

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD MAY 2022

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Welcome the Guild's 135th anniversary and acknowledge the significant impact the Guild has had in congregations and in the wider world during that time. *(Section 1.1.1)*
3. Commend the Guild on its efforts to maintain contact with and involvement of its membership as they emerge from pandemic restrictions. *(Section 2.4)*
4. Encourage Presbyteries and Guilds Together Groups to explore ways in which they can work together to support the greater involvement of Guilds in the mission of the Church. *(Section 3.6.2)*
5. Commend the further exploration of hybrid methods of meeting to enable wider participation in the national decision-making of the Guild. *(Section 3.7.2)*
6. Celebrate the significant number of new members who have joined this year and welcome the establishment of two new Guild branches. *(Section 5.1.2)*
7. Welcome new branches where Guilds have come together to provide a vibrant, sustainable local group and commend this approach as a model for future development. *(Section 5.1.4)*
8. Congratulate the Guild on the work of its Project Partnership Scheme 2021-24 and recognise the important issues tackled and vital monies raised. *(Section 4.3)*

Report

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 135 years on

1.1.1 The Guild has always been a movement that is not afraid of challenge or change. It has always been a movement that has been outward looking and has served local congregations and national and international partners faithfully for 135 years.

1.1.2 Whilst the report will indeed acknowledge the challenges that the Guild has faced over the past year, its aim is to focus on the many ways in which the Guild members, individually and collectively have taken their lights out from their proverbial bushels and shone for all to see in the past year.

1.1.3 The report is written with boldness and assurance about the role of The Guild at its core whilst recognising the significant challenges the Guild has faced particularly in terms of income from capitation fees, loss of income for the current Projects and the continuing challenge of meeting with post Covid-19 restrictions.

1.1.4 A number of groups have not been able to begin again and their contribution to the life of local congregations over many decades is to be celebrated and their loss will also be deeply felt not only in their own congregation but also by the wider Guild family.

1.2 "Lights and Bushels"

1.2.1 The Guild theme for 2021-22 is **Lights and Bushels** sitting alongside our overall strategy of **"Look Forward in Faith"**.

1.2.2 Looking forward in faith is something that the Guild has always done, with the confidence and assurance that comes from knowing that in all things God is in control.

1.3 The Confidence to Shine

1.3.1 The report looks at the many and varied ways in which Guild members have been able to let their 'light shine' locally, nationally and internationally.

2. SHINING LOCALLY

2.1 July 2021 saw many restrictions on meeting together lifted and Guilds began to plan for the year ahead.

2.2 An increasing number of Guilds, in response to local need, have changed their pattern of meeting. For some this has been a move from evening to afternoon meetings and for others it has been a move from winter to summer meetings.

2.3 The growth of summer Guilds is encouraging and it enabled some groups to get up and running quickly from June 2021.

2.4 Guilds continued to find innovative ways to keep in touch with each other with a number continuing to use online platforms to meet together and have opportunities for social engagement even when not able to meet in person.

2.5 As Guilds began to meet, the increasing use of 'in house' speakers and activities helped to minimise external social contacts but also enabled Guild members to share skills, experiences and knowledge with others in their branch. These opportunities to 'shine' have been positive and well received. We hope that this will continue in the year ahead with Guilds making use of the breadth of talent within their own membership.

2.6 Guild members have been connecting in different ways with local communities, emboldened by the challenge to shine. This has included outreach at Christmas and Easter.

2.7 By working with our project partners, Guilds have been able to provide local communities with much needed information, advice and support on important issues that challenge people in their everyday lives.

3. SHINING NATIONALLY

3.1 During the course of 2021, the Guild nationally has continued to support members and be actively involved in the work of the wider church and Christian community.

3.2 On-going work

3.2.1 Communications

3.2.1.1 Using a wide variety of platforms has enabled the Guild to shine a light on the significant work that we are involved in.

3.2.1.2 Our twice-yearly magazine continues to go to every member and has enabled us to share information, news and updates with our membership.

3.2.1.3 The Guild's weekly e-news has grown its readership by 25% over the past year with 1500 people now receiving it. With a word copy also available, it is estimated that the e-news is read by approx. 6000 people every week.

3.2.1.4 Similarly, the Guild's Facebook page has grown by over 50% with over 3600 "likes". As we seek to shine a light on the work of the Guild and its members these growing audiences are an important way of doing that.

3.2.2 Outreach

3.2.2.1 The Guild has a proud history over the past 135 years of reaching out beyond its own membership to the community and wider world.

