

**THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND  
COMMITTEE ON ECUMENICAL RELATIONS**

Church of Scotland Offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh  
4 December 2018

**MINUTE**

**PRESENT:**

**Convener:**

Rev Alexander Horsburgh

**Members:**

Rev Ross Blackman (Ministries Council), Rev Ian Boa (ACTS),  
Rev Anikó Schütz Bradwell (World Mission Council), Rev Dr Liam Fraser  
(Theological Forum), Rev Alison McDonald (CEC), Rev Dr Nikki Macdonald  
(Social Care Council), Rev John McMahon (Mission & Discipleship Council),  
Rev Canon Prof Charlotte Methuen (Scottish Episcopal Church),  
Rev Alexander Ritchie (United Free Church of Scotland),  
Mrs Pauline Weibye (Church & Society Council), Ms Miriam Weibye  
(WCC), Mrs Mary Welsh (Roman Catholic Church)

**Staff:**

Rev Dr John L McPake (Secretary), Ms Ros Milne (Senior Administrator)

**Apologies:**

Rev Dr Grant Barclay (Trustee – ACTS), Rev Dr Frances Henderson (Joint  
Commission on Doctrine), Rev Kevin Mackenzie (Vice Convener),  
Major Steven Turner (Salvation Army)

**ACTION**

**1. Welcome and Constitution**

The Convener welcomed Committee members and opened the meeting with worship. Apologies were noted.

**2. Committee Minute**

The minute of the meeting of the Ecumenical Relations Committee held on 27 and 28 September 2018 was approved.

**2.1 Matters arising from the minute**

**1.1 Item 3(5) – Committee's Budget**

The Convener reported that he and the Secretary had had a very helpful meeting with Mrs Anne Macintosh, General Treasurer, in connection with the Committee's budget. He informed the Committee that Anne was currently off work following surgery and asked members to keep her in their prayers.

**1.1 Item 3(6.1) – Ministerial Formation**

The Convener reported that he, the Secretary and Rev Ross Blackman had met with Miriam McHardy the ACTS Consultant on Ecumenical Ministerial Formation.

**1.1 Item 12 – Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

The Convener advised that, following on from conversations, a meeting with representatives of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland would take place in February 2019. The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss areas of mutual concern and continuing relations between the two churches.

The Secretary reported that Professor Patton Taylor, Convener of the PCI's Forces Chaplains Board had arranged to meet with members of the Church of Scotland's Forces Chaplains Committee in Edinburgh on 5 December. He would meet with Professor Taylor prior to the meeting with the Chaplains Committee.

**ACTION****4.6 World Communion of Reformed Churches**

The Convener informed the Committee that he had sent an email to Dr Hefin Jones asking how the Church of Scotland, as a member church, could support him in his work on the WCRC Executive Committee. Hefin had relayed to the WCRC concerns expressed at the Committee's September meeting.

**3. Risk Register**

The Committee went through the Risk Register in detail and changes were agreed. The Secretary was asked to make the revisions and bring it to the Committee's February meeting for approval.

**Secretary****4. Autumn Conference**

The summary of the feedback questionnaires was noted. It was generally felt that the Conference had been a success with good attendance. Feedback had been very positive. The Convener thanked all involved in making it a success, particularly Rev Prof Charlotte Methuen for her sessions. It was noted that clips had been uploaded to the ACTS YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCq77sTmHLvlgw5sC-C8VMJw>.

**5. Nominations****5.1 Ecumenical Relations Committee**

The Convener reported that there would be two vacancies on the Committee - the Vice Convener, Rev Kevin Mackenzie, and Rev Ross Blackman would both finish their terms of office at the General Assembly in May 2019. Rev Ross Blackman left the room for this item. After discussion, proposals were agreed to present to the Nominations Committee.

