

**THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND - MINISTRIES COUNCIL
COUNCIL**

Stirling Court Hotel, University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4AE

Wednesday 31 August – Thursday 1 September 2016

MINUTE

PRESENT:

Convener: Rev Neil Glover

Vice-Conveners: Rev Colin Brough
Rev Derek Pope

Members: 33 others recorded in the Register of Attendance

Staff in Attendance: Jayne Scott plus 21 staff as recorded in the Register of Attendance

Also in Attendance: Rev Moira McDonald and Rev Norman Smith were in attendance as participants of a 'Take a Pew' session

Apologies: Apologies were noted in the sederunt

ACTION

12 Opening Worship

Rev Derek Pope opened the conference with worship on the theme of leadership.

Rev Ross Blackman, Rev Dorothy Granger and Rev David McLachlan were introduced and welcomed to their first meeting. The Rev Jayne Scott was also welcomed to her first meeting since beginning as Council Secretary in July.

13 Confidence in the Vision

Council was asked to consider what inspires people to want to enter into ministry and how the Council will support our Ministers? Many General Assembly Reports and papers over the years have attempted to define what ministry is and what the vision is for Church of Scotland ministry. The following were referenced by the Convener and are available on the Church of Scotland website: *Deacons of the Gospel – A Vision for Today : A ministry for Tomorrow*, 2001; *Enabling Ministries*, 2009; *Beyond 2020 – Towards a Flourishing Ministry*, 2014; *A Decade for Ministry*; 2015 and *The Future of Ministry*, 2016.

There have been arguments and discussions in early Church looking for definitions. A vision is something which inspires you to act and inspires others to act along with you. Not just a vision statement but something meaningful that people understand and want to be part of.

Ministries Council should focus on the ministries for which it has responsibility including Ordained Ministry of Word and Sacrament, Readers, Ordained Local Ministers, Deacons, Ministries Development Staff, Transition Ministers, Interim Ministers, Pioneer Ministers, Path of Renewal ministry etc.

14 Confidence in the Journey

Rev Norman Smith, minister of Granton and Convener of Mission & Discipleship Council, along with the Rev Moira McDonald, minister of Corstorphine Old, were in attendance as participants in a *Take a Pew* session. From Ministries Council the Rev Sarah Brown, Mrs Margaret Dundas, Rev Tommy MacNeil and Dr Andrew Todd also participated and the Rev Sarah Ross hosted a conversation.

Discussions included: What are the markers for a flourishing Church? How does the Minister help to make things flourish? How to be an enabler?

Members were asked to let the Convener know if they wished to be part of a small group to take these conversations forward. Details will be included in the Report to General Assembly.

15 Confidence in Our Training

The Council Secretary explained that there were ongoing discussions around training with the Rethinking Initial Training Project Group (RIT), Training Task Group and Education & Support Committee. Mrs Scott went on to share some thoughts on possible directions for a flexible and accessible educational programme, joint working with Mission & Discipleship Council, supportive supervision and delivery of an effective conference programme. Comments and questions on this information had been received from the Strategic Planning Group, Training Task Group and Education & Support Committee prior to presentation to Council.

RIT will reflect on how the training programme has developed over the years and the current strengths. They will consider the future for the process, what skills are needed in a minister, part-time and distance learning, how initial ministerial education might be improved and how to offer life-long learning. Council sought strong evaluation mechanisms and being able to train ecumenically. The group will bring a high-level draft proposal with figures and costings to the December Council meeting for discussion and decision.

Should Council agree to a rough shape for a way forward in December then RIT would be disbanded and a new implementation group formed to do more detailed work on the curriculum and how the programme would be validated. There would be discussions around Continuing Ministerial Development and relationships with academic providers. A paper setting out the process would be brought to Council in February and then included in the report to the General Assembly in 2017.

Colin Brough offered worship on the theme of teaching.

16 Confidence in Our Planning

Rev Tony Stephen, leader of the Presbytery Planning Review Group (PPRG), reported that the group had met and shared some initial thoughts on the challenges facing their Presbytery in terms of planning and what their attitude was to Presbytery Planning. There were common experiences with lack of local leadership, imagination and decision-making, unrealistic expectations from Congregations and Presbyteries, problems with linkages and buildings. There was also a lack of motivation to plan forward, combined with a skills shortage plus the potential for strong personalities who may be around for a long time.

