

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

Church of Scotland Offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh
19 February 2019

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 Anikó Schütz Bradwell (World Mission Council), Rev Dr Liam Fraser (Theological Forum), Rev Alison McDonald (CEC), Rev Dr Nikki Macdonald (Social Care Council), Rev John McMahon (Mission & Discipleship Council), Rev Alexander Ritchie (United Free Church of Scotland), Major Steven Turner (Salvation Army), Mrs Pauline Weibye (Church & Society Council), Mrs Mary Welsh (Roman Catholic Church)

Staff: Mr Bob Cowan (Assistant General Treasurer), Rev Dr John L McPake (Secretary), Ms Ros Milne (Senior Administrator)

In attendance: Rt Rev Susan Brown (Moderator), Ms Fiona Buchanan (EFECW)

Apologies: Rev Dr Frances Henderson (Joint Commission on Doctrine), Rev Canon Prof Charlotte Methuen (Scottish Episcopal Church), Ms Miriam Weibye (WCC),

1. Welcome and Constitution

The Convener welcomed Committee members and the Rt Rev Susan Brown, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland who had asked to attend the meeting as an observer. The Moderator opened the meeting with worship. Introductions were made and apologies noted.

2. Committee Minute

The minute of the meeting of the Ecumenical Relations Committee held on 4 December 2018 was approved.

2.1 Matters arising from the minute

5.1 Nominations to Committee

The Convener reported that the Nominations Committee had approved the reappointment of Rev Kevin Mackenzie as Vice Convener for one further year and Rev Ross Blackman for a further period of four years. Subject to approval of the General Assembly, the Nominations Committee had agreed the appointment of two additional members to the Committee who would have a local involvement brief.

5.2 Columba Declaration Contact Group/Church of England General Synod

The Convener reported that the Very Rev Dr Angus Morrison would end his term as Convener of the Contact Group at its meeting in March. He put forward names of candidates who might replace Dr Morrison. He asked Committee members to send suggestions to either himself or the Secretary.

In addition, Dr Morrison's term of office as the Church of Scotland's representative as a Guest on the General Synod of the Church of England would end in March. The Committee approved the appointment of Rev Dr David Coulter to replace Dr Morrison. The appointment would be for a period of three years from July 2019.

ACTION

Committee

ACTION**8.1 Thy Kingdom Come Working Group**

The Convener informed the Committee that a small working group would be set up to take this forward. He said the Secretary had spoken to a number of people in connection with the letter the Moderator had sent to all Church of Scotland ministers at the beginning of February. The letter had encouraged participation in Thy Kingdom Come in 2019. He said that the communications teams of the Church of Scotland and Lambeth Palace were working together. It was agreed that the Convener and Secretary should approach possible members of the working group. If any Committee member wished to join the group, they should contact the Secretary.

**Convener/
Secretary
Committee**

3. Committee's Budget 2019 and Membership Contributions

The Convener welcomed Mr Bob Cowan who spoke to a paper previously circulated which outlined the Committee's budget for 2019. The budget had been approved by the Finance Group of the Council of Assembly. There had been a small increase, mainly to cover increased salary costs. A new line had been included to cover the cost of dialogues with the other churches. He said the Committee's February accounts would be available in March. It was noted that there could be additional costs to the Committee as a result of the appointment of two extra members.

Bob confirmed the budget for membership contributions to the ecumenical bodies would be transferred to the Committee.

Rev Ross Blackman reiterated a comment he had previously made about how much work the Committee carried out on such a small budget. He said the Committee provided good value for money.

The Convener thanked Bob for his report. Bob then left the meeting.

4. General Assembly**4.1 Heart & Soul**

A paper from the Convener was noted. He, the Vice-Convener and Rev Dr Nikki Macdonald had met to discuss the Committee's possible involvement with Heart and Soul.

