

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

Church of Scotland Offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh
14 June 2018

MINUTE

PRESENT:

Convener: Rev Alexander Horsburgh

Vice Convener: Rev Kevin Mackenzie

Members: Rev Dr Grant Barclay (Trustee – ACTS), Rev Ross Blackman (Ministries Council), Rev Anikó Schuetz Bradwell (World Mission Council), Rev Dr Liam Fraser (Theological Forum), Rev Canon Prof Charlotte Methuen (Scottish Episcopal Church), Rev Alexander Ritchie (United Free Church), Mrs Pauline Weibye

Apologies: Rev Ian Boa (ACTS), Rev Dr Frances Henderson (Joint Commission on Doctrine), Rev Alison McDonald (CEC), Mrs Anne Macintosh (General Treasurer), Rev John McMahan, Major Steven Turner (Salvation Army), Ms Miriam Weibye (WCC), Mrs Mary Welsh (Roman Catholic Church)

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

Prior to the Committee meeting, the Convener, Vice Convener and Secretary met with General Assembly nominated members to discuss the new way of engaging with the Councils and the Theological Forum and how the system had been working.

I. Welcome and Constitution

The meeting was constituted with a reading and prayer.

The Convener welcomed new Committee members: Mrs Pauline Weibye, an Elder nominated by the General Assembly and Rev Alexander Ritchie, United Free Church of Scotland. He explained that Rev John McMahan, a new General Assembly appointed member, and a chaplain at Broadmoor Hospital, had submitted apologies. John would attend the Committee's September meeting. He explained that the other denominations were invited to send representatives on a rota basis with the Roman Catholic Church having a permanent representative. He hoped this would also be the case for the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Introductions were then made.

The Convener reported that there was a vacancy on the Committee. The Secretary was asked to advise the Nominations Committee of the vacancy. Committee members were asked to send suggestions to the Secretary. Mr David Nicolson DCS, was thanked for his service on the Committee.

There then followed a 72 second silence followed by prayer for the people who had lost their lives in the Grenfell Tower fire.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 2 May 2018 were approved as an accurate record subject to amending item 6.1 removing "short" from the first paragraph and inserting "who had been involved in redesigning training" after "had been present".

ACTION

**Committee
members**

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Item 3 – CTBI Trustee

The Convener reported that Rev Alison McDonald's nomination as Trustee had been homologated by CTBI. She would attend a meeting of CTBI on 27 June. He was pleased to report that Alison had been reappointed to the Governing Board of the Conference of European Churches for a second term.

The Convener reported that the Conference of European Churches had approved a new membership fee scheme. This would mean that the Church of Scotland's contributions for the next five years would be based on what it had actually paid and not on the sum asked for. It had been calculated to provide a transparent, stepped increase each year. The Secretary was asked to submit the new fee scheme paper to the Finance Group of the Council of Assembly.

Item 5 – Committee's Budget

The Secretary informed the Committee that there had been an increase in the cost of hosting the dinner for General Assembly delegates this year. This had been due to an increase in numbers of World Mission delegates. The cost of the dinner was divided between Ecumenical Relations, World Mission and the Department of the General Assembly.

The Convener reported that he and the Vice Convener had met with the Finance Group of the Council of Assembly on 4 June to discuss membership contributions. It had been agreed that the 3rd and 4th quarterly membership contributions to Action of Churches Together in Scotland be suspended pending the outcome of the Review of ACTS.

The Convener raised the issue of how the new Ecumenical Strategy could be delivered. Additional funding would potentially be required to carry this out.

It was agreed that the Convener and Secretary should meet with the General Treasurer to discuss these issues and submit a paper to the Committee's meeting in September.

Item 6.1 – Ministries Council

Rev Ross Blackman said that he had not yet raised the suggestion of ecumenical working in connection with ministerial formation within the work of ACTS.

Item 7.1 – World Council of Churches – 70th Anniversary

The Secretary reported that there would be an anniversary service in Amsterdam in August, but that no final details were as yet available.

Item 7.2 – Conference of European Churches

The Convener read out an email from Rev Alison McDonald, who had been one of the Church of Scotland's delegates at the General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches which had been held in Novi Sad, from 31 May to 6 June 2018. Alison reported that she and Rev Dr Richard Frazer, the other Church of Scotland delegate, had participated actively in the Assembly. Richard had served on the Public Issues Committee and Alison had chaired the Message Committee. The Assembly reports were available online at: <https://www.ceceurope.org/>.

