *Life and Work* should employ a Business Development Manager, reporting to the Editor, tasked with delivering the marketing strategy. Objectives should be specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-specific.

The editorial team should be responsible for providing content for social media platforms - on a daily basis - and developing opportunities for subscribers to engage. The ambition should be to create a sense of community for the readers.

Promotional events should be part of the marketing mix, with roadshows involving the Editor, columnists and figures from the church. The magazine should also be seen as a hub for debate about religious, ethical and moral issues. The mainstream media should be looking to *Life and Work* as a source for stories in this area of public life, and looking to its writers to make informed comment.

To deliver these objectives, the Editor's workload will need to be examined. The Editor's priority should be the provision of editorial leadership, ideas generation, commissioning, the development of content on all platforms, and the development of the brand.

Financing

Life and Work generates its income from its cover price and advertising. Sales are in the region of £0.5m a year. The magazine is comparatively cheap for a monthly title: six issues for £11 for new subscribers, £24 for a full year. The accepted wisdom is that readers are sensitive to price increases and reluctant to accept even modest increases in price.

Market research will be better able to identify the pressure points in relation to price, and tease out what readers value and what they might be prepared to pay. There is

no question that subscribers have been conditioned to expect to pay a low price for the magazine. This needs to be redressed. *Life and Work* is one of the tools the church uses to achieve its mission. It is a critical tool in spreading the Gospel, keeping members of the church informed about church news and news about issues in the wider world that affect them, and it is a platform for debate within and about the church.

Life and Work also helps the church remain focused outside the periods of the General Assembly.

Subscribers are not just buying a magazine, they are investing in the work of the church, and this needs to be a key message as part of an overall strategy to increase the cover price, providing the resources to invest further in the magazine and making it more effective as a key communications tool.

This is not the place to explore the specific price point, suffice to say that *Life and Work's* cover price should be positioned somewhere within a band from £2.50-£3.50. Market research will allow a more accurate price point to be identified. Reductions in the cover price for those subscribers who sign up to long-term direct debit arrangements are common within the sector, and should be put in place here.

Currently, people selling subscriptions receive a discount on the cover price. In some places, this is passed to the individual subscriber, in others it is used as discretionary funds by the local church. It is common for sales incentives to be given, currently some £90k goes in commission - money that could be invested in the magazine.

This arrangement needs to be looked at as part of the overall pricing strategy. The sums are small when spread across the agent network, but together they could fund two or three posts, transforming the publication and the service, and ultimately helping deliver the church's mission to spread the Word.

Any change in cover price and subscription rates would need to be properly managed, and supported by a re-

launch of the magazine - potentially with greater pagination and new content, as well as an extensive marketing drive to communicate the work and worth of the magazine to the church.

This could and should be done after the market research exercise referred to earlier.

Governance

Governance arrangements for *Life and Work* are best described as light touch. The key figure is the Editor who is accountable to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

The Editor has complete responsibility for the content of the magazine, and is accountable for it. The principle of editorial independence is an essential part of the magazine's brand. It ensures that it is not seen as propaganda from Church of Scotland HQ. If it has 'a side', the magazine is on the side of its readers and the ordinary members of the church.

Although it has a special relationship with the church, part of *Life and Work's* role is to hold church authorities to account. Consequently, its relationship with the church's Communications Office is 'arm's length'. This challenge function is important, and in granting the Editor independence the church has recognised that.

Over the years, a number of different arrangements have been in place in terms of support for the Editor and the magazine. Since 2005, the Mission and Discipleship Council has been responsible for the business management of the magazine. Until 2010, this was handled through the Publishing Committee when it passed to the direct responsibility of the Mission and Discipleship Council.

In practice, the Editor discharges this duty on a day-to-day basis, in addition to responsibilities as editor, with the recent added work created by the website and social media engagement. This is not a satisfactory situation.

When business needs arise - such as tenders, procurement of goods and services and so on – the Editor works through them with the Council’s Resources Group, before they are presented to the full Council for formal approval.

There is scope for the General Assembly and the Finance Department to make suggestions and shape improvements to business operations. In this circumstance, suggestions would be submitted through the Resources Group and the Council for discussion and a decision.