The remit of the PPRG was to reflect on the principles and assumptions underlying the current planning cycle; to explore the extent to which these principles and assumptions are still relevant, given retirement profiles for ministers and the changing pattern of vocations and to offer proposals for a way forward which reflects current realities

Presbyteries have been creative and should now develop existing plans to prepare for growth rather than decline. The group will engage with the Panel on Review and Reform and Mission and Discipleship Council as well as encouraging Presbyteries to share the positive experiences with each other.

Business Session

On the morning of Thursday 1 September the Rev Mhorag Macdonald opened with worship themed on Spiritual Care followed by the business session.

17 Apologies

Apologies were noted.

18 Minute of the Ministries Council meeting held on Wednesday 22 June 2016

The Minute of the Ministries Council meeting held on Wednesday 22 June 2016 was approved.

19 Staffing

The Council Secretary reported that, following the retirement of Mrs Dorothy Davidson as Senior Administrator for Education & Support, the Council was pleased to welcome Miss Isobel Armstrong-Frost to this role. Interviews for the Go For It Fund Manager post will take place soon. Replacement posts currently advertised within the Priority Areas team were Ministries Support Officer and Administrator. New staff appointments will be introduced to Council in due course.

20 Convener's Report

Council received the Convener's Report *MC2-01* and points were discussed as set out in the report.

20.1 Council of Assembly Strategy Group: The Council of Assembly is looking to establish the vision and overall aim for the Church and will work on the high-level strategy in September. The Council of Assembly Strategy Group will look at a logic modelling technique. Ministries Council will be asked to contribute and then to ensure that our activities and outcomes are consistent with that aim.

The Strategic Planning Group will do some initial work on this plan and it was anticipated that the Council of Assembly would have a clear framework by January.

With the October Presbytery Conference to focus on planning the Convener proposed that the Council meet in January, in place of the second Presbytery Conference, to consider the aim, activities and outcomes from Ministries Council. It was noted however that the dates would clash with the Pre-retirement Conference as well as meetings of the Priority Areas Committee and Training Task Group.

20.2 Tomorrow's Calling: In the upcoming filming for *Take A Pew* there will be renewed focus on recruitment for ministry. This will conclude the *Take a Pew* project within the Tomorrow's Calling programme. There will be a second advent calendar production as part of Tomorrow's Calling. Details of the 2017 initiatives under Tomorrow's Calling will be presented at the December Council meeting.

20.3 Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme (4.6): Mr Daran Golby, Human Resources Manager – Ministries Council has been actively following up with those who are still not PVG cleared and who are under the auspices of Ministries Council. An update will be provided for Council.

DG

20.4 Cooperation with General Trustees: Council agreed that when the need arises for Ministries Council to work with General Trustees on issues of common interest members of both bodies would be invited to meet, rather than having one member of the Ministries Council attend all meetings of the General Trustees.

20.5 Presbytery Conference: Wed 12 – Thu 13 Oct 2016: The items for discussion will be Presbytery Planning and hub style ministry.

20.6 Pensions – Defined Benefit Schemes:

Council agreed that the Pensions Working Group continued to be given powers to consult with and make recommendations to Pensions Trustees with respect to technical pensions decisions on behalf of Ministries Council as the Employing agency. Membership of the Ministries Council Pensions Working Group was agreed as being the Convener, Mr Allan Sim, the Rev Jayne Scott and Mrs Catherine Skinner.

20.7 Ministers Over 75: The Ministries Council Supplementary Report 2012 specified that all ministers should retire at the age of 75. Further to an anticipated challenge to this ruling and that one minister is already working past the age of 75 work will be undertaken by the Council Secretary and Mrs Catherine Skinner, Depute Council Secretary, in consultation with the Law Department and potentially the Procurator in reviewing the current position. A paper for discussion and decision will be brought to the December meeting.

JS/CS

20.8 Special Arrangements Group and Death in Service Trustees: Council agreed that the Council Secretary, Rev Jayne Scott, be appointed to the Special Arrangements Group. This group agrees confidential arrangements which are made with Ministers and employees when special circumstances arise. This group consists of the Ministries Council Convener, Council Secretary, Depute Convener and Depute Secretary.