Rev Dr Nikki Macdonald reported that she had sourced tokens which could be included in a wallet along with small cards. The Vice Convener distributed a mock-up of what the cards could look like. It was proposed to print extracts from the Committee's ecumenical policy on the cards. It was noted that the publishers of the blue book could give guidance on the most suitable colour scheme for the cards.

It was noted that the Committee would have a small marquee to showcase *Thy Kingdom Come*. As the Committee would also hold an event in St Cuthbert's, the Secretary would approach different people to help with the marquee

Secretary

4.2 Sacramental Ministry Report

The Convener welcomed Theological Forum members to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. Appreciation was expressed for the hard work of the Convener of the Sacramental Ministries Working Group, Rev Jenny Adams, and of all those involved. It was emphasised that as a joint report, its content would need to be affirmed in its entirety by each Committee.

While members appreciated the challenge of representing a breadth of different voices in the text, it was agreed that in its current form, the report lacks coherence and will require significant and swift revision if it is to be presented at this year's General

Assembly. While wishing to preserve and better support the conclusion of the report, representatives of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and Theological Forum proposed the following key revisions to the text, to be implemented and circulated for approval as soon as possible:

1) Theological principles

As a document that wishes to affirm the theological and ecumenical importance of ordination, consistent and standardised principles need to be laid down, namely: the significance of the sacraments and the indivisibility of the Word and Sacrament. The Deliverance could be expanded to highlight these fundamental principles.

2) Practical implications

As a theological document, it needs to be stated clearly that it is beyond the current scope of the Working Group to explore the practical implications of principles delineated in the text, the outworking of which is subject to consideration of other parties. Clarification, rather than specification, is required of what is meant by 'proposals for alternative routes to ordination to ministry of Word and Sacrament' in relation to other recognised ministries.

The Convener thanked everyone for their contributions. Members of the Theological Forum then left the meeting.

ORDER OF THE DAY

European Forum of Ecumenical Christian Women (EFECW)

The Convener welcomed Ms Fiona Buchanan, Co-President of the EFECW. Fiona gave a presentation to the Committee, the details of which are included in an Appendix to the Minute.

The Convener thanked Fiona for her presentation. He noted that the Forum had been revitalised since she had taken over as Co-President and thanked her for all her work. Fiona joined the Committee for lunch.

4.3 Committee's Report to the General Assembly

The Convener thanked the Secretary for all the work he had put into writing the Report. Committee members reviewed the Report and Strategy in detail. It was noted that the Scottish Episcopal Church was likely to adopt the Church of Scotland Ecumenical Policy as its own Ecumenical Policy. A proposal would be brought to their General Synod.

On reviewing the section in the Report on *Thy Kingdom Come* prayer initiative, it was noted that the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Very Rev Susan Brown, had been the first Moderator to celebrate Holy Communion in Lambeth Palace.

Following a full discussion, the Secretary agreed to make agreed revisions and circulate the revised document to the Committee for approval.

5. Risk Register

The revised Risk Register was agreed subject to the inclusion of Brexit as a risk.

6. Newsletters

The Secretary reported that an embargo had been placed on sending out newsletters from the Church Offices until April. A review of the practice and process of issuing newsletters from across the organisation was underway.

ACTION

Secretary

Secretary

Secretary

7. Nominations

The Convener informed the Committee that Rev Dr Grant Barclay had been appointed Convener of the Legal Questions Committee. As a result, Grant would step down as a Trustee and Vice Convener of Action of Churches Together in Scotland at its AGM. It was noted that, traditionally, the Vice Convener would step up to the role of Convener at the AGM.

The Convener expressed the Committee's thanks to Grant for all his work during his term of office. Grant was also thanked for his contribution to the work of the Committee.

Rev Ian Boa emphasised the importance of the role of Convener at this juncture in the transition of ACTS. If possible, it would be helpful to have a handover with Grant. He thanked Grant, on behalf of ACTS, for all his work.

Committee members were asked to consider who might be suitable to take on the role of Convener and Trustee and send suggestions to the Secretary. Suggestions would be brought to the April Committee meeting.

