

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

Church of Scotland Offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh  
6 February 2018

**MINUTE**

**PRESENT:**

**Convener:** Rev Alison McDonald

**Vice Convener:** Rev Kevin Mackenzie

**Members:** Rev Ross Blackman (Ministries Council), Rev Dr Liam Fraser (Theological Forum), Mrs Marjorie Paton (Church & Society Council), Rev Matthew Ross (ACTS) – afternoon session, Mrs Mary Welsh (Roman Catholic Church)

**Apologies:** Rev Anikó Schuetz Bradwell (World Mission Council), Rev Gerald Bostock (Methodist Church), Alison Burnley, (Religious Society of Friends), Rev Stephen Fulcher (Mission & Discipleship Council), Rev Dr Frances Henderson (Joint Commission on Doctrine), Rev Alexander Horsburgh (WCRC), Mr David Nicholson DCS (Social Care Council), Major Steven Turner (Salvation Army), Ms Miriam Weibye (WCC)

**Staff:** Mrs Anne Macintosh (General Treasurer) – for morning session  
Rev Dr John L McPake (Secretary), Ms Ros Milne (Senior Administrator)  
Rev Dr George Whyte (Principal Clerk) – for morning session

**1. Welcome and Constitution**

The Convener welcomed Committee members. The meeting was constituted with a reading and prayer.

**2. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 7 December 2017 were approved as an accurate record.

The Convener informed members that the matters arising and business would be taken later to allow Mrs Macintosh and Dr Whyte to engage in discussion about the Theos Review of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) the Committee's Report to the General Assembly.

**3. ACTS Review**

The Convener reported that General Assembly nominated members of the Committee had met in Hamilton to look at the Committee's draft Report to the General Assembly and its response to the Theos review of ACTS. She said that Rev Matthew Ross, General Secretary of ACTS, would join the meeting for the afternoon session.

Copies of the Committee's draft Report to the General Assembly were tabled. The Convener emphasised the confidential nature of the Committee's discussion of the Review. There then followed a full discussion. The Secretary agreed to redraft the section on ACTS.

The Convener thanked everyone for their contributions.

Rev Dr George Whyte then left the meeting.

**ACTION**

#### 4. Committee's Budget

The Convener welcomed Mrs Anne Macintosh who gave an update on the Committee's expenditure to the end of 2017. She said there had been an underspend against budget which would be returned to the Mission and Renewal Fund.

She suggested that there be a meeting before the Finance Group next meets in April to discuss financial contributions. She felt it would be helpful to give the Finance Group a copy of ACTS accounts. She would work on a detailed budget for 2019 in December 2018. ACTS should be asked for a justification of costs before then.

The Convener thanked Anne for her report.

#### 5. Committee's Report to the General Assembly

The Committee went through the draft report in detail and amendments noted. There were two outstanding sections to be provided by the Convener and Rev Sandy Horsburgh. The Secretary agreed to make the revisions and send the revised Report to the Committee for approval.

#### 6. Matters arising from the Minutes

##### Item 3 (5.2) – Heart and Soul

The Vice Convener reported that a larger tent had been reserved which would be shared with the Scottish Episcopal Church and Action of Churches Together in Scotland. He and the Secretary had spoken about possibilities. Ros Milne reported that the application had been submitted. She would receive notification in due course as to whether it had been successful.

##### Item 3 (6.1) – United Free Church

The Convener reported on the meeting on 17 January 2018 with members of the United Free Church Ecumenical Relations Committee. The Convener, Secretary and Rev Ross Blackman had attended. It has been a good meeting where both Committees had shared information on current issues. There had been discussion of the respective General Assembly reports, the Theos Review of ACTS and the General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. She said that the two Secretaries would collaborate on the preparation of notes of the meeting. It had been agreed to continue this form of engagement.

##### Item 6.2 – Trustee of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

The Secretary reported that he had not yet received a response from the General Secretary of CTBI regarding representation, although he was aware that the Church would be asked to nominate a Trustee. On that basis, it was agreed to that the Secretary should bring a name to the Committee for approval.

##### Item 8 – Strategic Plan

The Convener reported that the Council of Assembly had produced a new version of the Strategic Plan with ecumenism more strongly embedded within it.