The group believes it is important the Editor remains accountable to the General Assembly. However, it also believes that *Life and Work* would benefit from the establishment of a management board, responsible for the overall strategic direction of *Life and Work*. The board would not be involved in editorial decision-making or day-to-day operational issues. The board should comprise people with appropriate skills for a church-based publication in the 21st century. These might include: business experience at board level, publishing, finance, marketing and public relations. The board would provide a trusted and independent source of advice for the team in developing the business.

It would also be responsible for ensuring *Life and Work* works within an agreed strategic framework, achieves agreed commercial goals, and embraces the challenges and opportunities publishing faces in the coming years.

APPENDIX III CARTA REVIEW REPORT

The Review Group was established in May 2013 in response to the following deliverance:

Instruct the Mission and Discipleship Council to set up a “review process” of the work of CARTA with a remit to investigate the ways in which the Committee may serve the changing needs of the Church in Scotland for building provision and report to the General Assembly of 2014.

The Group’s members are Graeme Roberts (Convener), Dan Carmichael, Campbell Duff, Paul Goode and Alison Mehigan. Nigel Robb was Secretary until his retirement from the Council on 31 March 2014 but kindly agreed to continue as the Group’s adviser; he was succeeded as Secretary by Graham Fender-Allison.

The Group has met on ten occasions and has consulted representatives of Presbytery Property Committees, congregations which have sought CARTA’s advice, the General Trustees and the Conveners of the Joint Emerging Church Group and the Mission Forum.

These consultations suggested that the service provided by CARTA and the General Trustees would be improved by clarifying their respective roles and responsibilities. The aim would be to streamline and simplify the process of accessing advice and obtaining approval for alterations and revising the paperwork required in order to avoid duplication. It would create a “single gateway” – a central point of contact for all enquiries regarding church buildings; offering more guidance and advice to congregations considering or planning major alterations. It would be responsible for organising joint training events for Presbyteries and congregations, possibly on a regional basis; and improving access to web-based resources.

The Group’s Interim Report to the 2014 General Assembly set out its approach to its remit and outlined the rationale and development of CARTA since 1934. It clarified CARTA’s role in relation to the Church’s privilege of “ecclesiastical exemption” from listed building planning consent. It has now proposed a more pro-active role for CARTA; considered other ways in which it might serve the future needs of the Church. Along with this, it has reviewed its composition and the terms of service of its members; confirmed that it was appropriately located within the Resourcing Worship section of the Mission and Discipleship Council; and identified several areas where the service it provides in support of the General Trustees might be improved.

The 2014 General Assembly received the report and approved the following deliverances:

- A. *Instruct CARTA, in support of the General Trustees, to take on a more pro-active role with Presbyteries in stimulating and supporting congregations to think creatively about how their buildings might be adapted for worship and witness in the 21st century (5).*
- B. *Encourage CARTA and the General Trustees to give further consideration to improving the service they provide to Presbyteries and congregations through enhanced communication and collaboration (6).*
- C. *Instruct the CARTA Review Group to resolve the question of the terms of service of members of the Committee with the Council of Assembly and to bring a revised remit to the 2015 General Assembly (7).*

The Convener and Secretary subsequently met with David Robertson and Brian Waller (General Trustees) to progress the first two of these and with the Convener and Secretary of the Council of Assembly regarding the third. The Review Group also considered a paper on the work of the Church of England's Council for the Care of Churches.

(A) Stimulating and supporting congregations to think creatively

The General Trustees have indicated that they would welcome CARTA's support in pursuing their aim to be more strategic and pro-active by encouraging congregations to reflect on their mission and how their church buildings might be adapted for the purposes of worship and witness in the 21st century.

The Review Group has progressed Deliverance 5 in the following ways:

1. Publications

It has commissioned and published information on the CARTA webpage of the *resourcing mission* website:

- *History of CARTA* – an expanded version of the paper prepared by Nigel Robb on how the Committee's development was shaped between 1934 and 2005 by the changing needs of the Church;

- *The Setting of Presbyterian Worship* – a historical and theological overview of the purpose and design of Church buildings in the Church of Scotland, as a reference point for congregations contemplating alterations to their buildings;
- *Notes for Congregations to Guide Discussion with Architects* – practical advice based on *The Setting of Presbyterian Worship*.

2. Quick Guides

This series has been enhanced by the publication of guidance on Access for All, Audio Visual, Church Lighting, Dementia Friendly Church Buildings, Organs and Musical Instruments, Reordering Church Interiors, and Sacramental Vessels. Further guides are planned.

