

**THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**  
**COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY**  
**18 February 2019**

**MINUTES**

The Council of Assembly met within the Church Offices, Edinburgh, on Monday 18 February 2019, and was constituted with prayer. A list of those attending is attached to this Minute as Appendix I.

**89. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Convener welcomed those present, including Chloe Clemmons, attending for the Secretary of the Church and Society Council; Carol Finlay, attending for the Secretary of the World Mission Council; Alan Miller, attending for the Convener of the World Mission Council; Craig Renton, attending for the Secretary of the Ministries Council; and Catherine Skinner who was in attendance. Apologies were noted.

**90. AGREE AGENDA**

The Agenda of the meeting was agreed.

**91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Convener declared an interest in relation to Min 23.1, Governance Group Report, in light of the discussions around the relationship between the Council and the Housing and Loan Fund. David Watt also declared an interest in relation to Min 23.1, Governance Group Report.

**92. COUNCIL AND SUB-GROUP MEMBERSHIP**

The Council had been advised via email, prior to the meeting, that Martin Scott had decided not to return to the post of Secretary to the Council of Assembly. A communication had also been issued to advise employees of the Central Services Committee. The Convener agreed to write to Dr Scott on behalf of the Council to offer thanks and good wishes.

John Corrigan, having previously indicated his intention to step down as a Trustee in May 2019, wrote to the Convener in December to indicate that he would step down with immediate effect. The Convener will write to Mr Corrigan to express thanks on behalf of the Council. Further to this resignation, the Convener approached Norma Rolls to invite her to serve as the Convener of the Governance Group, as an interim arrangement. Following a previous appeal for additional Trustee members on the Governance Group, Andrew McGowan had joined the Group. The Council gave retrospective approval for the interim Convenership arrangement and was content that an approach could be made ahead of the March Council meeting to seek to increase the voting membership of the Group.

**93. COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

The Convener confirmed that the Radical Action Plan, along with the relevant proposed deliverance, would be considered during an extraordinary meeting of the Council to be held on 22 February 2019.

Members considered other sections of the Council's draft Report to the General Assembly. A note of corrections to grammar and formatting would be received by Carron Lunt, Senior

Administration Officer, outwith the meeting. The following matters, in particular, were discussed:

a) Section 2 – Special Commission

- The report of the Special Commission would be published alongside the Supplementary Reports, in April 2019.
- The Principal Clerk advised that the report of the Special Commission was due to be heard by the General Assembly prior to discussions on the Action Plan. The Action Plan has been produced in consultation with the Special Commission. However, it may be necessary to make changes to the Action Plan to reflect the decisions made prior to receiving that part of the report.

b) Section 4 – National Offices Buildings Project

- It was acknowledged that much work has been undertaken around the National Offices Buildings Project since the General Assembly of 2018, including monitoring carried out by the Finance Group.
- The detail provided in an appendix was noted and it was agreed that this should be removed from the report. The text would be revised to strengthen the emphasis around the principle of *'form follows function'*. Future work would be subject to discussion and decisions around other areas during the General Assembly, such as the Special Commission and the Action Plan.

c) Section 5 – Stewardship and Finance

- The Council will be asked to approve a proposal in relation to the Hut and Canteen Work for HM Forces, for inclusion in the Council of Assembly Supplementary Report. The proposal will be referenced in the Council's Report.
- Having noted comments during discussion, the General Treasurer agreed to review the text in section 5 and make any necessary amendments.

Patricia Robertson and Iain Whyte joined the meeting for item 94.

**94. THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD**

A written report was received. Iain Whyte, General Secretary of the Church of Scotland Guild, highlighted that there was a perceived divide between the work of the Guild and other pieces of work in the Church. The Guild has no membership of either the Council of Assembly or the staff Senior Management Team. It was noted, however, that the Acting Secretary of the Council of Assembly had been involved in positive discussions with Mr Whyte around collaborative working.

Mr Whyte was due to meet with the Acting Secretary along with Catherine Skinner, Head of Operational Programmes, to discuss the Action Plan and hoped to have the opportunity to meet with the Special Commission.