##### Item 14.1 – Scottish Episcopal Church - nomination

The Secretary reported that it was the turn of the Scottish Episcopal Church to nominate a representative to serve on the Ecumenical Relations Committee from June 2018 and a name had been agreed. The Scottish Episcopal Church had, in turn, invited the Committee to nominate a representative to serve on its Inter Church

**ACTION**

**Secretary**

**Secretary**

**Secretary**

**Secretary**

Relations Committee from June. It was agreed that the Convener and Secretary should speak with the Convener of the Inter Church Relations Committee to find out what would be expected of the representative.

## **7. Nominations Committee**

The Vice Convener took the chair for this item. He reported that the Nominations Committee had agreed the nomination of Rev Sandy Horsburgh as Convener of the Committee from May 2018. In addition, the Nominations Committee had agreed two people for the remaining two vacancies on the Committee. The Committee was pleased to note that all potential candidates had put Ecumenical Relations as their first or only choice.

The Secretary reported that he had still to clarify the position of one General Assembly nominated member.

## **8. Risk Register**

Committee members noted and agreed the revised Risk Register.

## **9. Reports from Council representatives**

The Convener reported that most Councils had not yet met and Rev Steve Fulcher had been unable to attend the last meeting of the Mission & Discipleship Council. She invited Rev Dr Liam Fraser to report on the Theological Forum.

### **9.1 Theological Forum**

Rev Dr Liam Fraser gave a verbal report of the meeting of the meeting of the Theological Forum held on 2 February 2018. He said that the agenda had been very wide. Rev Harriet Harris, Chaplain at Edinburgh University, had spoken at the meeting. There had been discussion about nominations to the Forum and a possible change in composition and balance. There had been discussion about the reports received from other churches on its Same Sex Marriage report. There had also been discussion of oversight of ministry. It was noted that the Ecumenical Relations Committee would be invited to join a small working group.

The Convener thanked Liam his report.

## **10. Reports from Ecumenical Bodies**

### **10.1 Conference of European Churches - Nominations**

The Convener reported that CEC had sent a letter to its member churches inviting them to put forward nominations for the vacancies of President, Vice Presidents and Governing Board members.

The Secretary said that the Convener currently served on the Governing Board of CEC and her term of office was coming to an end. He said that CEC was concerned about continuity and had asked if the Convener would be willing to serve for one further term. Committee members agreed the nomination.

The Convener thanked the Committee. She said she hoped to be able to do more advocacy work for CEC. She then proposed, for the position of President, Pasteur Christian Krieger, Président du Conseil Synodal de l'Eglise Protestante Réformée d'Alsace Lorraine, Vice-Président de l'Union des Eglises Protestantes d'Alsace Lorraine and Vice-Président de la Fédération protestante de France. After discussion, the Committee agreed her proposal.

## **ACTION**

**Convener/  
Secretary**

**Secretary**

**Convener**

**10.2 World Communion of Reformed Churches – Nominations**

It was noted that there were vacancies for President, two Vice Presidents and Secretary of the Europe Steering Committee. The Convener said that there was a question about the interpretation of bylaws regarding office holders. The Committee agreed that the Convener should express her views at its next meeting.

**10.3 Institute for Ecumenical Research**

The Secretary reported that an invitation had been received to send a representative to the 52<sup>nd</sup> International Ecumenical Seminar, *Fundamentalism as Ecumenical Challenge*, to be held in Strasbourg from 2-9 July 2018. It was agreed to advertise the Seminar. Anyone interested could apply to the Duncan McClements Trust for a grant towards the costs of attending.

**11. Local Ecumenical Partnerships**

The Secretary gave an update on Local Ecumenical Partnerships. He said he would attend a Presbytery Clerks Forum and asked for permission to share the draft ecumenical policy and the underlying principles. This was agreed.

**12. Article in Scottish Catholic Observer**

The Convener reported that the Secretary had been interviewed by the Scottish Catholic Observer during the Week of Christian Unity. A copy of the press cutting was shared with the Committee.

**13. Future dates**

**13.1 Ecumenical Relations Committee meetings and Autumn Conference**

It was agreed to set up a Doodle Poll for Committee meetings in April, June, an overnight in September and the Autumn Conference. The Committee agreed to delegate the choice of venues for the September meeting to the Convener and Vice Convener.

There was discussion about a venue for the Autumn Conference. Feedback had indicated that the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church had been a good venue. It was agreed to book the venue once a date had been agreed.

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**

**Convener**

**Ros Milne**

**Ros Milne  
Convener/  
Vice Convener**

**Ros Milne**