3. Gallery of Images

The CARTA webpage contains a gallery of images illustrating some of the lighting, stained glass and reordering projects that the Committee has been involved in. These will be added to.

4. Case Studies

As resources permit, it is planned to create a series of online case studies as a further stimulus and support for congregations considering various kinds of improvements to their buildings.

(B) Enhanced communication and collaboration with the General Trustees

Deliverance 6 has been addressed in the following ways:

1. Joint Events

During 2014 a series of well-attended joint seminars for congregational property conveners was held in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Inverness and London; further joint seminars are planned for 2015-16. There was also an opportunity to promote the work of CARTA at a joint fringe event at the 2014 General Assembly.

2. Single Gateway and Consolidated Application Form

The General Trustees and CARTA have created a clearly signposted and easily accessible single gateway ("one-stop-shop") for dealing with all property related matters,

including enquiries and requests for advice about and applications for approval of alterations to church buildings. In place of the two separate forms currently in use, there will now be a single consolidated and simplified form for completion by those seeking advice or approval.

The single gateway will be operated by the General Trustees, who will forward requests requiring action by CARTA and inform applicants of the outcomes. Once a request has been referred to CARTA, however, the latter will deal directly with the applicant until a final decision has been reached. The new system will be launched at the 2015 General Assembly and will come into operation on 1 June 2015.

3. Clarification of CARTA's role

During the Review Group's consultations in 2013 it became evident that there was some uncertainty amongst both Presbyteries and congregations as to the respective roles and responsibilities of CARTA and the General Trustees in relation to the alteration of church buildings, particularly as regards the kind of proposals that CARTA is authorised to approve without reference to the General Trustees.

The General Trustees' *Guidelines for Congregational Property Conveners for Control over Work at Buildings*, together with the accompanying flowchart and Appendix III, is being revised to take account of the introduction of the single gateway. At the same time, the opportunity has been taken to provide clear information in CARTA's revised remit about the kinds of alterations that CARTA is authorised to approve on behalf of the General Trustees.

It has been agreed that CARTA will only deal with cases involving alterations to church halls if explicitly invited to do so by the General Trustees.

CARTA's role in relation to the mentoring of congregations undertaking major projects, feasibility studies and plans for new buildings has also been clarified.

4. Information and Resources

The web pages of the General Trustees and CARTA are being reviewed and revised to ensure that information

and resources relating to buildings are easily accessed from both directions and contain no ambiguities, inconsistencies or contradictions.

5. Internal Communication

In order to assist collaborative working, the General Trustees now have access to CARTA's Online Information Centre and to the spreadsheet used to monitor the progress of requests and applications. Draft agendas and minutes are routinely copied to the General Trustees.

6. Representation

The General Trustees will continue to be represented on CARTA but on the same basis as those appointed by outside bodies. The person appointed will be expected to attend meetings but will not be required to take part in CARTA visits.

7. Approval under Powers

The General Trustees have confirmed that the Convener and Secretary of CARTA are authorised to approve "uncontroversial, unopposed and routine" requests for approval on a case by case basis subject to each decision being homologated at the next meeting of CARTA.

(C) Terms of Office of CARTA members and Revised Remit

1. Terms of Office of CARTA members

In its Interim Report the Review Group drew attention to the importance of ensuring that CARTA has access to the wide range of knowledge, skills and expertise required for its work through the recruitment and retention of sufficient suitably qualified volunteers, both to serve on the Committee and to assist with visits. It also argued that the current restriction on the period of office of CARTA members is not appropriate for a body that has a service rather than a policy making function and that CARTA requires a measure of continuity of membership to maintain standards and ensure that its specialist expertise is available on a regional basis.

In its Report (paras 11.3-11.6) the Council of Assembly has accordingly agreed to seek the approval of the General Assembly for a small increase in the number of CARTA's

voting members from 17 to 18; it has also agreed with the Legal Questions Committee that the latter will move an amendment to Standing Orders to permit CARTA to have a term of office of not more than eight years for its General Assembly appointed voting members. This would ensure that CARTA has longer term access in its decision making to the accrued experience that its members acquire through participation in congregational visits, discussion of the issues raised by visit reports and presentations by outside experts on particular topics.