3.2.2.2 From the opening of hostels for young women in Glasgow and Edinburgh in 1919, our centenary project working with young drug addict prostitutes in Leith or our work in many ways with CrossReach, the Guild has shown a commitment to those who are on the margins of our communities.

3.2.2.3 This year we have worked with two charities, BEAT and Home for Good.

Together with BEAT, we hope to help local communities in Scotland recognise the signs of eating disorders and understand how to support those struggling to get the treatment they deserve. At the heart of this project, are the powerful stories of those who have lived through the illness. Over the next three years, volunteers with lived experience will join BEAT's training team to increase its impact, speak directly to decision-makers to demand greater action for those affected, and share their personal experience in local communities, as well as the message of hope that people can and do recover from eating disorders.

Working with Home for Good, a Christian charity who are passionate about finding a home for every child who needs one, we will work to inspire people to think about fostering and adoption. We also hope to equip the Church to welcome these families and help support people on their journeys.

3.2.2.4 By shining a light on these important issues and responding to need in practical and financial ways, the Guild has demonstrated Christ's love in action.

3.3 Resources

3.3.1 Each year members of our National Council work together to provide worship and discussion resources for our members and friends.

3.3.2 These resources are vital to the life and witness of the Guild and support the growth in faith of members.

3.4 Events

3.4.1 Bringing Guild members together to celebrate and share in fellowship is a key part of Guild life.

3.4.2 This year it was possible to hold our Annual Gathering in person at the Assembly Hall in Edinburgh.

3.4.3 The 2021 Gathering, entitled "The Extra Mile", was a day of particular celebration as it was the first in person for two years. However, we also enabled people to join online using live links. Guild members from as far apart as Shetland and Carlisle were able to join us on the day.

3.4.4 The day included the keynote address by the Moderator. Lord Jim Wallace provided encouragement and challenge to our members and it was a helpful insight into his hopes for his year in office.

3.4.5 It was also a day where we were able to shine a light on some excellent work that was being done by Guilds in Edinburgh, Ferintosh and North Berwick in particular.

3.4.6 A particular highlight was the opportunity to chat with members who joined us on a live link from St Andrew Blackadder in North Berwick and St Matthew's in Perth.

3.4.7 Our new format included the handover and taking of the oath of office by our incoming National Convener. This was a particularly poignant and special event. This new term of office has been well received by the Guild and helps to shape the Guild year.

3.5 New Events

3.5.1 We are continually striving to engage with members in new and imaginative ways using in person and virtual events as appropriate.

3.5.2 A series of online reflections provided by ministers in the run up to Easter proved popular and enabled Guild members and friends to have some space to reflect on the importance of Holy Week in a new way.

3.6 Regional Organisation

3.6.1 One of the key components of Guild organisation is the Guild at a Regional level, Guilds Together. These groups are made up of Guild representatives who jointly organise training, events and promotion of the Guild.

3.6.2 Traditionally these groups would mirror Presbytery boundaries and the new amalgamation of Presbyteries and subsequent geographical boundaries will place significant challenges on how Guilds Together Groups relate to the new Presbyteries.

3.6.3 To enable a Guilds Together Groups to work together, our four National Vice-Conveners are coordinating a series of Regional Gatherings across Scotland. These events combine worship, prayer, action and fellowship and encourage Guilds at a Regional level.

3.6.4 Following a re-evaluation of staffing needs, the Guild has begun the process of recruiting two part time members of staff who will support our Regional organisation and work with relevant National Vice-Conveners. They will not be primarily centrally based, focussing their work at a regional level. They will work with Guilds Together Groups and identify ways in which they can cooperate more closely with each other and help organise activities and events which make this possible.

3.7 Meetings

3.7.1 The Guild's National Council and our conferences have continued to meet on an on-line basis.

3.7.2 This has enabled people to remain involved in the decision making of the Guild and has resulted in members who were unable to travel in the past join in with the meetings. It is envisaged that we will try and maintain a hybrid model of meeting when in person Council meetings are possible.

3.8 National Conference

3.8.1 The Guild faces many challenges as it emerges fully from the current restrictions and we brought together representatives of Guilds in March to look at how best that can be done.

3.8.2 The event was an opportunity for representatives from Guilds and Guilds Together Groups to come together and develop our vision for the Guild for the next ten years. The event built on the work of the Action Plan and we are looking forward to moving forward with the conclusions of the conference in the coming year.

3.9 Convener's Challenge

3.9.1 The challenge is, as the name suggests, chosen by the National Convener and reflects something of their own character and interests. Over the years the challenges have reflected the varying interests of the Conveners including bowling, embroidery, writing and photography and the variety of skills and interests supported by Guild members.