8. Reports from Council representatives

8.1 Ministries Council

Rev Ross Blackman gave a verbal report of the Ministries Council meeting held on 13 February. He said much of the meeting had been in confidence. A lot of time had been spent looking at information which would go into the Council's Report to the General Assembly.

8.2 Social Care Council

Rev Dr Nikki Macdonald reported that the Council had met on 12 December 2018 and 13 February 2019. She had only been able to attend the December meeting. She said there was little to report from an ecumenical viewpoint. Most discussions had focused on ongoing financial challenges.

8.3 Mission & Discipleship Council

Rev John McMahon said that he had contacted the Council Secretary for an update. The main item to report was that Graham Fender-Alison, the Worship Resources Team Leader, was leaving. The Committee wished Graham well in his new post.

8.4 Church and Society Council

Mrs Pauline Weibye's report of the meeting of the Church and Society Council held on 5 and 6 February 2019 was noted. Pauline had not been able to attend the meeting and had based her report on agenda items.

It was noted that the theme of the Council's report to the 2019 General Assembly was 'The Kingdom of God' and the theme of the Council meeting had been 'Sharing the Kingdom'. Much of the meeting had been taken up discussing the Council's draft Report to the General Assembly. There had been an evening session which had discussed Brexit. She referred to an ecumenical event, currently being held, hosted by the Baptist Union of Scotland entitled *In Christ through Brexit*. It was a day of prayer and reflection.

The Convener reported that the Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches - Europe would be held in Edinburgh on 2 and 3 May 2019. The theme of the meeting would be 'Europe - A Dividing Continent?!'. He said consideration could be given to extending an invitation to the meeting to a representative from the Church and Society Council.

ACTION

Committee

**Convener/
Secretary**

ACTION**8.5 World Mission Council**

Rev Anikó Schütz Bradwell's report of the meeting of the Council was noted. She had not been able to attend its last meeting and had prepared her report based on the draft minute of the meeting.

8.6 Theological Forum

Rev Dr Liam Fraser reported that the Forum had considered the reconciliation report and there had been wide ranging discussion. The report - largely based on the work of Miroslav Wolf - gives a theoretical and practical account of strategies to overcome division within the Church. A draft was presented to the Forum and was warmly welcomed, with debate arising only in relation to one paragraph that discussed 'traditionalist' and 'revisionist' positions within the Church of Scotland.

The Convener thanked everyone for their reports.

9. Reports from International Ecumenical Bodies**9.1 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)**

A report from Rev Alison McDonald of the CTBI Trustees meeting held in Leeds on 7 and 8 January 2019 was noted. Most of the meeting had been spent in facilitated brain-storming. The aim had been to consider the priorities of CTBI and whether its current structure of governance was fit for today. A working group would be set up to look at how to take this forward.

A process had been started to identify the next Moderator with a view to making an appointment in the early part of 2020.

9.2 Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS)

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference written by the ACTS Transition Group and agreed by the Trustees of ACTS. Members of the Group had been drawn from ACTS Member Churches, Trustees, denominational Ecumenical Officers and those with recognised skills. The purpose of the Group would be to enable the development of a 'forum' model to facilitate the participation of the churches of Scotland, and other Christian bodies, in an ecumenical forum which would continue the Charitable Purposes of ACTS. It was proposed that the Group would continue in existence until 31 March 2020. The paper would be brought to the next Members' Meeting of ACTS for consultation and discussion.

Committee members were asked if they agreed with the content of the paper and what should be included in the Committee's Report to the General Assembly. Rev Dr John McPake had been appointed Convener of the Group. The amount of work he was doing was acknowledged.

After discussion, it was agreed, pending permission of the Trustees, to include the paper as an Appendix to the Committee's Report to the General Assembly.

9.3 World Council of Churches (WCC)

The report from Ms Miriam Weibye of the meeting of the Assembly Planning Committee was noted.