Alison had also participated in the Youth pre-Assembly and had given a presentation during the session called "Witnessing Christ in Europe today". Connor MacFaddyen had participated as a steward and Adrian Shaw had been one of the minute takers.

ACTION

Secretary

**Convener/
Secretary**

Miriam Weibye had been present as a joint church advisor for the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church.

A new President and Governing Board had been elected. President: Rev Christian Krieger (Union of Protestant Churches in Alsace and Lorraine); Vice-Presidents: Rt Rev Gulnar Frances-Dehqani (Church of England) and Metropolitan Cleopas Strongylis (Ecumenical Patriarchate). The Secretary was asked to write to Christian wishing him well in his new role.

Item 7.3 – Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Rev Ross Blackman reported that he had received material from the Quakers. He was waiting for a response from the other churches. He had yet to be in touch with the Very Rev Dr Sheilagh Kesting.

During discussion it was agreed that the amount of work required was larger than had been anticipated. It was agreed that the Convener, Secretary and Ross should meet to discuss the possibility of focussing on two Sundays instead of the intended four.

Item 7.4 – World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)

The Convener reported that leaders from the WCRC had suggested coming to Scotland to meet with representatives from the Church of Scotland. He had informed the WCRC Secretariat that there was a lot of work to be done following the General Assembly, particularly in relation to the strategic plan and that it was therefore not the best time for a meeting. He suggested that he and the Secretary could meet with them to plan a meeting at a future date. The Committee agreed this proposal.

4. Committee's Budget

The Convener reported that Mrs Anne Macintosh, General Treasurer, had submitted her apologies. The Committee noted the income and expenditure to the end of May 2018. It was noted that the Committee was slightly over budget on the Conferences, Travel & Representation and General Assembly accounts. This had been due to the dialogue with the Church of England and an increase in venue costs as a result of the closure of the Royal Over-Seas League, which had been the original venue for the dialogue.

5. General Assembly

5.1 Review

The Convener invited comment on the General Assembly from those members who had attended.

It was felt there had been more engagement with Ecumenical Relations than in the past. Six questions had been asked following the presentation of the Committee's report. This had been very encouraging.

The Committee noted, with thanks, all the work that had been carried out by Rev Alison McDonald during her five-year term of office as Convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee. The Convener also thanked the Vice Convener, Ms Miriam Weibye and Rev Ian Boa who had been involved in preparations for the Heart and Soul event.

5.2 Collated Deliverances

Members noted Deliverances which directly related to the Committee:

ACTION

Secretary

**Convener/
Secretary/
Ross Blackman**

**Convener/
Secretary**

ACTION**World Mission Council: Special Report on Lessons for Scotland from Christian Faith in Africa**

5. Instruct the World Mission Council, in conjunction with the Ministries Council, the Mission and Discipleship Council, the Church and Society Council and the Ecumenical Relations Committee, to continue to explore how the church in Scotland might apply relevant learning from the world church context.

The Secretary reported that the Council had arranged a meeting in August which he would attend.

Ecumenical Relations Committee

2. Adopt Local, Universal and Shaped by the Mission of God: An Ecumenical Policy for the Church of Scotland as the Ecumenical Policy of the Church of Scotland.
3. Note Local, Universal and Shaped by the Mission of God: An Ecumenical Policy for the Church of Scotland: A Theological Basis.
4. Instruct the Committee to bring a strategy for the implementation of Local, Universal and Shaped by the Mission of God: An Ecumenical Policy for the Church of Scotland to the General Assembly of 2019.
5. Concur with the response of the Committee to the Review of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) and agree to transmit the same to the Trustees of ACTS.
6. Note Action of Churches Together in Scotland: A Review.
7. Instruct the Committee to bring recommendations with respect to Action of Churches Together in Scotland, in the context of a strategy for the implementation of the Ecumenical Policy of the Church, to the General Assembly of 2019.
8. Instruct the Committee to advise the Council of Assembly of any significant matters which require a decision prior to the General Assembly of 2019, with respect to the Action of Churches Together in Scotland Review Process.

