

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

Church of Scotland Offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh
2 May 2018

MINUTE

PRESENT:

Convener: Rev Alison McDonald

Vice Convener: Rev Kevin Mackenzie

Members: Rev Dr Grant Barclay (Trustee – ACTS), Rev Ross Blackman (Ministries Council), Rev Gerald Bostock (Methodist Church), Alison Burnley, (Religious Society of Friends), Rev Dr Liam Fraser (Theological Forum), Rev Stephen Fulcher (Mission & Discipleship Council), Rev Dr Frances Henderson (Joint Commission on Doctrine), Rev Alexander Horsburgh (WCRC), Mrs Mary Welsh (Roman Catholic Church)

Apologies: Rev Anikó Schuetz Bradwell (World Mission Council), Mr David Nicholson DCS (Social Care Council), Mrs Marjorie Paton (Church & Society Council), Rev Matthew Ross (ACTS), Major Steven Turner (Salvation Army)

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

ACTION

1. Welcome and Constitution

The Convener welcomed Committee members and also Rev Dr Grant Barclay to his first meeting. Introductions were made. The meeting was constituted with readings and prayer led by the Vice Convener.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 6 February 2018 were approved as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

Item 4 – Committee’s Budget

The Secretary confirmed that he spoken to the General Secretary of Action of Churches Together in Scotland in connection with membership contributions and to encourage a formal response to the letter to the Trustees from the Council of Assembly sent in November 2017. The Convener asked Rev Dr Grant Barclay if he would pursue this and he agreed to do so.

G Barclay

Item 5.2 – Heart and Soul

Rev Sandy Horsburgh’s notes of the meeting of the planning group (Miriam Weibye (Scottish Episcopal Church), Sandy Horsburgh, Kevin Mackenzie and Ian Boa (Action of Churches Together in Scotland) were noted. It had been agreed that the theme of the tent would be “Talking together – walking together”.

The tent would house displays from East Kilbride where churches had a project which explored commonalities between congregations; *Side-by-side Faith: Movement for Gender Justice*; Fife Pilgrim Way; Our Common Calling; WCC Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. The Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church had agreed to appear on video outlining the growing relationship between the SEC and the Church of Scotland. The video from the WCC would play in rotation on a loop with the display on the Fife Pilgrim Way and the video from the SEC.

ACTION

The planning group had identified those exhibitors which already worked ecumenically. Laminated A5 “ecumenical badges” would be produced. Those working ecumenically would be asked to display a badge.

Sandy hoped Committee members would be able to attend. The Convener thanked all those involved in the preparations.

Item 3 (6.1) – United Free Church of Scotland

The Secretary reported that Rev John Fulton, General Secretary of the United Free Church, had agreed to produce the notes of the joint meeting held in January 2018. The Convener felt it would be important to have notes of such meetings for historical purposes.

Item 6.2 – Churches Together in Britain and Ireland - Trustee

The Vice Convener reported that he had attended a CTBI Work Programme Consultation in November 2017. The Church of Scotland had been invited to nominate a Trustee.

The Committee agreed to nominate the Rev Alison McDonald, who was proposed and seconded by Rev Dr Liam Fraser and Rev Steve Fulcher. The Secretary to advise the General Secretary of CTBI.

Secretary**Item 14.1 – Scottish Episcopal Church Inter Church Relations Committee**

The Secretary reported that he had approached Rev Dr Peter Donald who had agreed to represent the Church of Scotland on the Inter Church Relations Committee. Dr Donald was currently a member of the International Reformed Anglican Dialogue (IRAD). The Committee agreed the nomination.

The Secretary informed the Committee that Rev Professor Charlotte Methuen would join the Committee in the next session in June as the representative of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

4. Action of Churches Together in Scotland - Review

The Secretary’s notes of the meeting of the ACTS Members Meeting held on 25 April 2018 were considered. Rev Matthew Ross, General Secretary, would leave his post on 11 May 2018. He would take up a new position at the beginning of June with the World Council of Churches in Geneva as Programme Executive for Diakonia and Capacity Building. Rev Ian Boa had been appointed Interim General Secretary until 31 March 2019. The Convener reported that Matthew had served on the Committee for nine years and asked the Secretary to send a card to Matthew thanking him for his services to the Committee. The Secretary was also asked to send an email to Rev Ian Boa wishing him well.