2. Revised Remit

The Council of Assembly has also agreed to seek approval from the General Assembly for a revision of CARTA's remit so that this accurately reflects its responsibilities as these have evolved. The terms of the proposed revised remit, which has been agreed with the General Trustees, can be found in Appendix 3 of the Report of the Council of Assembly.

APPENDIX IV

CARTA MEETING DATES FOR 2015/2016

2015: 25 June, 17 September, 26 November

2016: 25 February, 28 April

APPENDIX V

MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP COUNCIL REPORT ON THE FUNDING OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH ASSEMBLY IN CONSULTATION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH ASSEMBLY AND COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY

1) Background to this report

In 2014 the General Assembly resolved to:

- *Affirm the importance of the National Youth Assembly in the life of the Church and in particular in fulfilling the strategic priorities of empowering young people and developing leadership.*
- *Instruct the Council, in consultation with the Council of Assembly and young people, to review the way in which the National Youth Assembly is funded, to*

further explore partnerships with other councils of the Church and to bring a report to the General Assembly 2015 with a view to securing sufficient budget for its ongoing development and to securing its place as an integral part of the national Church.

This report coincides with National Youth Assembly (NYA) entering its 21st year of existence. We, therefore, feel that as well as reviewing the future funding of the NYA the year of 2015 provides a reason to celebrate the 'coming of age' of the NYA. This is an opportunity to make a fresh start, building on and learning from the past and carving out a new future. We see the possibilities of a new partnership between the Church and its young adults which could provide hope for the future. We want the NYA to appeal to the breadth of the Church of Scotland, celebrating diversity of opinion and worship styles.

2) The NYA: a brief history

The NYA began in 1994 when the Church of Scotland was approached by the BBC to help them produce a programme on the opinions of young Christians.¹ This took the form of a residential experience for around 250 young adults focussed around debates of General Assembly reports and was chaired by the Moderator of the General Assembly assisted by the Principal Clerk.²

Following the success of this event, a similar event was held in 1997 and the NYA became an annual feature of Kirk life.³ The event was initially the responsibility of the Board of Parish Education, and latterly of the Mission and Discipleship Council.

In 1998, youth representatives appointed from Presbyteries and from the NYA took part in the deliberations of the General Assembly. Since 2003, the Moderator of the NYA has presented a report to the

¹ *Review of the NYA*, Mission and Discipleship Council, February 2011

² *Confidence in a Changing Church*, Finlay AJ MacDonald, Saint Andrew Press 2004

³ *Review of the NYA*, Chris MacRae, Mission and Discipleship Council, February 2011

General Assembly⁴ and in that year the General Assembly first remitted matters to the NYA for consideration.⁵

In the early 2000s, the NYA moved from debating General Assembly reports and deliverances to discussing topics identified by Assembly councils but producing their own deliverance. In tandem with this, the NYA began to appoint a Moderator and Clerk from within its own ranks as well as enabling volunteers from its number to help plan and lead the event.⁶ The NYA also moved from being held in the Assembly Hall to venues in Edinburgh, Dundee, Stirling and Aberfoyle.

A review following the 2007 NYA concluded: *“The event is designed to give young people a voice in the life of the Church of Scotland. Everything else comes after that. That is our key purpose.”*⁷ To this end, different discussion topics and styles of debate were tried and, in 2013, the NYA moved to a less formal open-forum discussion model.⁸ It was also in 2013 that the lower age limit for delegates was increased from 16 to 17.

In addition to this core purpose, the NYA has, for many young people, provided a reason for remaining part of the Church of Scotland, and has been a path for many into various ministries, including as elders, youth workers and ministers of word and sacrament. *“The General Assembly is encouraged to realise that many of the young people who attend the NYA continue to develop their faith and work out new ways of being committed to the church and their communities. Youth Assembly delegates regularly attend Enquirers’ Conferences to explore ministry in the church.”*⁹

⁴ *Inside Verdict*, ed. Steve Mallon, Scottish Christian Press 2003

⁵ *Confidence in a Changing Church*, Finlay AJ MacDonald, Saint Andrew Press 2004

⁶ *Speaking from the Heart*, Marjory A MacLean, Shoving Leopard 2010

⁷ *End of Part One*, Steve Mallon, *Mission and Discipleship Council*, December 2007

⁸ *Minutes of the Proceedings of the NYA of the Church of Scotland 2013*, General Assembly Volume of Reports 2014

⁹ *Report of the Mission and Discipleship Council, General Assembly Volume of Reports 2008*

The NYA is an annual residential event for those aged 17-25 within, and associated with, the Church of Scotland and forms part of the Church’s National Youth Strategy. In its role in “empowering young people” and “developing leadership” it fulfils at least two aspects of the Church’s strategic framework as agreed by the General Assembly in 2011.