The Secretary said that Deliverances 4, 7 and 8 were instructions and these were in hand.

Mission and Discipleship Council

2. Instruct the Council, in collaboration with the Council of Assembly, the Ministries Council, the World Mission Council, the Ecumenical Relations Committee, the Guild and the Panel on Review and Reform, to explore the development of a programme of education and training on discipleship aimed at lay members of congregations and report to the General Assembly of 2020.

It was noted that this Deliverance had come from the floor of the Assembly.

In terms of other Deliverances, the Secretary reported that he had accepted an invitation to join the ecumenical Gaelic Group (Council of Assembly deliverance 11).

Liam Fraser agreed he would take up the subject of the admission of children to Holy Communion with the Theological Forum.

It was noted that the Secretary had become a member of the Chalmers Lectureship Trust.

6. Strategy for the implementation of the Ecumenical Policy

A draft paper, written by Rev Ross Blackman, was noted and discussed. Ross explained that the paper was a discussion starter. He outlined the process. He explained that, before he joined the ministry, he had carried out a similar exercise for community healthcare projects. The approach was to begin with a dream or idea, look at the end

Liam Fraser

ACTION

goal and general vision and then devise a strategy that would lead in the right direction. The implementation could take three to five years to get to the end goal. The following comments were made:

- a) Decide on the goal
- b) How did the new ecumenical policy fit in with the Council of Assembly's new strategic plan to be brought to the General Assembly in 2019? It would be important for Ecumenical Relations to have input at the outset.
- c) In terms of resourcing at a local level – shared discipleship, training, structures, there was a need to be clear what was required at different levels.
- d) In relation to identity issues, it might be necessary to think about the steps required in order to get to the end goal.
- e) It would be easier if there was a strategic plan. There was a need to see how it fitted in to the broader framework.
- f) The review of ACTS, the outcome of which would be known by the end of the year, might produce opportunities for the Church of Scotland.
- g) A lot of people were working together locally – ecumenism was embedded in the Scottish psyche.
- h) The Council of Assembly should embed this into its strategy.
- i) Aim to support the local which might then change structures.
- j) When looking at new forms of ministry, there should be a need to look at local ecumenism.
- k) Make a distinction between local and denominational levels. The term “universal church” suggested eternity.

The Secretary referred to the ecumenical audit carried out in 2013. He said a high level of responses had been received. At the Committee's tent at Heart & Soul in 2017 a number of people had spoken on camera about what they had been doing together ecumenically.

The Convener said that the Strategy would be core to the Committee's Report to the General Assembly in 2019. He would work on a paper over the summer to be brought to the Committee's meeting in September.

7. Strategy for engaging with Presbyteries

The Secretary advised that two matters had arisen in relation to engaging with Presbyteries in which there were Local Ecumenical Partnerships, namely Presbytery Planning and the application of Act I (2015). It was agreed that the Secretary should write to these Presbyteries and advise them to contact him for advice in relation to these matters.

8. Local Ecumenical Partnerships

The Secretary gave an update on Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

9. Sacramental Ministry Working Group

The outline Report of the Panel on Review & Reform, the Theological Forum, the Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Legal Questions Committee was noted.

The General Assembly of 2017 had instructed the above to give consideration to whether, in the light of the ideas raised in the Report and Supplementary Report of the Panel on Review and Reform, there would be any change to the practice of Sacramental Ministry in the Church of Scotland and to consult with others and to report to a future Assembly.

Convener**Secretary**

ACTION**Charlotte
Methuen****Convener/
Secretary**

Charlotte Methuen referred to a paper from the United Lutheran Church in Germany entitled “Properly Called”. The Church of England had engaged with the paper in some depth. She agreed to send a copy to the Secretary.

It was agreed that the Convener and Secretary should engage with the Theological Forum and the Legal Questions Committee.

10. Reports for noting**10.1 Action of Churches Together in Scotland AGM**

A report from the Convener of ACTS AGM and Members’ Meeting held in Stirling on 13 June 2018 was noted.

10.2 Action of Churches Together in Scotland – Working Group

The Interim Report of the ACTS Working Group (WG) was tabled. There had been two meetings of the WG in May. A final report would be brought to the Members’ Meeting in September. The WG had concurred with the view that ACTS was not attuned to the ecumenical landscape in Scotland today. The WG would draft the final report over the summer and engage with representatives outwith ACTS membership.

