

**THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND  
MINISTRIES COUNCIL**

St Andrew's and St George's West Church, 13-17 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PA

Thursday 22 June 2017

**MINUTE**

**PRESENT:**

**Convener:** Rev Neil Glover

**Vice-Conveners:** Dr John Dent  
Rev Eleanor McMahon  
Rev Sarah Ross

**Members & Observers:** 30 others recorded in the Register of Attendance

**Staff in Attendance:** Jayne Scott plus 8 staff as recorded in the Register of Attendance

**Apologies:** Apologies were noted in the sederunt

**ACTION**

**1 Opening Worship**

The Convener welcomed those present and opened the meeting with worship. As suggested previously the Rev Sarah Brown offered to observe participation during the meeting and offer feedback at the end. Apologies were noted.

**2 General Assembly**

**2.1 Ministries Council Comments and Thoughts:** The Ministries Council report began before lunch which allowed time for thorough discussion on the business. Appreciation of this timing will be offered to the Assembly Arrangements Committee as feedback. In particular there was a lengthy debate around poverty and vacancies in rural areas. Mr Brian Porteous declared an interest as being a member of the Assembly Arrangements Committee.

**2.2 Operational Plan:** There will be further discussions with the Vice-Conveners on the breakdown of details in the Operational Plan (MCI-01). This will be brought back to the August Council overnight meeting.

**2.3 Key Points from General Assembly:** Dr John Dent attended the General Assembly as the Ministries Council Corresponding Member and offered some reflections on the experience. The Council of Assembly opened their report with a call to prayer and spoke of the strategic plan for the Church which Ministries Council will contribute to. The ecumenical dialogue continues and the Church is engaging with other communities. The Committee on Chaplains to HM Forces was instructed to approve and implement the Armed Forces Covenant which aspires to offer pastoral support, liturgical support and organisational support. Presbyteries were urged to appoint Veterans' Champions who will support parish ministers and Ministries Council should have a role in that.

**3 Staffing**

Mr Iain McLarty will begin as Worship Development Worker within the Priority Areas team on Monday 3 July 2017. A focus group has been drawn together to look at worship development needs.

Council noted that the Rev Marjory McPherson, Vocations & Support Secretary, had been appointed as Presbyter Clerk for Edinburgh and was due to begin in the new role in

September. Council expressed thanks to Mrs McPherson for all the work done for the Council and for ministers in the wider sense.

#### 4 Convener's Report

**4.1 Hub-style Ministries:** The Convener has been invited to speak on Hub-style Ministries at several Presbyteries and is happy to receive further invitations.

**4.2 Code of Conduct & Declaration and Registration of Interests:** Members were invited to confirm that they have read and understood the contents of the *Code of Conduct MCI – 03a* which was presented along with the *Declaration and Registration of Interests MCI – 03b*. The Convener explained that the guidance and paperwork from Ministries Council for declarations of interest were produced prior to a policy document which came out of the Council of Assembly meeting this week. Members are now asked to complete and return the new form with apologies for the inconvenience.

**4.3 Membership of Committees and Groups:** Council received the current *Table of Membership of Committees and Groups MCI-04*. It was noted that there were several vacancies and spaces to fill across the work of the Council. Members who would be interested in representing Council in other areas or who could suggest names of new co-opted members were asked to contact Mrs Carron Lunt, Administration Manager.

#### 5 Partnership Development

A written report *MCI-05* providing an overview of the work of the section was received along with a verbal report from the Rev Sarah Ross, Partnership Development Vice-Convener.

**5.1 Application for Full Status - East Kilbride Greenhills:** Council received details in paper *MCI-06* and unanimously and enthusiastically supported the raising of East Kilbride Greenhills to Full Status under section 30 of Act XIII 2000, as amended. The name of the charge shall be Greenhills Parish Church of Scotland, and it shall operate under the Unitary Constitution, as part of the Presbytery of Hamilton. This resolution shall take effect from 1 August 2017, subject to the receipt of a minute of concurrence on the adoption of the Manse and Church by the General Trustees.

**5.2 Proposals for Partnership Development Structure and Reporting:** Council agreed that the experiences of the last twelve months had shown that there is a need to reinstate a Partnership Development Committee, albeit with a revised remit and membership (*MCI-07*). The Partnership Development Review Group will be discharged from its responsibilities and this review function would lie with the Committee. The time commitment for those involved will be monitored.

**5.3 Partnership Development Review Group:** Review reports were presented for the *Go For It Fund MCI-08a*, *Presbytery Planning Task Group MCI-08b* and *New Charge Development Task Group MCI-08c*. The relevant groups as well as Council agreed to the recommendations provided in the reports with the following comments:

Go For It Fund - The Fund accepted recommendations 1-11 from the report as part of ongoing conversations. There will be further discussions on recommendation 12, which encourages the Fund to explore the possibilities for other sources of funding beyond the Church of Scotland, and recommendation 13, that Ministries Council consider broadening the resources of Go For It, particularly in training.

Presbytery Planning Task Group - Succession planning for leadership of the group has been discussed and new members would be considered. Planning is underway to offer a day conference for Presbyteries interested in exploring hub-style ministries. Details will be circulated in due course.

New Charge Development Task Group - Recommendation 6, around the way forward for church planting, would sit alongside discussions of the Joint Emerging Church Group and around Pioneering ministries.