Promotion of the Guild to try to attract new members continued, including in places where no current Guild existed. Statistics on membership were published each year.

It was suggested that the Guild might benefit from discussion with the Assembly Arrangements Committee and the Ministries Council on how to communicate and encourage the optimal method of inclusion of Guild members at Kirk Session meetings.

The Convener offered thanks on behalf of the Council for the work of the staff of the Guild Office. Members expressed their support of the ongoing work of the Guild and acknowledged the positive influence on the Church. In particular, Bill Steele, Convener of the Social Care Council, was thankful for the partnership with CrossReach. The Councils

have benefited hugely from partnerships with the Guild, which is a valued part of the mission of the Church.

**95. MEETING OF TRUSTEE MEMBERS**

*The discussion which took place under this item is contained in a Record Apart.*

**96. COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY – CONTINUED**

a) Section 7 – Gaelic in the Church

- The Gaelic Group had made progress in bringing together a Gaelic Language Plan for the Church. An outline of the Plan had been circulated with the draft Council of Assembly Report.
- Council welcomed the work of the Group and noted that the Plan was aspirational. It was agreed that discussion with members of the Gaelic Group would be a helpful way forward and Pauline Wilson, Executive Officer, was asked to invite representatives to attend an upcoming Council meeting. Details of cost and resource implications were requested.
- The Senior Management Team was asked to consider the resourcing requirements and impact on various Councils and Departments of the Church for this area of work as well as how it relates to the work of the Special Commission and to the Action Plan. Furthermore, the Senior Management Team would consider the potential deliverables of a 1-year consultancy post to progress key matters contained within the Plan.
- There would be further conversation with the Ministries Council around the use of the restricted fund. Funding for this piece of work would be embedded in the budget.
- The wording in the Council of Assembly Report would be revised to reflect discussions.
- Mrs Wilson was thanked for her considerable work in this area, as well as for bringing together the draft Council of Assembly Report.

b) Section 12 – Charitable Governance

- Text for Risk Management and Business Continuity was to be provided.

c) Section 14 – Statistics

- The annual statistics from congregations and presbyteries was to be produced and included in the Report as appendices.

The Council agreed the Report and proposed Deliverance, subject to the revisions discussed and to minor amendments received outwith the meeting.

**97. ANNUAL REPORT**

An initial draft of the Annual Report 2018 was provided, not for discussion, but to allow Members to read this and to submit comments to Pauline Wilson. A Further iteration would be made available in due course.

**98. CORRESPONDING MEMBER**

The Convener will attend the General Assembly as a Commissioner. Therefore, any Member who wished to serve as a Corresponding Member for the Council of Assembly was asked to advise the Acting Secretary.

**99. HEART AND SOUL 2019**

The Convener would be grateful to hear from Members who would be willing to serve as roaming ambassadors at the Heart and Soul event. During the afternoon the ambassadors will be based alongside those who are hosting a marquee and will talk of the work of the Council, in particular, the Action Plan.

The Assembly Arrangements Committee had shared a copy of their report out of the review of Heart and Soul, as promised. The Convener, the Acting Secretary, David Watt and the Principal Clerk recently attended a meeting with representatives of the Committee, at which it was agreed to continue with the budget provision for 2020. Further discussions on budget implications for Heart and Soul would be based on decisions taken at the General Assembly.

Nathalie Mares joined the meeting for item 100.

**100. THEOLOGICAL FORUM**

A written report on the work of the Theological Forum was received which included a risk register. The Principal Clerk reported that additional administrative support for the Forum Secretary had been identified within the existing staff team. Nathalie Mares, Forum Secretary, was appreciative of this support, which would allow time for engagement with the Councils and Committees.

It was noted that proposals being brought to the General Assembly by the Mission and Discipleship Council, if agreed, would result in additional work for the Forum.

The Convener thanked the Forum Secretary for being in attendance to provide a report for Council.