10.3 Joint meeting with the United Free Church of Scotland

The draft minutes of the meeting between the Ecumenical Relations Committees of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church held on 17 January 2018 were noted. The meeting had enabled both Committees to give updates on their work. It had been agreed that such meetings were important to allow the sharing of information.

10.4 Assembly of the Congregational Federation in Scotland

The report from Mr David Watt of the Annual Assembly held in Airdrie on 12 May 2018 was noted. Almost all the 24 congregations in the Federation had been represented. The National Assembly of the Congregational Federation in Britain is to be hosted by the Scottish Federation in 2019.

10.5 Action of Churches Together in Scotland and Priority Areas

The notes of an exploratory meeting between the Ecumenical Officer, John Finch (Ministries Support Officer), Iain McLarty (Worship Development Worker, Ministries Council) and Shirley Grieve (Priority Areas Secretary) were noted. Given that “mission from the margins” was a large part of the wider ecumenical agenda, the group had discussed whether Priority Areas could play a role in ensuring that this was at the forefront of how ACTS and the Ecumenical Relations Committee could work moving forward.

11. World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)

Committee members noted the Message from the Executive Committee of the WCRC which had met in Seoul, South Korea from 10-16 May 2018. Mrs Pauline Weibye, who had been minute recorder at the Executive Committee, gave a reflection. She said it had been a great privilege to meet with people from other churches.

The Convener thanked Pauline for her reflections and her work as minute taker. He said that the new WCRC Strategic Plan, agreed in Seoul, would be on the Agenda of the Committee’s meeting in September.

12. Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The Secretary reported that he and the Principal Clerk, Rev Dr George Whyte, had accompanied the Moderator to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in

ACTION

Ireland in Belfast from 4-8 June 2019. They had been very warmly received and ties with the Church of Scotland had been strongly affirmed.

The Secretary had written a paper outlining the decision made by the PCI as follows:

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland voted on the following options [one option to be selected]:

Moved by the Very Rev Principal JS Carson, seconded by the Rev TD Gribben, and agreed:

27. That the Presbyterian Church in Ireland:

(a) should no longer accept invitations to the Moderator of the General Assembly, or any other formal delegation, to attend the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church and no longer issue invitations to those two denominations to attend the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

(b) should resume accepting invitations for the Moderator of the General Assembly to attend the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and should continue to accept such invitations from the United Reformed Church.

There voted for a): 255

There voted for b): 171

On being put to the House, the substantive motion (a) was declared passed.

Moved by the Very Rev Principal JS Carson, seconded by the Rev TD Gribben, and agreed:

28. That where there are areas in which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Church of Scotland could collaborate together for the mutual benefit of both (through their respective Councils, Committees and Departments), then such collaboration should continue or could be considered.

It was noted that the Secretary had been in contact with Rev John Brackenridge. He and the Convener were seeking an early meeting with the PCI Church Relations Committee. The Committee endorsed this approach and the Secretary was asked to convey this to the Convener of the PCI's Church Relations Committee.

Secretary

It was agreed that the Secretary should ask the Council of Assembly to add this to its agenda for its meeting on 18 June.

Secretary

The Convener read out an email he had received from a Church of Scotland minister regarding the decision taken by the PCI. The minister said he had been aware that, in recent years, similar decisions had been taken by the Free Church and United Free Church. He was concerned by these broken relationships.

He asked if the Ecumenical Relations Committee would be willing to give consideration to these broken relations and prepare a report for the General Assembly in 2019 describing these broken relations and, so far as possible, offering some analysis of the cause and possible steps that could be taken to repair and restore relations with our Presbyterian neighbours.

The Committee agreed to remit this matter to the Convener and Secretary

10. Future meeting dates

It was noted that the overnight Committee meeting in 2019 would be held in the Kinnoull Monastery, Perthshire from 24-25 September from lunchtime to lunchtime.

It was agreed that the Convener, Vice Convener and Secretary should liaise regarding dates for meetings to the end of 2019 taking into account meetings of Councils and the Theological Forum.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting 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

**Convener/
Secretary**

Secretary