

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY
20 November 2017

MINUTES

The Council of Assembly met within the Church Offices, Edinburgh, on Monday 20 November 2017, and was constituted with prayer. A list of those attending is attached to this Minute as Appendix I.

36. APOLOGIES

Apologies were noted.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no new declarations of interest.

38. AGREE AGENDA

The Agenda for the meeting was agreed.

39. SCOTTISH CARE AWARDS

Members noted that Peter Bailey, former Secretary to the Social Care Council, had been given a Special Recognition Award at the Scottish Care National Care Home Awards on 17 November, and asked the Convener to convey congratulations on behalf of the Council of Assembly. It was noted that the Social Care Council's Morlich House had been shortlisted for an Award.

40. ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Alison McDonald, Convener, and Kevin Mackenzie, Vice-Convener, Ecumenical Relations Committee, joined the meeting and spoke to the Committee's update report.

With regard to the implementation of the Ecumenical Committee review outcomes, it was noted that a bespoke approach was being adopted to ensure effective connections between the Committee and each of the Councils. The Committee was continuing to work on a revised ecumenical policy. It was anticipated that this would focus on local ecumenism and mission in line with current ecumenical thinking.

The Council noted the Finance Group's consideration of a request from Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) for a contribution of £144,000 for the year 2018. It was proposed that this sum be included in the budget for 2018, with the first and second quarterly instalments being guaranteed. Payment of the final two quarterly payments for 2018 would be considered in light of the impending review of ACTS to ensure that the Church's contribution was appropriate to the ongoing scale of that work. The Council was content with this approach. It was noted that Grant Barclay, former Convener of the Council of Assembly, had been appointed as the Church of Scotland's representative on the ACTS Board of Trustees.

The Church of Scotland's contributions to ecumenical bodies did not come within the Ecumenical Relations Committee's financial oversight, and it was suggested that this practice might be reviewed, notwithstanding the principle of ecumenism being an issue of concern for the whole Church.

It was noted that the Columba Declaration Group had met in the last week and had included the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) in its membership. A number of areas of potential joint working had been identified. Separate conversations with the SEC were also proving fruitful.

The Convener thanked the Committee's representatives for their attendance and input.

41. GENDER JUSTICE

The Council considered the paper *'The Future of Gender Justice Work in the Church of Scotland'*, including a letter from Valerie Allen, Convener of the Church's Violence Against Women (VAW) Task Group, inviting the Council to take action to implement decisions of the General Assembly to commit to this area of work. The Council had given initial consideration to a request for a permanent Gender Justice position in November 2016 and had remitted the matter to the Finance Group for more detailed exploration with a recommendation to come back to the full Council. A scoping exercise had been undertaken by the temporary VAW Development Worker and the proposals coming out of that had been considered by the Finance Group and the SMT. The resultant proposal (**Option 2** of three) was for the creation of a Gender Justice Initiative with a dedicated Gender Justice Officer. This included an option to explore external funding for a community based VAW post as part of this initiative. The overall cost of this would be £256,246 over five years.

A proposal to fund the initiative through contributions by Councils had failed to gain support during the period of consultation. It was noted, therefore, that a decision by the Council to establish this post would result in Council budgets having to be adjusted to fund the initiative and would be a departure from the Council's policy decision not to exceed the current staffing establishment.

In response to a question, the other two options were outlined as follows:

Option 1 – Gender Justice Initiative with a dedicated Gender Justice Officer and a VAW Officer. The overall cost of this would be £370,482 over five years.

Option 3 – Gender Justice Training Calendar with a fixed term Development Officer. The overall cost of this would be £28,518 over five years.

Following a full discussion, a vote was taken For or Against Option 2 for the creation of a Gender Justice Initiative with a dedicated full-time Gender Justice Officer. Nine trustees voted in favour and 5 against and the proposal carried. It was agreed that a job description would be drawn up for consideration by the CSC Executive (Staffing) on 14 December with a view to recruiting early in the New Year for the Gender Justice Development Worker. Further discussions would take place once that person was in post as to the best way to seek funding for a possible additional, locally-focussed worker specifically on the VAW agenda.

Norma Rolls indicated that there was evidence to show that the inclusion of a job specification which listed essential criteria within a recruitment process mitigated against women as they were more likely to rule themselves out from applying if they did not meet 100% of the requirements; with men, a 60% alignment was more likely to be deemed sufficient. It was agreed to give this matter consideration in terms of the Church's recruitment practices.

John Corrigan proposed that titles such as Mrs, Miss, Ms and Mr should be removed from Council of Assembly Minutes, in the interests of gender justice. The Council agreed, adding that all titles, including Rev and Dr, should be removed.

42. MINISTRIES COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Council considered a confidential paper putting forward the Ministries Council's proposals for a Development Programme for 2018-2020 which would integrate fifteen

projects which had come onto that Council's agenda in the last 12-18 months through General Assembly instruction. At the same time, there would be new thinking to ensure that the Council was relevant, responsive, strategic (in line with the Council of Assembly's Strategic Plan), sustainable and fit-for-purpose. Additional capacity was sought for a fixed term period of no more than three years.