**101. COUNCILS' BUSINESS****101.1 Ministries Council**

A written update report was received. The Ministries Council had identified a lack of written guidance on the boundaries between Task Groups, Committees, the Council and the staff team. In consultation with the Church Solicitor and the Convener of the Governance Group, a paper would be prepared to set out a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Members were pleased that this exercise was being carried out and reference was made to the Guidance Note for Meetings, to be received later on agenda (Min 110).

The Ministries Council is grateful for the collaboration with the Legal Questions Committee around legislation.

**101.2 Social Care Council**

A written update report was received, along with a presentation on CrossReach services from Bill Steele, Convener of the Social Care Council. The Social Care Council was delighted to receive notification at the end of December of a legacy of £1.3m. The figure for legacies included in the budget had reduced to £200k and would reduce to zero for future budgets.

Mr Steele highlighted the high standard of artwork produced through the Heart for Art sessions. CrossReach runs these creative arts groups for people with dementia.

Delivery of the actions agreed to support the anniversary of 150 years of Social Care for the Church of Scotland were underway with an exhibition due to be unveiled in April 2019.

CrossReach launched a new website to promote the services and to facilitate the recruitment the process.

The Convener offered thanks to Mr Steele for the presentation and for the ongoing work carried out by CrossReach.

### **101.3 Panel on Review and Reform**

Council noted a request from the Panel on Review and Reform to offer a report at an upcoming meeting.

### **102. MINUTES**

The Minute of the Council meeting held on 17 December 2018 (COA5 2018-2019) was approved.

### **103. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising which were not otherwise covered on the agenda.

### **104. FINANCE**

#### **104.1 Finance Group Report**

David Watt reported that much work had been done around funds reorganisation. Details would be provided for inclusion in the Council of Assembly Report to the General Assembly.

A working capital support had been provided by the General Treasurer and work was ongoing to formalise that loan from Unincorporated Councils and Committees (UCC) resources. The Group continued to develop the understanding of the CrossReach financial position.

#### **104.2 Minutes of Finance Group**

The Council received the Draft Minutes of the Meeting of 4 February (FG7 2018-19).

#### **104.3 Management Accounts to 31 December 2018**

The net operating result was comparable to the budget for 2018, and substantially better than the forecast figure in the November management accounts. The principal reasons for this were that, in their December accounts, the Social Care Council capitalised £1,181k of the spend on the Schools' Restructure project and accrued a residual legacy of £1,300k for which a reliable estimate of the amount receivable was confirmed just prior to the year end. The net negative Movement in Funds for 2018 was £6,458k.

A request was made for further details of unrestricted funds to be reported on periodically.

#### **104.4 Funds Reorganisation**

Details of proposed funds reorganisation were provided and it was highlighted that the cost value was shown. The funds could be worth more now. Noting that the details had been scrutinised by the Finance Group, the applications for reorganisation of 29 funds were agreed.

#### **104.5 Funds Reorganisation Resolution**

Further to recent applications for funds reorganisation, authorisation was granted to the Convener to sign the necessary documentation, on behalf of the Trustees, to pass the final resolution for:

- a) Freebairn White Fund
- b) Ministry Benevolent Fund
- c) The Moffat Bequest

### **105. GOVERNANCE**

The Council received a written report from the Governance Group.

The Chairman and the Secretary to the Housing and Loan Fund would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Governance Group on 11 March 2019 to confirm the understanding of the relationship between the UCC Trustees and the Fund Trustees and to agree the duty of oversight held by the Council of Assembly. The Group will consider the potential for the Fund reporting to the Council of Assembly.

The training programme for Trustees is being developed. The Council agreed with the Governance Group recommendation that the training should be delivered after the General Assembly, potentially in June 2019.

#### **105.1 Minutes of Governance Group**

The Council received the Draft Minutes of Governance Group Meeting of 11 February (*GG4 2018-19*).

### **106. CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

#### **106.1 Minutes of Central Services Committee (CSC)**

The Council received the Minutes of meeting of 13 December (CSC3 2018-19).