**Secretary
Secretary**

It was noted that Rev Dr Peter McEnhill had resigned from his post as Consultant on Ecumenical Ministerial Formation. Ms Miriam McHardy had been appointed as his replacement from August 2018.

Member churches of ACTS had been invited to present their responses (previously circulated) to the ACTS Review. A response had also been received from the EMU Partners Meeting (Episcopal, Methodist, United Reformed). The session had been facilitated by Rev Aled Edwards (Churches Together in Wales).

There had been consensus in the responses around the need to clarify the vision of ACTS, broaden its membership base and to restructure the organisation. The responses

had confirmed the conclusions of the Theos Review. There had, however, been no consensus on how to achieve any of the desired outcomes.

It had been agreed that there was a need for one over-arching ecumenical instrument in Scotland. It had also been agreed that ACTS needed a root and branch reform drawing on the insights of the Theos Review. A strong focus on the development and support of local ecumenical partnerships (LEPs) and an outward facing mission were seen as integral to any such body.

The Members Meeting had agreed to form a short-term working group composed of Miriam Weibye (SEC) (Convener), Rev Dr Grant Barclay (Trustee), Fr William McFadden (RC), Huw Lloyd-Richards (Quakers) and Rev Dr John L McPake (CofS). It had been agreed to invite an additional member from a church which was not a member of ACTS. An interim report would be brought to the ACTS AGM on 13 June. It was hoped that a final report would be brought to the ACTS Members' Meeting on 12/13 September. The Convener said that she could not think of a better group to take matters forward. She would ask for prayers for the group at the General Assembly.

The Convener thanked everyone for their comments. She said that if any Committee member had further comments to make, they would be passed on to the group.

5. Committee's Budget

The Convener welcomed Mrs Anne Macintosh who gave an update on the Committee's expenditure to the end of March 2018. Anne indicated that the paper in front of the Committee had been a draft. She would send the Secretary a more up-to-date budget to the end of April.

Anne indicated that the Committee's Conferences and Travel & Representation accounts were slightly over budget. It was noted that this was due to the Conference with the Joint Commission on Doctrine and the Biennial Consultation with the Church of England. Alternative accommodation had to be found as a result of the closure of the Royal Over-Seas League.

The Secretary said that the General Assembly account might be over budget due to having to use an alternative venue for the General Assembly dinner, which had previously been held in the Royal Over-Seas League. There was discussion about the division of the invoice for the dinner which had traditionally been split three ways between the Committee, the Assembly Arrangements Committee and World Mission Council. It was agreed that the Secretary should request a meeting with the Secretary of the Assembly Arrangements Committee and the Secretary of the World Mission Council to discuss this.

It was noted that a meeting was required with the Council of Assembly Finance Group to discuss the Committee's budget.

The Convener thanked Anne for all her work on behalf of the Committee. Anne then left the meeting.

6. Reports from Council representatives

6.1 Ministries Council

Rev Ross Blackman reported on the April meeting of the Ministries Council. There had been discussion regarding strategic work and redesigning training. Rev Dr Anne Tomlinson, Principal of the Scottish Episcopal Institute, who had been involved in redesigning training, had been present.

ACTION

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A Macintosh

Secretary

Secretary

Grant Barclay asked if there was a connection between work being carried out in relation to ministerial formation and the work of ACTS. He wondered if there was scope for ecumenical working. Ross agreed to raise this with the Council.

The Secretary agreed to speak with Ms Miriam McHardy after she begins in August. It was noted she would be at the ACTS Members' Meeting in June 2018.

6.2 Church and Society Council

The Convener informed the meeting that Mrs Paton had tendered her apologies as her husband had been unwell.

The Committee noted Marjorie's comprehensive report of the meeting of the Church and Society Council held in April. It was noted that the Council was involved in a wide range of diverse work. The Convener said that the Council did a lot work ecumenically as it was embedded in its work.

The Convener said that Murdo Macdonald (Genetics) and Adrian Shaw (Climate Change & Economics) had been significant speakers and had contributed a lot to the work of the Conference of European Churches over the last five years.

6.3 Mission and Discipleship Council

Rev Steve Fulcher's report of the meeting of the Mission and Discipleship Council held on 25 April in the Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh was noted. Rev Angus Mathieson had been welcomed as the Interim Council Secretary.