The NYA has played a vital role in enabling young people to take an active role in decision making in the Church, enriching the work of it on a local and national level. The event is more than a youth weekend away, and it does not seek to imitate the General Assembly’s formal style. Throughout its history of innovative adaptation the NYA has enthused a generation of lone young people in their local churches and has developed leaders. The NYA has given young people in our Church the confidence to have a voice in the Church’s affairs.

Through its programme, the NYA has also allowed young people to experience forms of worship new to them and broaden their horizons from their experience of local church. Some have found it an important aspect of their faith journey. The community of peers in a Christian context has allowed strong relationships to be built.

The NYA has, therefore, been an integral part of the work the Church of Scotland with young people. It is not a substitute for local youth work, though has historically complemented local youth work. For the General Assembly and its agencies, the NYA has acted as a mouthpiece and constituency of considered opinion. For young people the NYA is an opportunity to be heard; a source of mutual encouragement from other young Christians; and acts as an annual, temporary ‘incubator’ community which has incidentally encouraged young people to explore and enter vocations in the church.¹⁰

3) The NYA: its purpose and benefits

The primary aim of the NYA is to give a platform for young

¹⁰ Of the type outlined in *Report of the Ministries Council*, General Assembly Volume of reports 2014, 4/7-18.

people to have a voice in decision-making within the Church of Scotland. It does this through facilitating conversations between young people who are involved in the Church and the General Assembly. As the only national gathering of young people within the Church of Scotland, there are a number of benefits which flow naturally from creating this space. These should be both actively encouraged and also taken into account in the future reviews of the NYA. For these reasons it is useful to have a set of statements which help to enshrine the wider ethos of the NYA and its benefits to the wider Church. Following consultation with young people¹¹ it is proposed that the primary aim of the NYA is:

- To provide a platform for young people to voice their opinions and actively participate in decision making within the Church of Scotland.

In doing this the NYA of the Church of Scotland:

- Enables young people from all over Scotland to gather and worship God.
- Encourages young people in their faith and personal growth.
- Equips young people to serve in their local congregations.
- Provides a safe place to learn about and discuss issues relevant to the Church and to society.
- Provides opportunities to learn about the Church of Scotland.
- Encourages dialogue with those of other denominations, faiths, and countries.
- Encourages ecumenical relationships among young people.
- Equips young people to engage with the Councils and committees of the Church of Scotland.

- Enables fellowship and community among young Christians from all over Scotland.
- Develops leadership among young people.
- Creates a community in which young people discern God's call in their lives.
- Provides a place for young people to learn about vocations, particularly in relation to the recognised ministries of the Church of Scotland.

4) The NYA: Cost to delegates, venue changes, number in attendance

The NYA, since 2007, has been held in five locations: the Apex Hotel in Dundee, then Stirling University, where the location was regarded as far from ideal with the delegates too scattered around the campus. It returned to the West Park Conference Centre, Dundee for two years but, on cost grounds, the NYA met in 2014 at Gartmore House where it is returning in 2015.

Although the cost for delegates had risen steadily from £75 in 2009 to £110 in 2012, using Gartmore as a venue allowed the cost to be reduced to £85. There has always been a reduced price for those coming from churches in Priority Areas or from the islands. While some of the delegates are in employment, for others, at school or at University or College, it can be quite demanding, on top of student debt or no independent source of income. We encourage congregations and/or Presbyteries to consider subsidising the cost of attendance and travel in part or in whole. In so doing they will not only make attendance possible but increase their ownership of the event, making it more likely that they will receive back, in some form, a report on the NYA.

Over the years the Council has resourced the NYA with staff and finance. Funds used for the NYA need to be justified in the Council's overall strategy of reaching and supporting this age group. We want to invest in young adults, both as they grow in the church and as they reach out to their contemporaries. A full account of the facts and figures can be found in Note 1 at the end of this report.