**Secretary****5.2 Columba Declaration Contact Group/Church of England General Synod**

The Convener informed the Committee that the Very Rev Dr Angus Morrison would finish his term of office as Co-Convener of the Contact Group at its March meeting. Dr Morrison also served as the Church of Scotland representative on the General Synod of the Church of England and his term of office would end at its Spring Synod in 2019. His replacement would serve for a three-year term from the General Synod in the summer of 2019. Committee members were asked to send nominations to the Secretary.

**Committee****5.3 European Ecumenical Study Course 2019**

Consideration was given to an invitation from the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Bavaria to send a representative to a course to be held from 13-22 May 2019. The title of the course was "*Rediscovering Spirituality – Impulses from the Christian Traditions*". The course would comprise of 40 International participants from various churches and confessions. Following discussion, Rev Dr Nikki Macdonald expressed an interest in attending.

**Secretary****ORDER OF THE DAY**

The Convener welcomed Mr Bob Cowan, Assistant General Treasurer.

**6. Finance****6.1 Council of Assembly Finance Group meeting**

The Convener's report of the meeting with the Finance Group on 5 November was

**ACTION**

noted. The Vice Convener and Secretary had also attended the meeting. The Group had received an update on the Committee's accounts for 2018 and its draft budget for 2019. An update had been given on the work of the ACTS Transition Working Group. A draft budget for 2019 and 2020 prepared by ACTS had been discussed.

There had been a discussion about membership contributions to the ecumenical bodies and whether the responsibility for them should sit within the Committee's budget rather than the central budget. The suggestion was made for the need to assess the value of the contributions. The Church of Scotland 'Go for It' fund could be used as a standard.

## **6.2 Committee's Management Accounts**

The management accounts to 31 October 2018 were noted. The accounts had indicated that the variance against budget had shown a small deficit. Bob reported that the Committee had received a donation from the Miss Eliza C Pedersen's Trust. The money had been transferred to the Duncan McClements Trust for Ecumenical Training. Bob confirmed that the Committee's budget for 2019 would be brought to the Finance Group of the Council of Assembly.

## **7. Action of Churches Together in Scotland**

### **7.1 Members' Meeting**

The report of the ACTS Members' Meeting held on 22 November was noted.

### **7.2 ACTS Review Working Group report**

The report of the Review Working Group was noted. The report gave a brief history of Ecumenism and outlined the Vision for a Scottish Churches Forum to replace ACTS. It then outlined the organisation required and implications and consequences.

The Convener read out a letter received from the Treasurer of ACTS. The budget for 2019 attached to the letter was tabled. There was discussion about how the new Scottish Christian Forum would be financed and the appointment of a director to effect a smooth transition. There was also discussion about the reserves currently held by ACTS and the level of membership contributions paid by member churches. It was felt that if a director were to be appointed, salary and associated costs should be met from ACTS reserves. The Secretary reported that the ACTS Transition Group would meet on 7 December. He would relay concerns expressed by Committee members to the meeting. Rev Ian Boa indicated that the Transition Group would need to have proposals ready in time for the next Members' Meeting.

The Convener thanked Bob who then left the meeting.

### **7.3 Ecumenical Development Group**

The Convener's report of the meeting of the Ecumenical Development Group held on 13 November 2018 in Edinburgh was noted. The two main items of business had been updates on Local Ecumenical Partnerships and how the Group could respond to the ACTS Review Working Group report. There had been some uncertainty about what the Group might do in a new structure as the ACTS Members' Meeting had not yet met.

## **8. General Assembly 2019**

### **8.1 Committee's Report and Strategy**

The Convener introduced a paper entitled "A Strategy for the Ecumenical Relations Committee of the Church of Scotland". The paper had been written jointly by the Convener, Vice Convener, Secretary and Ross Blackman. It was hoped the paper would feed in to the Committee's report to the General Assembly.

**ACTION**

Ross suggested that the Committee should choose what could realistically be done in the first year.

