

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

Conforti Institute, Coatbridge  
27-28 September 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 Ian Boa (ACTS), Rev Dr Liam Fraser (Theological Forum), Rev Dr Nikki Macdonald (Social Care Council), Rev John McMahon (Mission & Discipleship Council), Rev Prof Charlotte Methuen (Scottish Episcopal Church), Rev Alexander Ritchie (United Free Church of Scotland), Major Steven Turner (Salvation Army), Ms Miriam Weibye (WCC), Mrs Pauline Weibye (Church & Society Council)  
**Staff:** Rev Dr John L McPake (Secretary), Ms Ros Milne (Senior Administrator)  
**Guest:** Dr Thomas Hefin Jones (WCRC)  
**Apologies:** Rev Dr Frances Henderson (Joint Commission on Doctrine), Rev Alison McDonald (CEC), Rev Anikó Schütz Bradwell (World Mission Council), Mrs Mary Welsh (Roman Catholic Church)

**27 September 2018**

**Welcome and Constitution**

The Convener welcomed Committee members. The meeting was opened with worship. Introductions were made and apologies noted.

The Convener announced that Ros Milne would retire in May 2019 and took the opportunity to express the thanks of the Committee for her highly valued service.

**I. Committee Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Ecumenical Relations Committee held on 14 June 2018 were approved subject to rewording Item 3(6.1) to read "... ministerial formation within the work of ACTS."

**I.1 Matters arising from the minutes**

**Item 1 – Vacancy on Committee**

The Convener welcomed two new General Assembly appointed members to the Committee. Rev Dr Nikki Macdonald and Rev Dr John McMahon. Dr Macdonald would accompany the Social Care Council and Dr McMahon the Mission & Discipleship Council.

**Item 3 (5) – Committee's Budget**

The Convener reported that he and the Secretary had not yet met with the General Treasurer to discuss membership contributions and funding for delivering the new Ecumenical Strategy.

**Item 3 (6.1) – Ministerial Formation**

The Convener said that he and the Secretary had agreed to meet with Miriam McHardy, the ACTS Consultant on Ecumenical Ministerial Formation. Rev Ross Blackman asked if he could be involved.

**ACTION**

**Convener/  
Secretary**

**ACTION****Item 3 (7.1) – World Council of Churches**

The Convener reported that Rev Ian Alexander, Secretary of the World Mission Council, had represented the Church of Scotland at the WCC's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service. The Service had been held on 23 August in the Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam on the spot where the WCC had been founded on 23 August 1948.

**Item 3 (7.3) – Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2019**

Committee members noted the worship material prepared for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Rev Ross Blackman had produced the material for 13 January 2019 and Dame Sheilagh Kesting had produced the material for 20 January.

**Item 3 (7.4) – World Communion of Reformed Churches**

It was noted that a meeting had still to take place in Edinburgh with senior staff of the WCRC.

**Item 7 – Strategy for Engaging with Presbyteries**

The Secretary reported that he had spoken to a number of Presbyteries in which there were Local Ecumenical Partnerships. He highlighted issues in relation to Act VII (2003) and ACT I (2015) and advised that he would consult with the Depute Principal Clerk in relation to this.

**Item 9 – Sacramental Ministries Working Group**

Rev Dr Liam Fraser reported that the Working Group had met on 26 September and gave a brief summary of the meeting.

**Item 12 – Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI)**

The Secretary advised that he had been in touch with the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rev Trevor Gribben. The Committee agreed that the Secretary should follow this up and that further discussions should take place, if appropriate.

**Convener/  
Secretary****2. Action of Churches Together in Scotland - Working Group Report**

Following the review of ACTS by Theos, a Working Group had been set up to identify a working model for ecumenism and proposals for organisational action by ACTS. The Group had met over the summer. Members of the Group had been: Ms Miriam Weibye (Convener), Rev Dr John L McPake, Rev William McFadden (Roman Catholic Church), Rev Grant Barclay (Trustee of ACTS), Huw Lloyd Richards (Religious Society of Friends).