¹¹ This report draws on four main sources of consultation with young people: event feedback from recent years of NYA; consultation in connection with the 2011 review of NYA; and discussions at several NYA planning weekends open to anyone with a connection to the NYA; and consultation with the elected youth representatives of the NYA.

5) **The future: striking a balance between security and review**

Uncertainty about the future of the NYA had, it became clear, been undermining morale especially among those responsible for planning and organising the event. Discussions about the value and cost of the event, its length and format, and its strategic importance both to those who attend and to the church are not unreasonable. However a lack of clarity as to its future removed security in planning and restricted opportunities to develop the work. Financial security will give it a secure and strategic future which will allow the NYA to flourish.

Following the endorsement of the event as such at the General Assembly 2014 we want to balance security with review. Guaranteeing funding for the event for three years provides security for development and experiment, whilst scrutiny and re-evaluation should take place during the first year of each three year cycle. Any minor changes could be implemented immediately, but significant ones may be introduced at a more appropriate time.

Building this helpful balance of security and review into the life cycle of the NYA is seen as a positive way forward. The Council is committed to the financial support of the NYA for the years 2015-2018 in its current form. It is suggested that the NYA be reviewed during 2015-2016, allowing for any significant changes to be reported to the General Assembly of 2016 on the understanding that such significant changes, if any, would not take effect until after the NYA event of 2018. This gives the leadership space to develop the NYA while ensuring it continues to play a strategically important and effective role as part of overall Council policy. The findings of the review should be in the public domain for the sake of transparency.

6) **The NYA: an event for the *whole* Church**

We would like to encourage congregations and Presbyteries to take greater ownership of the NYA. This can be done in a variety of ways.

The first would be to ask congregations to inform the Presbytery if one or more of their young people will be attending the NYA. The delegate(s) could then go with the

blessing of both congregation and Presbytery. Those who attend could be asked, after the event, to provide a short, written report for their Church magazine and also the Kirk Session and the Presbytery. It may well be that they could also be invited to speak either in a Church service of their own congregation or to their Kirk Session or Presbytery, thus raising awareness, prayer and interest in the needs and challenges of this age group. This would also be in line with the General Assembly report on Decision Making and Young People which was received in 2014.

Secondly the Council encourages congregations and Presbyteries to make known to their young people that the Council is willing to help provide financial assistance to help young people attend NYA where cost would otherwise be an obstacle. Young people will be able to apply to this fund when they sign up to attend NYA. This provides a streamlined improvement on expecting young people to ask their Kirk Sessions or Presbyteries for financial help to attend the NYA, particularly in cases where local congregations themselves may have limited funds to help in this regard. Applications for assistance could be made on-line at the time of booking.

The final way Presbyteries can support young people having involvement in the wider church is by encouraging them to be youth representatives to the General Assembly. Each Presbytery can elect one youth representative to the General Assembly, who attends alongside those young people elected as youth representatives of the NYA. This has proved a very enriching experience for delegates who have proved worthy of the trust invested in them, by working hard and actively participating in the work of the General Assembly. It is a concern that not all Presbyteries choose or are able to identify suitable delegates. The NYA may prove a good place where such people from that age group can be identified and encouraged to become delegates at a future General Assembly. Many who have provided leadership at the NYA have also been youth delegates at the General Assembly.

We believe that encouraging young people to take part in the NYA and to be youth representatives at the General

Assembly can help to ensure a bright future for the Church at all levels. There is much to learn for young people with these opportunities and it is generally felt that young people who have engaged with these opportunities have returned to their local congregations enthused to start new projects, take on leadership roles, participate in local decision making, participate in Presbytery and much more. They also often return with a renewed sense of faith in God that encourages others. It is the Church's job to nurture this for the benefit of the young people, the National Church, Presbyteries and the local church. We would encourage congregations to actively encourage young people to participate, to be part of a movement to promote the value that young people bring to the Church of Scotland now and in the future. We would encourage this to happen across the breadth of the Church, ensuring that the national youth involvement represents and celebrates the diversity of the Church.

7) **The NYA: Event *and* living community**

The NYA has the exciting prospect of continuing to ensure those between 17-25 feel, and are, fairly represented within the Church of Scotland and find a welcoming place where they and their faith can develop. We recognise, however, that the weekend event itself cannot be a standalone event. Re-introducing live streaming or recordings of the event would open up opportunities for many more people who cannot attend the event to see the discussions that are taking place. Having been successfully done in the past, we see no reason as to why this should not happen again.