#### **106.2 Minutes of CSC Executive Committee (Staffing)**

The Council received the Minutes of Meeting of 10 December (CSC Exec6 2018-19) and Draft Minutes of Executive Committee (Staffing) Meeting of 11 February (CSC Exec7 2018-19).

David Brackenridge sought to have a focus on the work requirements rather than on the headcount. The Senior Management Team will consider the business critical elements for staffing requests prior to discussion by the CSC Executive Committee (Staffing).

Council was reminded of the agreement that the Councils, Committees and Departments were to engage in a prioritisation exercise, with consideration of which activities would cease, and to report on this at the Council meeting in June 2019.

Discussion recorded in the draft minutes of the Committee meeting of 11 February 2019 around the Pensions Department was challenged as not being the correct position. This would be discussed, along with other options for the future, at the Pensions Forum meeting on 21 February 2019.

### **107. PENSIONS**

The Pension Trustees asked each of the Employing Agencies to comment on draft Pension Trustees Report to the General Assembly. A joint response from all of the Agencies, co-ordinated through the Council of Assembly, was provided. The Council would receive an update following the Pensions Forum meeting on 21 February 2019.

George Cowie joined the meeting for item 108.

### **108. LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE**

As well as running through the schedule of work, the Committee also services any upcoming cases. George Cowie, Convener of the Legal Questions Committee, offered thanks for the work of the Church Solicitor and the Procurator. The Legal Questions Committee works alongside the Councils and Committees, helping to provide legislation which enables work to go forwards. A great deal of work has been done with the Ministries Council on legislation. It was noted that, in previous years, pieces of work had been brought to the Committee in January and February. Earlier conversations would be ideal.

Work was ongoing to produce legislation around Same Sex Marriages and this would be presented to the General Assembly in 2020.

A second cycle had been completed of the pilot scheme for Presbytery Review, which enables Presbyteries to reflect on their work in a similar way to Local Church Review. The conversations so far had been with those presbyteries who had opted into the process. It was hoped that the Committee would bring legislation forward to the General Assembly in 2020 to establish Presbytery Review as a recognised process. It had been suggested that the General Assembly should hear from Presbyteries on Presbytery Review and to share good practice.

**109. SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM**

There was nothing further to report from the Senior Management Team at this time.

**110. GUIDANCE NOTE FOR MEETINGS**

A guidance note for Council and Committee meetings had been updated and circulated to the Council for information. Members raised concerns previously regarding the late submission and circulation of papers for Council meetings. This issue had not been resolved. The Acting Secretary explained that the monthly cycle of meetings created additional demands on time.

The Convener advised that a reduction to the number of meetings would result in the Council being unable to handle the volume of work. Concerns were noted and papers would continue to be circulated at the earliest opportunity.

Council endorsed the revised guidance note.

**111. COMMUNICATIONS**

There was nothing further to report on communications at this time.

**112. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

An Extraordinary meeting of the Council was due to take place at 11.30am on Friday 22 February 2019, in the Church Offices. The Council would then meet at 10.30am on Monday 18 March 2019, at St Cuthbert Parish Church, Lothian Road, Edinburgh.

**The Meeting was closed with Prayer.**

APPENDIX I

# COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY

18 February 2019

**Sederunt:**

Jennifer Adams  
Sally Bonnar  
David Brackenridge  
Derek Browning  
Viv Dickenson  
Alistair Gibb  
Neil Glover  
Isobel Hunter  
Martin Johnstone  
Anne Lamont  
Elaine McCloghry  
Andrew McGowan  
John McPake  
Anne Macintosh  
Mary Macleod  
Ruth MacLeod  
Angus Mathieson  
Norma Rolls  
Norman Smith  
Alan Sorensen  
Bill Steele  
David Watt  
George Whyte  
Ronald Wright  
Raymond Young

**Apologies:**

Ian Alexander  
John Chalmers  
Alison Fenton  
Richard Frazer  
Jayne Scott

**In Attendance:**

Chloe Clemmons  
Carol Finlay  
Carron Lunt  
Alan Miller  
Craig Renton  
Catherine Skinner  
Pauline Wilson (item 96a)