The Working Group's report had been circulated to the Trustees of ACTS for their meeting 23 August 2018. The Secretary and Miriam Weibye had made a presentation at the meeting.

The Trustees had agreed to the proposals, in principle. The report had then been circulated to the ACTS Members' Meeting which had met on 12 and 13 September. The Members' Meeting had made amendments to the report and the Working Group had been tasked to make the revisions. The Group had arranged to meet in Dumfries from 4-5 October. Following revision, the report would be circulated to the nine member churches of ACTS to ascertain their support to the proposal of the setting up of a Scottish Christian Forum. An additional Members' Meeting had been arranged for 22 November when the revised report would be received.

The Convener invited Committee members to comment on the report. Comments were noted and would be considered by the Working Group.

**ACTION****3. Strategy for the implementation of the Ecumenical Policy**

The Convener introduced the paper jointly written by Rev Ross Blackman and the Convener. The General Assembly of 2018 had approved the Committee's revised ecumenical policy and had been instructed to bring a strategy to implement the policy to the General Assembly of 2019. The paper had highlighted ways the strategy could be implemented locally, nationally and internationally. The Convener then handed over to the Vice Convener and Secretary.

In order to aid discussion and set SMART Goals, a sheet describing the concept was circulated and introduced by the Vice Convener. Small discussion groups were formed to focus on short-term specific goals. Following feedback, specific goals were then allocated to the groups. There then followed a plenary and summary session.

The Convener thanked Committee members for their contributions.

**EVENING SESSION**

The meeting resumed after dinner.

**4. Reports from International Ecumenical Bodies****4.1 International Reformed-Anglican Dialogue**

The Convener welcomed Rev Dr Peter Donald who had joined the Committee for the evening session. Dr Donald had represented the Church of Scotland at the dialogue between the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the Anglican Communion (IRAD). The meeting had been held from 24-30 August 2018 in the Vancouver School of Theology, Vancouver, Canada. A report of the meeting had been previously circulated.

Peter explained that the dialogue was a work-in-progress following on from the first IRAD in 1984 which had produced the report *God's Reign and Our Unity*. The current dialogue had studied the nature of communion (*koinonia*) and the pressing issues which had emerged for both Communion. The IRAD would meet again in August 2019 in Hiroshima, Japan.

The Convener thanked Peter for his report.

**4.2 Conference of European Churches General Assembly**

The report from Rev Alison McDonald, the Church of Scotland's representative on CEC's Governing Board, was noted. A short video of the Assembly Message was played to the Committee (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQ1rq7nUEjE>). It was agreed that the Message should be promoted to congregations.

The Assembly had been a business meeting and a time for discussion and reflection. Around 900 people had attended the Assembly, including voting representatives, advisors, facilitators, staff and stewards.

The Constitutional amendments had been accepted. The Assembly had produced three main documents: Public Issues Committee Statements (Rev Dr Richard Frazer had served on this Committee); the Assembly Message (Alison has been Convener); and the Strategy and Policy Committee report. The reports had been uploaded to CEC's website: <https://www.ceceurope.org/resources/assembly-2018/>

Alison had also participated in the pre-Youth Assembly event. Concern had been expressed at the event about age and gender inequality and CEC had been urged to develop a youth strategy.

Secretary

**ACTION**

At the end of the meeting, officers and members of the Governing Board had been elected for the next five years. Alison had been elected to the Governing Board for a second term.

### **4.3 World Council of Churches**

Ms Miriam Weibye's report of the meeting of the WCC's Central Committee held in Geneva from 15-21 June was noted.

The WCC's 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly would be held in 2021 in Karlsruhe, Germany. Dates to be confirmed but likely to be in September. The Central Committee had spent some time celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A number of public issues statements had been discussed and agreed, the full texts of which were available to download on the WCC's website. A working document entitled "Called to Transformative Action: Ecumenical Diakonia" was reviewed and would be shared with member churches and brought back to the 2020 Central Committee meeting. It had been noted that the WCC had a total membership of 350.