Delegates of the Assembly, along with all other young members of the Church of Scotland, are welcomed into the Church of Scotland Youth (COSY) Facebook group. This offers a space for members to discuss topics of their choice and to share information about the work they and others have been carrying out in their local congregation and

Note 1: NYA attendance and costs of recent years

community. Added to this, a recently set up Pinterest page¹² allows those that view it to see multiple links to events and information boards that may be relevant to them.

This organic and self-sustaining online community has led to regional COSY events allowing young members of the Church to meet up with local people of the same age and share time, fellowship and conversation with each other.¹³

The online community that has built up is a working example of how the NYA has helped to hold and develop the faith of the 17-25 age group within the Church of Scotland. The importance of this online community is evident to those involved, and suggests a way in which the NYA can reach many more young Christians around Scotland.

8) **Conclusion**

While discussing the possibilities of future funding for the NYA, we have found that forming a group in which open and honest conversations could take place has been an immensely positive experience. In particular, we consider that there has been value in a regular meeting of the various stakeholders in the NYA and that building on these conversations and relationships will be valuable in the future. The Mission and Discipleship Council commits itself to considering how best to carry on the momentum gained in the process of compiling this report. We look forward to the implementation of our recommendations for a secure and flourishing NYA and wish God's blessing on the NYA in this its twenty-first year and into the future.

¹² www.pinterest.com/cofsyouth

¹³ For example COSY Glasgow and COSY North

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Venue	Apex Hotel, Dundee	Stirling University	Stirling University	Westpark Dundee	Westpark Dundee	Westpark Dundee	Gartmore House, Aberfoyle
Staff	-	32 (choir 35)	30	25	13	15	15
Total delegates	225	169	150	139	134	111	100
Of which volunteers	-	20	27	25	25	18	13
M&D Cost	£75,346	£77,119 (choir £14,399)	£66,202	£45,189	£44,206	£37,041	£24,000
Delegate cost	£75	£75	£80	£100	£105	£105	£85
Volunteer cost	-	£50	£55	£75	£85	£105	£65
Priority Areas delegate cost	£25	£25	£40	£50	£50	£65	£50
Subsidy	£335	£456	£441	£325	£330	£334	£240

Note 2: Membership of reporting group

Rachel Hutcheson (Moderator of NYA 2014/2015)
 Colin Sinclair (Convener of Mission and Discipleship Council and member of Council of Assembly)
 Grant Barclay (Convener of Council of Assembly)
 Lynne McEwen (member of Mission and Discipleship)
 Darren Philip (member of Mission and Discipleship, former member of NYA)
 Andrew Kimmitt (member Council of Assembly and NYA)
 Lynsey Kimmitt (Moderator of NYA 2013/2014)
 Andrew MacPherson (representative of NYA)
 Ron Clarke (Team Leader of Congregational Learning in MDC)

Ronnie Black
 Liz Fisk
 Paul Goode
 Sheena Wurthman

“Life and Work” Review Group

Tom Collins
 John McCallum
 Marc Jones

Pray Now

Carol Ford (C)
 Peggy Ewart-Roberts
 Mary-Ann Rennie
 Ishbel McFarlane
 Mark Foster
 Adam Dillon
 Tina Kemp
 Rob McKenzie

Music Group

Iain McLarty
 Jane Bentley

APPENDIX VI**CO-OPTED MEMBERS ON GROUPS AND COMMITTEES****Resourcing Worship**

Norah Summers
 Dorothy Kinloch

Learning Disabilities Working Group

Ivy Blair

Margaret McLarty
Richard Michael

Liturgical Group

John Shaw-Dunn
Karen Hendry
Neil Gardner
Robin McKenzie

Why Believe?

Fiona Bullock
Gary Caldwell
Daniel Frank
Scott McRoberts
Ross Watters
Liam Fraser

Communications and Marketing Group

Peter Johnstone

Rural Working Group

Richard Begg

Ronnie Gall
Andy Campbell
Jim Alexander
David Logan

Children and Young People Group

Barbara McDade
Chris Long
Jen Robertson
Hannah McGregor
Alastair Ross

Joint Emerging Church Group

Tommy MacNeil
Doug Gay

CARTA

Gordon McFarlane
James G Cuthbertson