3.9.2 This year's challenge is to produce a traybake using six ingredients, the winner to be announced at the Annual Gathering in September.

3.10 External Contacts

3.10.1 The Guild has continued to contribute greatly to the work of several groups, both within the Church of Scotland and beyond. We value the opportunities to share, learn and campaign on a range of issues. In particular we welcome the opportunity to be involved with the work of the Faith Action Programme Mission Support Group.

3.10.2 These partnerships continue the Guild's interest in work beyond its own and its desire to contribute to the broad work of the Church of Scotland and other bodies.

3.11 Staffing

3.11.1 In 2021 Iain Whyte retired after ten years of service to the Guild as General Secretary. Iain brought to the Guild, wisdom, drive and enthusiasm. We are grateful for the ways in which, that under Iain's leadership, Guilds were encouraged and enabled to meet the challenges of 21st century church life.

3.11.2 Then in 2022, Alice Finlayson retired as our Finance Assistant. Alice's attention to detail has always meant that the stewardship of Guild money was clear and accurate which has enabled us to emerge from the pandemic in a good financial position.

4. SHINING INTERNATIONALLY

4.1 From the Guild's inception, looking outward to the wider world was a key component of Guild life. In 1894, a hospital in Kalimpong in India was supported by Guild members and for many years Guild members have continued to contribute to the work there.

4.1.1 Over the years other projects developed and relationships formed with partners across the globe. These mutually beneficial relationships have helped enlighten the lives of Guild members and ensure that God's light has been able to shine in many countries.

4.2 Malawi and other overseas work

4.2.1 Our most developed and sustained partnership is with the Guilds in the Synod of Livingstonia in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) which continues to grow and develop.

4.2.2 As a Guild we welcome the many opportunities to share with and learn from our brothers and sisters in Malawi. It enriches our faith and enables us to grow as sisters and brothers in Christ.

4.2.3 Twinning with our friends in Malawi

4.2.3.1 Our twinings between Guilds Together in Ayr and District, North Ayrshire, Shetland, and Dunbartonshire with Presbyterian Guilds in Bandawe, Milala, Dwangwa, and Mzuzu respectively have also developed during the past year.

4.2.3.2 The sharing of prayer support over the past year has been particularly beneficial. Using modern technology, we have been able to keep in touch and support each other even when meeting together was not possible and we are currently looking at how best we can develop these relationships further in the year ahead.

4.2.4 Solar light for Schools

4.2.4.1 Over the past year, we have been able to build on our support for solar lighting to extend the programme into CCAP secondary schools and a further 6 primary schools.

4.2.4.2 We are encouraged at the ways in which these units have transformed the lives of students in the local community. With each unit providing 3200 hours of additional study these extra units will provide an extra 96,000 hours of study time. In total the Guild will have added 172,800 study hours for students and community members.

4.2.4.3 Women will be key beneficiaries of the extra hours since having a well-lit, secure space will encourage more community activity and enable women to participate more fully in education and community life.

4.3 Guild Partnership Projects

4.3.1 In 1969 the current project scheme began, initially as an annual project and then in 1997 a three-year project partnership with six individual projects was developed.

4.3.2 This last year has continued to make fundraising challenging and traditional avenues were not available. However, Guilds used their ingenuity to continue to support our partners. Our final total for our partners from 2018-2021, was £587,155.38.

- The Boys' Brigade Scotland, Faith in our Future.
- Free to Live Trust, Seema's Project.
- Malawi Fruits, Growing the Future.
- World Mission Council, Journeying Together with Teenage Mothers in Zambia.
- Sailors' Society, A Chaplain for Our Ports.
- CrossReach, Join up the Dots.

4.3.3 Since 1969 £7,347,490.52 has been raised for the Guild Project Partnership Scheme, a remarkable total and testament to the outward-looking nature of Guild members.

4.3.4 South East Asia

4.3.4.1 Working with Pioneers, we will support the development of a small chocolate kitchen on a beautiful island in South East Asia. It is here that Pioneers staff demonstrate the love of God to a group of unreached people. Chocolate Heaven is providing employment for chocolate makers, fair prices for local growers, producing and selling delicious chocolate in a variety of flavours and sharing God's good news with their employees and wider community whenever they have the opportunity to do so.