Miriam had been moderator of the Communications Committee and had presented a revised communications strategy. Miriam had also been asked to be rapporteur of the Message Committee and presented the second and final reading of the Message. She had also acted as the Master of Ceremonies during the afternoon part of Pope Francis' visit to the WCC. The current General Secretary would end his term of office in 2019 and Miriam had been elected to serve on the Search Committee.

### **4.4 Community of Protestant Churches in Europe**

The Committee noted a report from Rev Andrea Price who had represented the Church of Scotland at CPCE's General Assembly in Basel, Switzerland from 13-18 September 2018. Over 96 delegates and 52 advisors and guests representing 94 European member churches had attended. The Assembly theme had been "Liberated – Connected – Committed". Andrea had conducted an evening service on Sunday, 16 September. She had been part of the group responsible for drafting resolutions from the discussion groups and the final report to be adopted by the General Assembly. Discussion documents and statements were available to view at: [www.cpce-assembly.eu/documents](http://www.cpce-assembly.eu/documents).

### **4.5 European Christian Convention**

Information about the European Christian Convention was noted. The ECC had been founded in June 2016. Its first Members' Assembly had been held in Berlin in May 2017. At the Assembly its board had been elected and members' fees set. There were 26 members. Its goal was to be a transnational place of dialogue and encounter, debate and spirituality. It was planned to address three areas:

1. questions around the current state of ecumenism, of inter-religious dialogue, of Eastern and Western differences;
2. questions of society and ethics interlinked to Christianity such as migration, bio ethics, social justice and solidarity, European civil society;
3. questions of democracy and democratic space and human rights (human dignity, quality).

After discussion, it was agreed to request to be added to the ECC's mailing list.

The Convener thanked everyone for their contributions.

The evening session closed with prayers in the Chapel led by Charlotte Methuen.

**Secretary**

**28 September 2018**

Following morning prayers, the Convener welcomed members to the second day of the meeting.

**4.6 World Communion of Reformed Churches**

The Convener welcomed Dr Hefin Jones to the meeting and introductions were made. Dr Jones, a Senior Lecturer at the School of Biosciences at Cardiff University, and a member of the Union of Welsh Independents, represents the UK and Irish churches on the WCRC Executive Committee.

Hefin gave a report of the meeting of the Executive Committee held in South Korea from 9-16 May 2018. The detailed notes of the report are in an attachment to this Minute.

The Convener thanked Hefin for his very comprehensive report.

The Convener asked how the work of the WCRC, expressed in its Strategic Plan, could be carried out and how member churches could be part of delivering it. He wondered if work could be carried out collaboratively.

It was agreed that the Convener and Secretary would have a discussion with Hefin in relation to how the Committee could support him. The Committee also agreed that he should express its concerns to the President.

Mrs Pauline Weibye informed the Committee that she had been asked to attend the next Executive Committee in Zurich. The Committee agreed to support her attendance.

**5. Finance****5.1 Committee Budget**

The Committee's income and expenditure account to 31 July 2018 was noted. There had been an overspend on Travel & Representation. This has been due to moving to a different venue for the consultation with the Church of England as a result of the closure of the Royal Over-Seas League. The forecast to the end of the year indicated the Committee might be slightly over budget. The Secretary reported that there was a need to have a discussion with the Finance Group in relation to the shift to a local emphasis and how this work could be carried out.

**5.2 Membership Contributions**

The Convener reported that ecumenical membership contributions were paid out of the Church's central budget. As the Committee had regular interactions with all the ecumenical bodies, he asked whether the Committee should be responsible for the funds instead. Following discussions, it was agreed that there would be further consultation with the Assembly-appointed members of the Committee.

**5.3 Local Ecumenism Development worker**

The Convener asked for the Committee's thoughts on the appointment of a Local Ecumenism Development Worker to enable the Committee to deliver its ecumenical policy and its renewed commitment to local ecumenism. In the light of the reforming of ACTS, membership contributions may be less and the saving could potentially be used towards the funding of the post. Following discussion, it was agreed to keep this under consideration.