The Secretary referred to the wave of prayer initiative initiated by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York - "Thy Kingdom Come" (<https://www.thykingdomcome.global>). He showed the Committee the document of the partnership in the initiative signed by the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Secretary thought this could provide an opportunity to deliver the "local" part of the Committee's strategy. It would have immense ecumenical potential. Each presbytery and congregation would be asked if they would be willing to participate. It was suggested that other churches should be involved.

The Convener confirmed that the Secretary would do more work on this and it would be included in the Committee's report to the General Assembly. A small group would be put together to take this forward in due course.

It was agreed to include in the report a note of discussions to date about ACTS. The Secretary would consult with the other member churches to ensure that they would all report along the same lines.

Other items agreed to be included in the report: the Biennial meeting with the Church of England; and the Assemblies of the Conference of European Churches and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe.

## **8.2 Heart and Soul**

The Convener confirmed that the Heart and Soul event would take place in Princes Street Gardens in May 2019. It was agreed to give active consideration to sharing a tent again with Action of Churches Together in Scotland. It was noted that it would be necessary to submit a proposal with the application. Rev Dr Nikki Macdonald volunteered to take this forward along with Ian Boa, the Vice Convener and Anikó Schütz Bradwell. Ros Milne would find out what the theme would be.

**R Milne**

## **9. Sacramental Ministry Working Group**

The draft Report of the Panel on Review & Reform, the Theological Forum, the Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Legal Questions Committee was noted. The Report had been written following an instruction from the General Assembly in 2017. Liam Fraser reported that the draft text had been discussed at the meeting of the Theological Forum earlier in the day. The Forum would meet again in January 2019.

After discussion, it was agreed to send the Forum a note of suggested revisions and comments.

**Secretary**

## **10. Reports from Council representatives**

### **10.1 World Mission Council**

Rev Anikó Schütz Bradwell had not been able to attend the November meeting of the Council and had submitted a summary based on the draft minute of the meeting.

Part of the meeting had been dedicated to discussion of the Council of Assembly's Radical Action Plan. Reports had been received from the Local Development, Africa and Caribbean, Middle East, Asia, and Europe and Americas Committees. It had been noted that a grant had been given to the Theological Community of Mexico for their three-year project to encourage ecumenical formation and engagement, particularly amongst those marginalised by the churches.

**ACTION****10.2 Ministries Council**

Rev Ross Blackman gave a verbal report of the meeting of the Ministries Council meeting held in October. David Plews had moved on from Ascend. Priority Areas continue to do innovative work that is being replicated in Mission and Discipleship Council. A percentage increase in Ministers' stipends had been discussed.

**10.3 Mission and Discipleship Council**

The Committee noted a report from Rev John McMahon. The report had been produced following very encouraging telephone conversations with the Secretary and Convener of the Council. John had highlighted several areas where the Council worked ecumenically.

**10.4 Theological Forum**

Rev Dr Liam Fraser gave a verbal report of the meeting of the Forum which had met earlier in the day. The main item on the agenda had been the Sacramental Ministry Working Group report. The Forum had also looked at the Westminster Confession of Faith and theology of reconciliation.

**10.5 Church and Society Council**

Mrs Pauline Weibye reported that she had not been able to attend the meeting of the Council which had been held on 28 November but had submitted a report based on agenda items.

It was agreed to confirm with the Council that Pauline was the Committee's representative as there had been some confusion as to the status of Mrs Marjorie Paton.

**Secretary**

The Convener thanked everyone for their reports.

**11. Reports from International Ecumenical Bodies****11.1 World Council of Churches**

Ms Miriam Weibye gave a verbal report of the meeting of the Search Committee held in Athens in November. The Committee had been set up to find a new General Secretary to replace Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, whose term of office would end in 2020. A job description would be circulated to member churches in mid-January 2019.