The morning had been spent reviewing the remits of various sub-groups of the Council. Steve had been pleased to note that all groups had ecumenical considerations written into their remits. Three groups had been discontinued as their work overlapped that of other groups. The Convener thanked Steve for encouraging the Council to work ecumenically which had had a very positive effect.

It had been noted that the Scottish Churches Racial Justice Group (supported by ACTS) had been suspended and that its work had been taken over by Minority Ethnic Christians Together in Scotland (MECTIS).

6.4 Theological Forum

Rev Dr Liam Fraser gave a verbal report. He said the Forum had met twice since the Committee had last met – in March and April. There had been a lot of overlap. At the March meeting, there had been discussion about an overture to be brought to the General Assembly from the Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles regarding the Westminster Confession. If approved, it would involve a lot of work over a number of years. It had been posted on the Presbytery's web site:
<http://www.melrosepeeblespresbytery.org.uk/WESTMINSTER%20CONFESSION.pdf>.

The Secretary raised the question of whether, if passed, the Ecumenical Relations Committee ought to seek to be involved in the subsequent process. The Secretary agreed to speak to the Principal Clerk on this matter.

Liam reported that there had also been discussion at the March meeting about ecumenical theological education.

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R Blackman

Secretary

Secretary

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The April meeting had two pieces of discussion. The sacramental ministries working group's work was ongoing. They were looking at revising OLMs as there had been general recognition that it should be easier to ordain ministers.

The Convener thanked everyone for their reports.

7. Reports from Ecumenical Bodies

7.1 World Council of Churches

Committee members noted a letter from the World Council of Churches regarding its 70th Anniversary which it was celebrating in 2018.

(<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/wcc70/>)

The WCC had decided to celebrate the occasion in as many ways as possible. Member churches and ecumenical partners had been invited to participate actively in the celebrations.

The Secretary reported that he had spoken with Rev Matthew Ross about whether the Anniversary would be marked by ACTS. He suggested taking this up with Rev Ian Boa. He had also spoken with Rev Ian Alexander, General Secretary, World Mission Council.

It was noted that materials had been collated on the WCC's web site. It was agreed that, as time was limited, ACTS should be asked to advertise the web site:

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/wcc70/>

7.2 Conference of European Churches

The Convener gave a brief report of the meeting of the Governing Board of CEC. The agenda had been full as this had been the penultimate meeting before CEC's Assembly. There had been an important session spent with consultants who had evaluated the work carried out by the Governing Board. An evaluation had been received from staff of the work of the Thematic Reference Groups. It had been noted that 70 out of 117 member churches had engaged in the consultation process on the open letter "What future for Europe". It was felt this could be a good model to engage with member churches in future.

Rev Soren Lenz (Union of Protestant Churches in Alsace and Lorraine) had been installed as the new Secretary as a service in the Chapel of Europe. She would be based in Strasbourg and work on a part-time basis.

A report of the work of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe had been received from Doris Peschke, General Secretary. The Board had noted her retirement and had expressed much gratitude to her for her work over the years.

The remaining time had been spent on preparations for the upcoming General Assembly.

The Convener reported that she had held a preparatory briefing meeting on 26 April for the Scottish delegates and others who would attend CEC's General Assembly later in the month. She said that Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) had held a briefing meeting for the British and Irish Churches. The meeting had been organised late in the day and no one from Scotland had been able to attend. CTBI's General Secretary, Rev Bob Fyffe, had been able to attend the Scottish meeting and had given some input from CTBI's meeting. The Convener said that she had also been invited to take part in one of the sessions at the Youth Assembly.

Secretary

ORDER OF THE DAY

7.3 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2019

Following lunch, Phil Mellstrom, Worship Development Worker, Mission and Discipleship Council, was welcomed to the meeting. Introductions were made. Phil explained that part of his work was to produce resources, such as Pray Now and Weekly Worship (formerly Starters for Sunday). The Council's Resourcing Worship Team had produced Weekly Worship as an online resource. The material was available for use by individuals and congregations. He was responsible for Weekly Worship and was part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. He wished to include more content written by ecumenical friends and partners. He hoped, through working with the Ecumenical Relations Committee, the WPCU could be promoted more widely. Ecumenical material would be required for weeks 6, 13, 20 and 27 in January 2019. The worship materials should be based on the relevant verses from the Revised Common Lectionary.