4.3.5 Uganda

4.3.5.1 In Uganda our Project Partnership with "Starchild, Finding the Light in Every Child" will help address the challenges of stigma and myths related to intellectual and physical disability. Starchild aims to build a holistic centre called the Sunflower Sanctuary. This centre will offer support, training and guidance to the most marginalised and help to prevent future generations of disabled people from being hidden in their communities and regarded as having no potential benefit to society. It is this lack of equality and inclusion that Starchild is addressing with the Guild and will be going forward in faith to bring these children out of the darkness and into the light.

4.3.6 Brazil

4.3.6.1 "Hear our Voice: empowering young women for ministry and service" is a project at UNIDA, a higher education institute in Vitoria, designed to empower young women through theological education. The partnership with The Guild has three core elements:

1. Providing access to accredited theological education for young women through special scholarships
2. Equipping young women for leadership in churches, faith-based organisations and wider society through practical education
3. Mentoring young women through accompaniment and work placements.

4.3.6.2 "Hear our Voice!" has the goal of providing 3000 students with educational opportunities at affordable prices, often with scholarships, from low-income backgrounds especially women and Afro-Brazilians.

4.3.7 Tanzania

4.3.7.1 Africa Inland Church Tanzania had the vision to create a multi-faceted and sustainable village on the southern side of Lake Victoria and the project 'Kazunzu Village of Hope Tanzania' is that vision. Working with the Africa Inland Church Tanzania and the Vine Trust we aim to:

- Increase the number of homes allowing more young families to serve as Guardian Parents to four or five orphaned children.
- Enrich the life of the village through the development of the community hub, a primary school, health post and vocational training centre.
- Create self-sustainability by investing in agricultural projects and fish farming.
- Fast tract the project over the next four years rather than the next ten years.

5. SHINING FOR ALL TO SEE

5.1.1 As reported above, much of the work of the Guild has continued despite the limitations placed upon us by the pandemic restrictions. We encouraged Guilds, as they faced another uncertain year to look to the words of our founder *"It is they who dream bright dreams that in the end deliver....do not be afraid or ashamed to announce splendid hopes. It is enthusiasts the world needs, and I pray you to be enthusiastic."*

5.1.2 In doing so we hoped that new members would come forward and we are heartened by the number of Guilds who have reported a growth in new members. We have welcomed a significant number of new members across the year which is a source of great encouragement. We are grateful to Guild members and supporters who have enabled us to get back meeting again, albeit in a new way. The fellowship that people have missed is now returning.

5.1.3 We dreamed of new Guild branches and following discussions with congregations in Newmilns and in Newport on Tay, we are delighted that two new Guilds have now been established in these congregations, and we are delighted to be welcoming these new members into our fellowship.

5.1.4 Changes to the numbers of building and congregations will have an impact on Guilds and we can see opportunities for this to safeguard the future of Guilds in a particular place by sharing people, skills and resources. Already Guilds in Largs and Lanark have come together and these combined groups are proving to be a real source of vibrancy and hope in times of change and uncertainty.

6. IN CONCLUSION

6.1 This has been a difficult time but we are emerging with renewed vision and enthusiasm for the future.

6.2 As we look forward, we do so in faith and in the words of Hebrews 11:1

'Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.'

In the name of the Committee

MARGARET MUIR, *National Convener*
KAREN GILLON, *General Secretary*

Appendix
Guild Finances 2021

General Fund Income	£	General Fund Expenditure	£
Members' Contributions	86598	Management and admin	182573
Donations and Grants	7178	Objects Expenditure	25544
Sales	4319	Cost of sales	2667
Project Support	15758		
Other	20918		
Total	134771	Total	210784

Project Donations 2021 to 28/2/2022

BEAT There is hope	£5,641.19
HOME FOR GOOD Finding a home for every child	£6,802.33
UNIDA Hear our voice	£1,015.70
VINE TRUST Kazunzu Village of Hope	£4,033.50
STARCHILD Finding the light in every child	£5,501.81
PIONEERS Chocolate Heaven	£3,033.99
Total	£26,028.52

Addendum

MARGARET MUIR National Convener 2021-2022

The National Council of the Guild wishes to record its thanks to Margaret Muir for serving as National Convener since September 2021.

Margaret Muir has served the Guild for many years in her home church, Airdrie New Monkland linked with Greengairs, as well as serving as Convener of both her Guild and Hamilton Guilds Together. She also represents the Guild on the Presbytery of Forth Valley and Clydesdale. In 2016 she became National Council Representative for Hamilton North Guilds Together and she has served as Committee Convener, National Vice-Convener and now as National Convener.

Margaret has used her warm personality to encourage people to use their gifts and talents in service to the Guild, their community and the wider world.

The Guild wishes Margaret well for the future, both in the Guild and in her church and community life.

KAREN GILLON, *General Secretary*