Council agreed to the appointment of the Council Secretary, Rev Jayne Scott, as a nominated Death in Service Trustee for the Ministries Council Death Benefit Scheme and further agreed to the removal of the Rev Dr Martin Scott as a Trustee of the Ministries Council Death Benefit Scheme. The other Death in Service Trustees remain as Mrs Catherine Skinner and the Council Convener.

21 Finance

The Finance Convener thanked the Finance Manager for the detailed papers and supporting documents provided and reported as follows:

21.1 Management Accounts to June 2016: The Ministries Council management accounts for the six months ended 30 June 2016 (MC2 – 02) show a deficit of £867k, against a budget deficit of £913k. The Path of Renewal project under spend was due to the project being in its very early stages with one staff member in post whereas the budget was for 100% capacity for the full year. Following vacancies in the first half of the year the Ministries Council team is almost fully staffed now so the under spend would disappear and should be on budget by the end of year.

The reserves of the Council were £43m with almost £13m of the total reserves available and unrestricted. Restricted reserves continue to be looked at. Contributions to pensions deficit repair were still being provided for.

21.2 Budget: Council received the first Draft 2017 Budget and Draft 2018 Indicative Budget along with supporting papers (MC2-03 a & b). A reduction in ministry numbers is forecast and further work will be done to look at anticipated retirements.

No stipend increases have been built into the budget at the request of the Council of Assembly, however the Finance Committee unanimously recommended an increase of 1%. With additional pressures on ministers the Committee felt it was important for morale to have an increase.

Declarations of interest were noted from ministers and those in a close relationship with someone who was a minister or Ministries Development Staff.

Any stipend increase must be sustainable over coming years. The decision has ramifications for the rest of the Church and ultimately the money needs to come from Congregation's. The Council of Assembly will make the decisions on affordability. There should be an understanding of how an increase would be perceived by the fellowship of the Church and concerns were expressed that some in CrossReach are not yet receiving the Living Wage.

Council voted in support the recommendation of a 1% increase: for 20; against 6. The proposal will be taken to the Council of Assembly where non-ministerial members can vote on this and then back to the December meeting of Ministries Council. Council of Assembly will make final decisions on the budget in December.

A £50k grant to Dunfermline East New Charge Development has been included in the budget

as per the business case document (MC2-04). The Finance Committee although supportive of grant have requested an updated business case to contain more financial information including cash flow projections and details of other sources of income. Council approved the business case in principle and remit to the Finance Committee to further review the finances. The Committee will produce a template for those wishing to submit a business case to ensure that all relevant details are included.

Ministries Council is in negotiations with the Pension Trustees seeking to cease pension deficit payments for the Ministers scheme. The budget therefore has been adjusted to show only the required deficit repayments for the Ministries Development Staff (MDS) scheme.

A provision of £500k for impairment costs for Inverness St Columba's had been reduced recently to £450k. This is money which should have previously been restricted and therefore the Ministries Council is obliged to contribute towards the costs of their new building.

Council approved the first Draft 2017 Budget and Draft 2018 Indicative Budget subject to:

- a) Any Council of Assembly approved stipend and salary increases to be built in.
- b) Finance Committee final approval of the £50k grant to Dunfermline East from requested updates to business case document.
- c) Confirmation from the Pensions Trustees that the deficit repayments to the Ministers Pension Scheme can cease.
- d) Clarification of the funding required for any Inverness St Columba's new build.

Any final business cases for additional spends in the 2017 budget should be sent to the Finance Manager by Friday 23 September for consideration by the Finance Committee. Final adjustments to the 2017 budget and 2018 indicative budget will then be approved at the December Ministries Council meeting.

21.3 Funeral Grants: Historically grants of £1,500 have been paid to widow(er)s which has not been means tested. £30k is in the budget going forward and Council noted that the Finance Committee was not minded to change this at this time.

21.4 Pulpit Recommendation: Allowances and fees will be reviewed by the Committee and Pulpit Supply Fee will be part of those discussions.

21.5 Emerging Risk – Payroll System: Having gone through a tendering process for the provider there have been some delays with the contract. Deloitte have audited this and the Audit Committee is aware of the ongoing risks.

The current provider will make a presentation on 6 September and thereafter a decision will be needed on who the provider will be. It was hoped that the new system will be implemented in April 2017, but the cumbersome processes mean it may take longer. Council noted that concerns over risks continue to be raised.