Phil said there had been 120,000 hits on the Weekly Worship web pages since 2017. It was a good way of sharing knowledge. A number of talented writers had been lined up to produce material for Lent and Pentecost. He asked if the Committee would be interested in engaging in the production of good quality material.

It was noted that the World Council of Churches was celebrating its 70th Anniversary in 2018. The Vice Convener said that if the General Assembly agreed the Ecumenical Policy, it could be disseminated throughout the church by way of prayer cards. Mary Welsh reported that the Jesuits had an arts and prayer section which used paintings to reflect on. It was good for small groups.

It was noted that the end of October would be the deadline. Rev Ross Blackman volunteered to assist. He would co-ordinate with Sandy Horsburgh and the Secretary. Frances Henderson reminded the Committee of the liturgy produced by the Joint Commission on Doctrine.

It was agreed to put this on the Agenda for the Committee's June meeting.

The Convener thanked Phil for attending the meeting.

7.4 World Communion of Reformed Churches

The report from Rev Sandy Horsburgh of the annual meeting of the Council of WCRC Europe Area held in Budapest from 12-13 April 2018 was noted.

The meeting had reviewed the work of WCRC Europe over the last two years. There had been discussion on the Constitution and By-laws. The decision had been made that no member of the Steering Committee should serve for more than two terms in any capacity. The main focus of the meeting had been the work of the Task Force on Migration. Elections had been held for the post of President, two Vice Presidents and Secretary.

Sandy said that there had been a lot of discussion on migration. It had been good to hear different stories from other parts of the Continent.

Sandy thanked the Committee for its support and Ros Milne for her assistance over the years.

ACTION

**R Blackman/
S Horsburgh/
Secretary**

Secretary

ACTION

Sandy reported that following the meeting, Rev Chris Ferguson, the WCRC General Secretary, had asked him if the Church of Scotland would consider inviting him and Hans Lessing to visit Scotland to meet church leaders and reformed academic theologians. The WCRC had started a programme of visiting larger member churches as it had been acknowledged that their agendas had not been highlighted in recent years. It was agreed, in principle, to issue an invitation. There would be a need to find out if other churches, such as the United Free Church and the United Reformed Church Synod of Scotland, would be involved. If so, there would be a question of sharing costs between the churches.

Secretary

Sandy said that the new Steering Committee hoped to hold the 2019 WCRC Europe Council meeting in Edinburgh. Sandy reported that it would be the responsibility of the Ecumenical Relations Committee to issue a formal invitation. It would be normal to offer some administrative assistance in the form of help with venue and accommodation booking. Sandy had written to the new Secretary of the Committee asking what the theme of the visit would be and why they wished to visit Scotland. The Committee agreed in principle.

The Convener thanked Sandy for his report.

8. Local Ecumenical Partnerships**8.1 Protocols for Model Constitution for LEPs**

The General Assembly of 2012 had adopted a Model Constitution for a Single Congregation Local Ecumenical Partnership through an Act Anent Local Ecumenical Partnerships (ACT XI (2012)). The Model Constitution had been approved by the National Sponsoring Body (NSB) for Local Ecumenical Partnerships in March 2012. The NSB had since been replaced by the Ecumenical Development Group of Action of Churches Together in Scotland. The Secretary had prepared a revised set of Protocols with respect to the adoption of the LEP Constitution, with the revised Protocols having been signed off by the Law Department.

The Secretary noted a request from a congregation holding an LEP Constitution for advice as to whether, or not, it could adopt another form of Constitution. The Secretary had advised the congregation that it was not possible to do so and that he would advise the Ecumenical Development Group on this matter.

8.2 Constitution

The Secretary reported that a question had been raised by a Presbytery in relation to the applicability of Act I (2015) in relation to the situation of a Local Ecumenical Partnership in a vacancy. The Secretary undertook to consult with the Principal Clerk before the General Assembly.

Secretary

The Convener thanked the Secretary for his work.

9. Reports for noting**9.1 Secretary's Report**

The Secretary's report of meetings attended and work undertaken from November 2017 to March 2018 was noted. The Convener noted all the meetings the Secretary had attended and thanked him for his work on behalf of the Committee.

9.2 Biennial Consultation with the Church of England – The Future Shape of Mission

The draft minute of the Biennial Consultation with the Church of England held from 15-16 March 2018 in the New Club, Edinburgh was noted.