It was suggested that the format used for business cases would help Council to consider the position and ask appropriate questions regarding future reviews. It was noted that the Interim Ministries Task Group and the Chaplaincies Forum had also been reviewed and that reports would be brought to a future Council meeting. Council thanked the Review Group for the work done so far and all of the groups who have been reviewed for engaging positively with the process.

## 6 Priority Areas

Written report *MCI-09* summarised the broad areas of work which had arisen out of the plan included in the report to the General Assembly and deliverances.

Ms Shirley Grieve, Priority Areas Secretary, confirmed that work had begun to look at the allocation of staffing resources via Presbytery Planning and poverty in rural areas. A representative from Ministries Council has been invited to sit on the Rural Working Group.

**6.1 Priority Areas Academy:** A learning programme based on experience and practice (*MCI-10*) was put together in response to needs expressed at the Priority Areas Gathering. There are four key strands: Asset Based Community Development; sustainability and partnership development; leadership, missional and worship development and networking and sharing expertise. Workshops and events will be delivered over the course of the plan.

**6.2 Highlights Report:** Paper *MCI-11* offered a flavour of the breadth of work being undertaking.

## 7 Education and Support

Written report *MCI-12* providing an overview of the work of the section was received along with a verbal report from the Rev Eleanor McMahon, Education and Support Vice-Convener including:

**7.1 Postgraduate Fund:** Council welcomed the introduction of the fund and noted that an adjudicating panel would be set up to receive applications.

**7.2 Ascend:** Members eligible for Ministerial Development Conversation were encouraged to sign-up online. The fortnightly e-newsletter will reduce in frequency to become monthly and a new quarterly Ascend publication will be sent by post beginning in the Autumn.

**7.2 Emails:** A large number of emails are being sent to ministers including approximately 24 e-newsletters from the Church. The Convener agreed to raise this with the Council of Assembly and reported that he had already raised concerns regarding a recent email outage. The provision of technical support was being reviewed.

**7.3 Pastoral and Vocational Care Task Group:** The Committee continued to explore possibilities for pastoral support of Ministries Development Staff (MDS) including Deacons who are MDS. Further investigation would be given as to whether the 24 hour helpline could be made available to OLM's. There is a strategy for national support and the group would look to integrate that with the Presbytery provision and other organisations. The group will also consider the support and development opportunities for Locums and Interim Moderators.

## 8 Finance

**8.1 Revised Finance Committee Remit:** Council approved the revised remit (*MCI-13*).

**8.2 Housing & Loan Fund:** The Committee was tasked with looking at the requirements of ministries and how money is spent on various parts of the Council work. There were

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ongoing discussions around levels of funding for the Housing & Loan Fund along with all other aspects of the budget.

**8.3 Management Accounts to April 2017:** The Ministries Council management accounts for the period ended 30 April 2017 (*MCI-14*) showed a deficit of £799k, against a budget deficit of £1,124k, a positive variance of £325k. Stipends were £315k under budget with an increased number of retirements in the first part of the year than anticipated. There were 22 fewer ministers than originally budgeted for.

There was also an overall interest charge of £17k on credit balances rather than interest income, relating to the last quarter of 2016. This is an Internal operation and it was thought that this will change.

Committee is now entering the detailed phase of budgeting and looking at all areas of the Councils work. The Council of Assembly is not able to provide Ministries Council with the income they originally thought they could so the 2018 budget will need to be revisited.

**8.4 New Machar:** The parish of New Machar has requested permission to transfer funds from the Stipend Fund to the Fabric Fund to spend on a new outreach centre. Ministries Council was asked to homologate the proposal. There were assurances that this will be offset by additional income generated by the project and the Committee was satisfied that all was in order.

**8.5 Diaconate Council:** The Diaconate Council is looking to host a conference in 2019 and have requested that Ministries Council guarantee the financial position. It is expected that income will match expenditure and the conference would therefore pay for itself. The Committee agreed in principle and asked for a business case. Council was supportive subject to a business case coming to Committee.

## 9 Minute of the Ministries Council Meeting held on 22 March 2017

The Minute of the Ministries Council meeting held on Wednesday 22 March 2017 was approved.

## 10 Development Programme

Council received an initial business case (*MCI-15*) setting out pieces of work as part of a *Development Programme*. Sustainability, staff capacity and budgets will be discussed further with representatives of the Council of Assembly Finance Group and details will be brought to the August Council meeting. It was also noted that work was being carried out to look into releasing restricted reserves as well as reviewing the levels of grant funding from Ministries Council whilst continuing to work in partnerships.

Ministries Council will work alongside the Council of Assembly in conversations around strategies and visions for the Church and for Ministries Council. Details will be brought to the jointly hosted Presbytery Conference on 1-2 November and then reported to the 2018 General Assembly.

## 11 Approval to Act Under Power

Council gave powers to the Convener and to Dr John Dent to act as may be necessary regarding policy and governance issues over the summer prior to the August Council meeting. Powers to act were also given to Mr Allan Sim for any urgent financial decisions.

## 12 Observation Exercise Feedback

Rev Sarah Brown shared various observations around gender balance in participation, a lack of participation by some, room layout which does not support participation and issues with sound. The Convener will follow up on this with Miss Brown and bring back to the August Council meeting. Members were invited to share their thoughts and suggestions with the Convener.

**ACTION**

**13 Date of Next Meeting** – The overnight meeting of the Council will take place on Wednesday 30 - Thursday 31 August 2017 at The Westerwood Hotel, St Andrews Drive, Nr Glasgow G68 0EW

**The Convener thanked those present for their contributions and the meeting closed with the Grace.**

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Convener Date

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Secretary Date