22 Priority Areas

Council received a written report MC2-05 with a detailed summary setting of the work of Priority Areas. The priority will be to fill two staff vacancies within the team. The Rev Derek Pope, Vice-Convener, will produce a paper on future work within Priority Areas for consideration at December Council.

22.1 Priority Areas Committee Membership: Council Members are invited to consider whether they might like to serve on the Committee or to suggest those who may be co-opted. Contact the Rev Derek Pope, Convener, or Ms Shirley Grieve, Priority Areas Secretary, if interested.

DP

23 Education & Support

Council received a written report *MC2-06* with overview and key issues of the work of Education & Support.

23.1 Staffing: The Committee welcomed Dr Katie Bradley, as Training Officer responsible for Probationers who is on secondment from the World Mission Council. The Committee also welcomed Miss Isobel Armstrong-Frost as Senior Administrator working closely with the Education & Support Secretary following the retirement of Mrs Dorothy Davidson.

23.2 Remit for the Rethinking Initial Training Project Group: The Project Group is tasked with creating a proposal for the future process for Initial Ministerial Education to be brought to the December Council meeting.

23.3 Candidate Funding: Details of *International* and *Rest of UK* Fees were discussed by the Committee and set out in paper *MC2-10* for Council. Council was agreeable to make good on previous commitments made and noted that costs incurred could be significant. The Rev Marjory McPherson, Education & Support Secretary, along with Mr David Plews, Training Development Manager, will prepare a paper for the December Council meeting to outline potential costs to the Council based on current trends.

MMcP/DP

23.4 Extension of Ministry Appointment: The Rev Jannie du Plessis, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, has served for 3 years in the Presbytery of Dumfries and Kirkcudbright as a minister in assisted vacancy. The Congregation and Presbytery have agreed to extend this ministry for a further 3 years and sought concurrence from Ministries Council. Council agreed to the extension.

24 Partnership Development

Council received a written report *MC2-07* with overview and key issues of the work of Partnership Development.

24.1 Pioneer Ministry: Council agreed that the final decision following recruitment, with regard to approval of local finance being available; suitable office space; and governance lie with the Convener of the Pioneer Ministry Project Group and the Partnership Development Secretary.

24.2 Application for Full Status – St Ninian’s Ferguslie: Paisley: Council noted the details contained in paper *MC2-08* and resolved to raise Ferguslie St Ninian’s to Full Status under section 30 of Act XIII 2000, as amended. The name of the charge shall be St Ninians: Paisley Parish Church of Scotland, and it shall operate under the Unitary Constitution, as part of the Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley. This resolution shall take effect from 1 October 2016, subject to the receipt of a minute of concurrence on the adoption of the Manse and Church by the General Trustees.

24.3 Interim Ministry Establishment: Council approved the establishment for the Interim Ministry Team at the same level as 2015/2016 being nine Interim Ministers, six Transition Ministers, and an Interim Deacon.

25 Strategic Projects

25.1 Church of Scotland Email: In addition to queries received about the process of allocation, retention and close of Church of Scotland email accounts there were also issues raised relating to data protection and encryption. The Colin Brough, Vice-Convener, has created a user guide which will be developed and tested prior to being made available to those with a Church of Scotland email address. There have been issues around IT support locally and how to manage this support going forward. Various requests have been received from people wishing to keep their email account open following retirement or otherwise falling outwith the usual triggers for being allocated with an email address. There are many

exceptions and variations and a report will be compiled for decision and agreement by the Council Secretary.

Concerns over the quality of data held in the central database have been raised with the Council of Assembly. A project will be initiated to ensure that data is effectively managed, sound, robust and protected. This will have a resource implication and further information will be brought to a future meeting of the Council.

26 Powers to Act On Behalf of Council: In the absence of an October Council meeting this year the Council gave powers to the Convener and the Rev Marjory MacLean, as Depute Convener, to act on behalf of Council for any routine decisions and to consult with appropriate Council members in coming months as required.

27 Confidence in the Future

Mr Daran Golby, Human Resources Manager – Ministries Council, lead the closing session inviting those in attendance to evaluate the meeting and to share their expectations out of the time together.

28 Date of Next Meeting – The next meeting of the Council will take place on Wednesday 7 December 2016 at 10.30am at the Church Offices, 121 George Street.

The Convener thanked those present for their contributions and the Conference closed with a celebration of Holy Communion

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Convener Date

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Secretary Date