ACTION

There had been a reflection on the process and history leading to the signing of the *Columba Declaration* and a reflection on the meeting of the *Columba Declaration* Contact Group in November 2017 at Shepherds Dene in Northumberland.

The work of the Centre for Theology and Community based at St George-in-the-East, London had been outlined. The meeting had heard about the Path of Renewal initiative of the Panel on Review and Reform of the Church of Scotland.

Rev Prof David Fergusson had provided an analysis of the social, political and cultural contexts in which the Church had sought to address the challenge of mission within Scotland.

The Archbishop of York had focussed on the theme of intentional discipleship and disciple-making. On the morning of 16 March, the Archbishop had led the celebration of Holy Communion in the Chapel of the Church of Scotland offices.

Strategies for Renewal and Reform had been outlined within the Church of England. There had been an open forum on the Future Shape of Mission. Action points had been agreed and the closing reflection had been given by the Rt Rev Dr John Armes, Bishop of Edinburgh, Scottish Episcopal Church.

The Convener reported that she had attended the second day. It had been a very good meeting.

The Secretary said that previous dialogues had discussed several topics but not in any great detail. This time, the meeting had concentrated on the Future Shape of Mission and there had been very in-depth discussions. It was noted that the Scottish Episcopal Church Faith & Order Board would increase its representation.

9.3 Mediterranean Hope Visits 2017

The Committee noted a very detailed report from three representatives of the Church of Scotland (Ross Greer, a member of Bearsden Cross Church and MSP); David Bradwell (Refugee Co-ordinator, Church and Society Council); and Fiona Kendall (Church of Scotland Mission Partner). In 2017, they had taken part in visits to Mediterranean Hope, the refugee and migrants programme of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy. In addition to financial assistance from Church and Society and World Mission Council, Ross Greer had received support from the Duncan McClements Trust for Ecumenical Training.

Alison Burnley requested permission to circulate the document which she had found to be very informative. The Secretary would contact David Bradwell.

Secretary

9.4 United Reformed Church Synod of Scotland

Rev Kevin Mackenzie's report of the United Reformed Church Synod of Scotland meeting held in Glasgow in March was noted. There had been a heavy emphasis on eating together, relaxing and socialising for the whole family. There had been a good youth representation and one of the activities had been a "Cardboard City" which had highlighted the struggle of those sleeping on the streets. Kevin had been impressed by the unquestioned acceptance of everyone, no matter their church background. Two main items on the agenda had been the Data Protection Regulations and the Review by Theos of Action of Churches Together in Scotland.

The Convener thanked Kevin for his attendance on behalf of the Church.

ACTION

10. Future dates

10.1 Ecumenical Relations Committee meetings and Autumn Conference

It was noted that the Committee would meet again on 15 June 2018 in the Church offices at 121 George Street, Edinburgh. The Committee's overnight meeting would be held in the Conforti Institute on 27 and 28 September 2018.

The date of the joint Autumn Conference with ACTS had been agreed. It would be held on Saturday, 27 October 2018 in the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church.

Rev Dr Frances Henderson referred to the Joint Commission on Doctrine Conference held in March which she had attended. She said it had been a very good conference and thanked Ros Milne for all her work.

11. Retiring Committee members

The Convener was sorry she could not thank Mrs Marjorie Paton in person but acknowledged her diligent attendance at meetings. She thanked Rev Steve Fulcher (Mission & Discipleship Council) who had served for 1.5 terms. His work on behalf of the Committee had been very much appreciated.

She also noted that Alison Burnley (Religious Society of Friends) and Rev Dr Gerald Bostock (Methodist Church in Scotland) would come off the Committee each having served a term of four years. She thanked them for their faithful attendance and contributions at Committee meetings.

The Secretary then thanked the Convener for her service on the Committee. He noted that she had agreed to serve an extra year in order to allow a smooth transition when the Committee had been working without a Vice Convener and on the retirement of Sheilagh Kesting. He also thanked Alison for representing the Church on the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Conference of European Churches. He said that the Committee had been indebted to her faithful service and work over the years.

The Secretary presented the Convener with a small gift on behalf of the Committee.

The Convener thanked everyone for attending the meeting which was closed with the Benediction.

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Convener

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Secretary

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