**ACTION****Convener/  
Secretary****Convener/  
Secretary****Convener/  
Secretary**

## 6. Risk Register

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Secretary should revise the Risk Register and circulate it to Committee members for approval.

## 7. Reports from Council representatives

### 7.1 Ministries Council Conference

The report from Rev Ross Blackman of the meeting of the Ministries Council Conference held on 5 and 6 September in Erskine was noted. The Secretary had attended on the first day of the Conference.

Following the Convener's report, there had been seven sessions which began with a presentation and discussion from Place for Hope to set the milieu and ground rules for the Conference. The sessions had been: annual Operational Plan and Policy Development (over three sessions); Cairn Movement by Rich Robinson; Resilience Research by Professor Leslie Francis; and the final session - Gathering Thoughts.

### 7.2 World Mission Council

The report from Rev Anikó Schütz Bradwell of the meeting of the World Mission Council held on 5 September in Edinburgh was noted.

It had been noted that Fiona Kendall had settled into her work with Mediterranean Hope in Italy and had represented the Church of Scotland at the Methodist-Waldensian Synod Meeting.

Following Anikó's report to the Council on the Ecumenical Relations Committee's work, there had been discussion around the Church of Scotland's relationship with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The decision for continued partnership work between committees of the churches had been welcomed. There had been a question about membership of ACTS and whether membership would be widened following the review.

### 7.3 Church and Society Council

A report from Mrs Pauline Weibye of the meeting of the Church and Society Council held on 5 September was noted. This had been Pauline's first meeting having been appointed by the General Assembly in May. Pauline had been pleased to report the Council worked ecumenically and had in its membership four representatives from other churches.

The morning session had been spent receiving reports from staff on progress in the seven key areas of the Council's work as identified in its 2016 "Speak Out" exercise. Some areas outwith this framework, but which needed to be continued had been Ecumenical Relations and Interfaith. There had been small group work in the afternoon to set priorities for 2018/19. Also in the afternoon, the Council had invited the chair and a member of the Scottish Government's Poverty and Inequality Commission to speak about its work.

In connection with education in Scotland, the Secretary asked whether the Council could offer a critique to the Scottish Government. It was noted that the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office worked on behalf of all the churches. Pauline agreed to pass on comments to the Council.

### 7.4 Theological Forum

Rev Dr Liam Fraser's report of meetings of the Theological Forum held on 25 June and 21 August and was noted.

**ACTION**

**Secretary**

**P Weibye**

The Forum had been working very well and new members were adding good value to discussions. There had been discussion of hub-style ministries and it had considered an outline report of the Sacramental Ministries Working Group at its June meeting. The meeting in August had been held in Perthshire where it had spent the day discussing the Westminster Confession of Faith and its place as the subordinate standard of the Church of Scotland.

The Convener thanked everyone for their reports.

## **8. Engaging with young people**

### **8.1 National Youth Assembly**

The Convener reported that Liam Fraser had represented the Committee at this year's National Youth Assembly. Liam said that he had been made to feel very welcome and 10 attendees had expressed an interest in ecumenism and had asked how they could get involved. Liam had given some suggestions and had taken their names for any appropriate future ecumenical conferences. Liam had since heard that Young Ecumenical Scotland had been set up on Facebook as a result of his conversations (<https://www.facebook.com/Young-Ecumenical-Scotland-414534649075340/>). He asked how the Committee could support this and encourage local ecumenism. It was agreed to publicise vacancies for stewards for conferences etc through the new group.

### **8.2 Young Adult Volunteering**

The Committee noted a proposal for involving Scottish youth in the Presbyterian Church USA Young Adult Volunteering (YAV) Programme.

In September 2014, the Priority Areas Committee had agreed to pursue a pilot project in partnership with the PCUSA to start a Scotland site for the programme. The strapline for the programme was '*a year in service, a lifetime of change*'. There were 15 national sites across the US and six international sites where volunteers could serve. They were placed in community agencies or local churches with jobs depending on the needs of the partner and the skills and interests of the volunteer.