The Finance Group had considered the financial arrangements, as noted in the Minutes (FG4). The Ministries Council was proposing to use reserves to fund much of this work and was anticipating a number of savings, most of which had now been negotiated with partner organisations.

David Brackenridge highlighted the need for clear exit strategies to be written into any fixed term posts from the outset.

The Council agreed the proposals, noting that these would be reflected in the 2018 final Budget and in the 2019 indicative Budget.

43. COUNCILS' BUSINESS

The following reports were taken:

43.1 Mission and Discipleship Council

The Council noted the written report. With regard to the Scottish Storytelling Centre, it was noted that a decision on funding for the next period was awaited from Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland (TRACS). The Council noted that the Mission Forum had been discontinued, the Mission and Discipleship Council preferring to operate with short-term working groups covering areas of activity.

43.2 Ministries Council

The Council considered a request from the Ministries Council for a number of changes to its membership numbers:

- a) An additional Vice-Convener to serve for one year, bringing the number up to five. The Council was of the view that this request should not be accepted on the basis that members of the Ministries Council were permitted to serve as sub-committee Conveners without having to be appointed as Vice-Conveners, in line with the practice within the Council of Assembly.
- b) An additional four members. The Council agreed to seek the General Assembly's approval for a temporary uplift for a period of two years from May 2018 in light of the anticipated workload over that period.
- c) An increase in the number of co-optees, particularly on the Interim/Transitional Ministry Task Group and the Go For It Committee. The Council agreed to a temporary uplift for a period of two years from May 2018.

43.3 World Mission Council

Iain Cunningham reported that the World Mission Council's theme for 2018 would be Interfaith Relationships.

43.4 Social Care Council

Bill Steele gave a presentation on the current priorities for the Social Care Council, with reference to the written report.

It was noted that a 'fit for purpose' review of that Council's central services was due to be finalised in February 2018. The question of whether some functions could be merged across the national Offices had been considered, but the financial risks in relation to the different terms and conditions of the staff groups had been deemed to be too high to proceed with this in any significant way.

Staff recruitment and retention continued to be a challenge for CrossReach, with 128 FTE vacancies at present across its services. A number of approaches were being taken to try to address this and these were noted.

CrossReach was working in effective partnerships with Strathclyde University and the Prince's Trust, as well as with Presbyteries, congregations and ecumenical partners.

With regard to the Scottish Living Wage, members noted that CrossReach had around 100 staff members not currently achieving this level of pay, with differentials continuing to make this unaffordable for the Social Care Council.

It was noted that 2019 would be the 150th Anniversary of the Church of Scotland's social care provision. A working group had been set up to plan the celebrations, and all Councils were encouraged to get involved.

44. SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

Karen Campbell, Convener, Safeguarding Committee, and Julie Main, Safeguarding Manager, joined the meeting and spoke to their written update report. A review of the Church's safeguarding processes and practices was scheduled to take place over the next three months, with a report expected in April 2018. John Christie and Ranald Mair were engaged to take forward different aspects of this review.

It was noted that a Service Level Agreement with the United Reformed Church was being finalised for the provision of certain Safeguarding services to that denomination.

45. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 September 2017 were approved.

With regard to Minute 25 Raymond Young advised that the General Trustees were now exploring ways in which one congregation could grant money to another within charity legislation and subject to Presbytery approval.

The Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 16 October 2017 were approved.

46. MATTERS ARISING

46.1 Council and Sub-Group Membership (Min 29)

There remained two vacancies on the Central Services Committee. It was suggested that there might be suitable names for consideration following the forthcoming Nomination Committee process.

46.2 Property Review (Min 30.2c)

The Council noted a written progress report on the national Church Office buildings project. The Finance Group would be holding an Extraordinary Meeting on 29 November to consider the financial data relating to each option. A full business plan was expected to be brought to the December meeting. Isobel Hunter asked that consideration be given to looking for properties with a smaller square footage than was currently being sought.

46.3 Strategic Plan (Min 6 COAExtra1 17 18))

The Council noted the current version of the draft Strategic Plan which had formed the basis for consultation in the latest round of Roadshows. The Strategy Group was due to meet on 28 November to consider feedback from these events and to further revise the documentation.

46.4 IT Review (Min 16 COA1 17-18)

Catherine Skinner joined the meeting. The Council considered a paper on IT which highlighted the need for more governance around the implementation of recommendations coming out of the audit of the IT Department in November 2016 and the subsequent in-

depth examination of the security and functions of the Department in March 2017. The Council noted that the Central Services Committee had oversight of the IT function and agreed that, in the first instance, it should consider how best to address this work to ensure that all the areas of risk currently sitting under the IT portfolio were being adequately discharged.