**11.2 Conference of European Churches**

A report from Rev Alison McDonald of the meeting of CEC's Governing Board held in Brussels from 21-24 November 2018 was noted. Full minutes would be available on CEC's web site in approximately six weeks. Alison said that it had been a good meeting with a lot of energy. There were a lot of competent people on the Board.

Nominations to committees had been agreed. Two people had been asked to take forward a communications strategy and another had been asked to ensure the contribution of young people in the life of CEC.

A positive evaluation of the General Assembly had been noted. The Board had worked on and approved the strategic plan for the coming five-year period. Its focus would be on promoting peace, justice and reconciliation in Europe and deepening church communion and ecumenical fellowship. The Board also issued three public statements in connection with climate change, migration and refugees and human rights.

**12. Local Ecumenical Partnerships**

The Secretary reported that the constitution for Grahamston United Church, Falkirk (Church of Scotland, United Reformed Church and Methodist Church) had been

**ACTION**

approved by the General Assembly in 2011. However, a signed copy of the document had not been produced. He had revised the draft Constitution and Basis of Incorporation in consultation with the other churches. The final revised documents were before the Committee for approval. The documents would be signed at the business meeting of the Presbytery of Falkirk on the evening of 4 December. After discussion, the documents were approved.

**13. Reports for noting****13.1 Secretary's Report**

The Secretary's report of work undertaken and meetings attended from October to November 2018 was noted.

**13.2 Our Common Calling Working Group (Scottish Episcopal Church/ Church of Scotland)**

The Convener's report of the meeting of the Working Group held on 21 November in Edinburgh was noted. The meeting had been mainly theological and a paper presented by Scott Robertson (SEC) and Liam Fraser (Church of Scotland) had explored areas of theological convergence and divergence between the two churches and had suggested possible resolutions to areas of disagreement. Some revisions had been suggested to the paper with a view to it being available more widely.

Rev Dr John McPake had given an overview of the Church of Scotland Ecumenical Policy and there had been a discussion on receiving one another's ordained ministries. There had also been reports on the International Reformed-Anglican Dialogue and the ACTS Transition Working Group. It had been agreed that an interim report would be prepared in time for inclusion in reports to the General Assembly and the General Synod in 2019.

**13.3 Thy Kingdom Come 2019**

A report from the Secretary was noted on the partnership by the Church of Scotland in the *Thy Kingdom Come* global prayer initiative. *Thy Kingdom Come* works in partnership with many Christian denominations and Churches Together in England. In May 2016, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York had invited Christians from across the Church of England to join a wave of prayer between Ascension and Pentecost. More than 100,000 Christians from different denominations in the UK and overseas took part. The initiative had carried on in 2017.

The Church of Scotland had agreed to formally partner in *Thy Kingdom Come* in 2019 and thereafter. This had been symbolically marked during the meeting of the Moderator and the Archbishop of Canterbury on 29 November 2018. It had been agreed that the Moderator would write to all ministers and presbyteries in December inviting them to consider taking part and in partnership with other traditions.

It was hoped to mark the Partnership at the General Assembly in 2019.

**13.4 Baptist Union Assembly**

A report from Rev Ross Blackman of the Assembly held in Motherwell from 25-26 October 2018 was noted. Ross had found the Assembly to be challenging, encouraging and uplifting.

**14. Any other business****14.1 Duncan McClements Trust for Ecumenical Training**

The Convener reported that the General Assembly appointed members of the Committee, who were trustees of the Trust, had agreed to award a grant to Rev Rhona Cathcart towards the costs of attending an Ecumenical Seminar in Strasbourg.

Rhona had submitted a report following the Seminar which had been circulated to the Trustees for information.

**14. Date of next meeting**

Committee members were reminded that the Committee would meet again on Tuesday, 19 February 2019 in the Church Offices at 121 George Street, Edinburgh, from 10.30 am – 3.30 pm.

The Convener thanked everyone for attending the meeting which was closed with the saying of the Grace together.

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Convener

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Date

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Secretary

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Date

**ACTION**

**All to note**