It was proposed that the Church of Scotland explore the possibility of encouraging Scottish young people (aged 21-30) to engage with the YAV programme by serving in one of the US national sites for 11 months. Costs were noted. Ministries, World Mission, Mission & Discipleship, Church and Society Councils and Ecumenical Relations had been involved in discussions.

## **9. Autumn Conference**

The Conference flyer was noted. It would be co-hosted with ACTS and held on Saturday, 27 October from 10.30 am – 3.15 pm in the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church, Nicolson Square, Edinburgh. The theme was *Fragmentation and Unity: being ecumenical in a fragmenting world*. Rev Canon Prof Charlotte Methuen, keynote speaker, would reflect on the "Appeal to all Christian People" (1920) as a response to the catastrophe of WWI and as the catalyst for ecumenism in Britain and Ireland.

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, The Rt Rev Susan Brown, had agreed to speak about "Making Connections". There would also be a presentation about local ecumenical working in East Kilbride – the "Community Integration Project".

The Convener said that it had been suggested the Conference be live-streamed or videoed. The costs of live-streaming were outwith the Committee's budget but he had video equipment that could be used. Rev John McMahon volunteered to operate the equipment. Rev Ian Boa said that ACTS would post the video on YouTube.

**ACTION**

Committee members were encouraged to attend.

### **10. Nominations – Assemblies and Synods 2019**

Committee members considered representation at Assemblies and Synods of the other denominations in 2019. Names were agreed for the Secretary to approach. The Committee was reminded of the need to achieve gender balance in representation.

### **11. Local Ecumenical Partnerships**

The Secretary gave an update on Falkirk, Aberdeen, Shetland and Perth.

### **12. Reports for noting**

#### **12.1 Secretary's Report**

The Secretary's report of work undertaken and meetings attended from June to September 2018 was noted.

#### **12.2 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland**

A report from Alison McDonald of the meeting of CTBI's Trustees held on 27 June 2018 was noted. This had been Alison's first meeting as a Trustee. A new Executive Officer for Justice and Inclusion, Richard Reddie, had been appointed. As a Trustee, Alison would be keen to see CTBI engage with and have relevance across all the nations of Britain and Ireland.

The Secretary reported that the CTBI Consultation he had been due to attend in November had been cancelled.

#### **12.3 Lutheran Folks Church of the Faroe Islands**

A report from the Secretary of a visit to the Church Offices on 27 August by a group from the Faroe Islands was noted.

The Lutheran Bishop of the Faroe Islands, accompanied by members of the church board and administrative staff had met with the Moderator, Principal Clerk, Solicitor of the Church, Parliamentary Officer, Society, Religion and Technology Policy Officer. The purpose of the visit had been to enable representatives of the LFC to become better acquainted with church communities where the life of the church is shaped by the particular geographical context of an island complex. Following the visit to the Church Offices, the group travelled to the Western Isles to engage with the work of the Church of Scotland on Lewis. The assistance of the Clerk to the Presbytery of Lewis was noted with appreciation.

It was anticipated that further discussions would take place in the future.

### **13. Any other business**

The Convener reported that a request had been received for funding to enable a young person to attend the Global Consultation on the Occasion of Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women in Jamaica at the beginning of October. Seonaid Knox had agreed to represent the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church at the Consultation. The Church & Society and World Mission Councils had agreed to pay for her flights. The Committee had been asked to share the accommodation costs with the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Ros Milne reported that an application form had been forwarded to Seonaid to enable her to apply for funding from the Duncan McClements Trust. Once received, Ros would forward the application to General Assembly nominated members of the Committee for approval.

## **ACTION**

**All to note**

**Secretary**

**R Milne**



**ACTION**

**14. Date of next meeting**

Committee members were reminded that the Committee would meet again on Tuesday, 4 December 2018 in the Church Offices at 121 George Street, Edinburgh, from 10.30 am – 3.30 pm.