46.5 Organisational Review (Min 16 COA 17-18)

John Corrigan spoke to his paper '*An Organisational Review for the UCC*' having been asked to establish a small working group to prepare a remit for such a review. The paper highlighted a failure across the UCC to implement many recommendations coming out of reviews undertaken since 2010, including internal audit reports and those by external consultants, involving various parts of the UCC. In light of this, and bearing in mind the responsibility of the trustees to exercise good stewardship, the paper asked the Council to consider whether there was any merit in investing in an organisation-wide review.

The Council recognised that the Church's structure was not conducive to dealing with such matters in a straightforward manner. There was no executive authority and it was difficult to instruct that corporate decisions be implemented by Councils and Committees. One member suggested that the Council should desist from this review, believing that the IT governance work would help address a number of related concerns. Others were keen for the review to proceed but within clearly stated parameters to ensure that any recommendations would be achievable. Others felt that to set rigid parameters would merely be setting up for failure

Following further discussion, the Council concluded that it could not come to an agreed position on this matter at the present time, but would return to it in the light of the developing Strategic Plan.

47. FINANCE

47.1 Minutes of Finance Group

The Council received the draft Minutes of the Finance Group meeting of 2 October and 6 November (FG3 and FG4 (2017-2018)).

47.2 Finance Group Report

The following matters were highlighted:

- a) Management Accounts to 30 September 2017: The Council noted the management accounts to 30 September 2017.
- b) Staffing Establishment: A question was asked in relation to the Group's discussion around the staffing establishment contained within Minute 39f(i) of the Finance Group Minutes of 2 October. The Secretary indicated that a revised policy would be drafted for consideration by the Council to bring clarity to the matter.

48. GOVERNANCE

48.1 Minutes of Governance Group

The Council received the draft Minutes of the Governance Group meeting of 13 November (GG3 (2017-2018)).

48.2 Governance Group Report

The following matter was highlighted:

Data Protection Regulation: Members sought an update with regard to preparations at all levels of the Church for the forthcoming General Data Protection Regulation. It was agreed that the Governance Group would seek a report from the Solicitor for its meeting on 11 December.

49. CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE (CSC)**49.1 CSC Meeting**

The draft Minutes of the Committee's meeting of 5 October 2017 were noted.

49.2 CSC Executive (Staffing)

The draft Minutes of the CSC Executive meetings of 5 October and 13 November 2017, dealing with staffing matters, were noted. The posts relating to the Ministries Council had been agreed earlier in the meeting (Minute 42). The following posts were then agreed:

- a) Participatory Budget Development Worker, Church and Society Council, on a part-time (0.6) fixed term (18 weeks) basis.
- b) Programme Manager (Economics), Church and Society Council, on a full-time, fixed term (2 years) basis.
- c) Programme Manager (Flourishing Local Communities), Church and Society Council, on a full-time, fixed term (2 years) basis.
- d) Administration and Development Officer, Scottish Storytelling Centre, Mission and Discipleship Council, on a full-time fixed term (1 year) basis.
- e) Retail and Box Office Supervisor, Scottish Storytelling Centre, Mission and Discipleship Council, on a full-time fixed term (1 year) basis.
- f) Administrator, General Trustees. Whilst this was a replacement post, the job description had been reconfigured and the post upgraded.

50. ANNUAL OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Council noted the written update on progress to date in relation to the Annual Operational Plan.

51. SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

There were no matters requiring to be reported from the SMT to the Council at this time.

52. AUDIT

The Council received the Minutes of the Audit Committee meetings of 28 March and 29 August (AC4 and AC1 (2017-2018)).

53. COMMUNICATION

There were no matters requiring to be reported to the Council at this time.

54. PROPERTY SALES AND PURCHASES

The Secretary recalled that the Ministries Council had prepared a list of property for disposal in 2015 and had intended to seek blanket authority from the Council of Assembly to sell each one at the appropriate time. This matter would be clarified in December.

In the meantime, the Council granted permission for the Ministries Council to proceed to sell St Columba's Church, Rosyth.

55. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.30am, Monday 18 December 2017. The Convener indicated that the full Agenda for the next meeting may not allow for reports from Councils, other than on urgent matters.

The Meeting was closed with Prayer.

APPENDIX I

COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY

20 November 2017

Sederunt:

Ian Alexander
Russell Barr (am)
Sally Bonnar
David Brackenridge
John Corrigan
Catherine Coull
Iain Cunningham
Viv Dickenson (pm)
Alistair Gibb
Neil Glover
Isobel Hunter
Anne Lamont
Elaine McCloghry
Anne Macintosh
Ruth MacLeod
John McPake
Norma Rolls
Jayne Scott
Martin Scott
Norman Smith
Alan Sorensen
Bill Steele
David Watt
Ronald Wright
Raymond Young

Apologies:

Graham Duffin
Richard Frazer
Martin Johnstone
Andrew McGowan
Mary Macleod
George Whyte

In Attendance:

Alison McDonald (*item 40*)
Kevin Mackenzie (*item 40*)
Karen Campbell (*item 44*)
Julie Main (*item 44*)
Catherine Skinner (*item 46*)
Jennifer Hamilton
Pauline Wilson