**All to note**

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

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Convener

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Date

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Secretary

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Date

## Appendix I

### World Communion of Reformed Churches - Executive Committee meeting held in South Korea from 9-16 May 2018

#### Report from Dr Hefin Jones

This had been Hefin's first meeting. The meeting had been held at a very significant time and there had been much discussion and hope for the peace process in the Korean peninsula. Hefin felt it had been a privilege as they had been able to converse with the Koreans and obtain a very special insight into their perception of what had been happening. It had been made more uplifting by the fact that a few days prior to the Executive Committee meeting, the WCRC General Secretary, Chris Ferguson, along with the leadership of the World Council of Churches, had visited and met various political leaders and dignitaries, along with church leaders in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, that is North Korea.

Hefin gave an overview on three themes: Executive Committee general business; the Strategic Plan; and worship and visits.

Among topics that kept 'cropping up' during discussions had been issues related to communication between the WCRC and member churches; use of consensus techniques in member churches to ensure better involvement of the marginalised; the need not to just ordain women but to empower them to take up positions of influence in their churches; and support of regional networks.

Numerous regional reports had been presented, including one by the WCRC Europe Regional President, Martina Wasserloos, who specifically discussed the work of the WCRC Europe Task Force on Migration and Refugees. Greetings had been received from various churches and associated bodies and associations. Three Committees had been established: Finance; Constitution and Membership; and Reformed Partnership Fund.

There had been substantial discussion on the General Council format and organisation in Leipzig in 2017. Hefin had been grateful that he had been provided with the Church of Scotland delegation's response to the General Council.

It had been noted that the core costs of the WCRC were met through membership contributions, while all project costs were met through specific targeted fundraising. It had been agreed that, in future, the Executive Council would be presented with a list of individual churches' contributions.

At the Executive Committee meeting, approval had been given to extend the contract of employment of Philip Tanis for a further five years as Executive Secretary for Communication and Operations.

#### The Strategic Plan:

The main task of the Executive Committee meeting had been to agree the content and wording of WCRC's Strategic Plan for 2018 – 2024. Having heard the voices of the General Council at Leipzig, a draft Strategic Plan had been crafted by a Strategic Planning Committee. The 32-page Draft Strategic Plan had been split into two main sections: Strategic Objectives and Organizational Issues. The task of the Executive Committee had been to edit, fine-tune and agree a Strategic Plan. The revised, updated and approved multi-page Strategic Plan was available on the WCRC website.

#### Worship and Visits:

On the first evening Committee members had been invited to Han Shin Church for dinner and a Prayer Service, dedicated specifically to praying for the peace process. The WCRC President preached on Jesus' message of peace. It was a very powerful and moving service. The President also preached at the Opening Service held at the Presbyterian Centennial Building the following morning

where she reminded people that reconciliation did not happen without pain, and urged them to see others 'beyond the flesh' with reference to Paul in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

On the Saturday, they travelled to the Paju Dora Observatory in the Demilitarized Zone and viewed a presentation by a representative of the Republic of Korea Army. They had been welcomed to the Army Chapel in the DMZ and took part in a service of prayer for peace and reconciliation in the Korean peninsula.

On the Sunday, they split into small groups and visited one of 12 churches, belonging to either The Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) or The Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea (PROK). Hefin had joined the congregation at the Seoul Seongnam Church and very much appreciated the welcome, the worship and the lunch that followed! In the evening they visited Sumoon Church and took the opportunity to pray for those who had been affected by that day's suicide bombings in Indonesia – one of the targeted churches, Diponegoro Indonesian Christian Church, being a WCRC member.

A service of worship had been held at the end of the meeting when they all participated by sitting together around the Lord's Table for a celebration of Holy Communion. This made a big impression on Hefin as he felt they had all arrived a week earlier as strangers, but, after a week of hard, enjoyable, intense but rewarding work, worshipped very much as One in Christ.