The Committee had met in Cyprus from 9-16 January 2019 on the invitation of the Church of Cyprus. The Assembly would take place in September 2021 in Karlsruhe, Germany. Discussion focussed on the agreed theme '*Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity*'. The Assembly would include, prayer and Bible study, home groups, business plenaries, thematic plenaries, ecumenical conversations, committees and

Secretary

a marketplace, as well as regional and confessional meetings. There would also be a programme of pre-assemblies. It was hoped the Assembly would be environmentally friendly with as much electronic communication and material as possible.

The Committee would meet again in December 2019 in Karlsruhe. An Assembly Worship Planning Committee would meet in July 2019.

9.4 World Council of Churches - Global Consultation

A very detailed report was noted from Seonaid Knox of the Global Consultation on the Commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women. The Consultation had been held in Jamaica from 2-5 October 2018. Seonaid had been awarded a small grant from the Duncan McClements Trust towards the costs of attending the Consultation.

9.5 Conference of European Churches (CEC)

CEC's draft Strategic Plan 2019-2023 was noted. The Plan had been sent to member churches for consultation. Rev Alison McDonald confirmed responses were to be submitted by 31 March 2019. It was agreed to put together a small group to discuss the Plan. Alison agreed to be part of the group.

10. Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI)

The Convener's report of a meeting with members of the PCI held on 12 February in Belfast was noted.

Local Ecumenical Partnerships

The Secretary gave an update on Local Ecumenical Partnerships.

Committee members noted a letter from the Scottish Charity Regulator, OSCR, which confirmed acceptance of the change to the Constitution of Grahamston United Church, Falkirk (Church of Scotland, United Reformed Church and Methodist Church).

11. Reports for noting

11.1 Secretary's Report

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

11.2 Visit to Egypt

A report from the Very Rev Dr Angus Morrison of his visit to Egypt from 27 January to 1 February 2019 was noted. Dr Morrison had joined an ecumenical group led by His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos. It was agreed to invite Dr Morrison to a future meeting of the Committee to give a report on the visit.

12. Any other business

12.1 Retirement of Ros Milne

The Secretary confirmed that Ros Milne would retire in May. Her last day in the office would be 24 May.

12.2 World Communion of Reformed Churches

Mrs Pauline Weibye informed the Committee that she would attend the next meeting of the Executive Committee of the WCRC as a minute-taker.

ACTION

**Convener/
Secretary**

Secretary

Date of next meeting

It was noted that the Committee would meet with members of the Scottish Episcopal Church Inter Church Relations Committee on 2 April 2019 from 10.30 am to 3.30 pm. The meeting would be held in the Church Offices, 121 George Street, Edinburgh.

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

All to note

APPENDIX I

ECUMENICAL FORUM OF ECUMENICAL CHRISTIAN WOMEN (EFECW)

Summary of presentation given by Fiona Buchanan, Co-President of EFECW.

Background

- WCC meeting of eighty people responsible for “women’s” work.
- It became clear to the Europeans that co-ordination, or even communication, among Christian women was lacking
- Proposal to find a way of working together
- Led to a meeting the following year in Brussels with 70 women from 21 European countries
- Feminism and feminist theology discussed openly for the first time
- Peace and war, poverty, the environment, violence against women
- All were agreed, no matter how difficult the conference had been - the work had to carry on
- Ruth Epting, a Reformed minister in Basel took on this task

Key Aims

The social and political context at the time led to these being the key aims, and have remained at the heart of the forum ever since.

Many roads led to the founding of the Forum - the ecumenical spirit of optimism after the second Vatican Council, 1964; the peace-threatening arms build-up in Europe; and the emergence of feminist theology.

Themes

Workshops/seminars/publications/projects - often in collaboration with churches or other organisations. Over the years, the focus has been very much on mutual learning, ecumenical sharing and building solidarity across networks.

Priorities since 2014:

- A stronger advocacy and lobbying voice although, being a forum covering a broad range of denominations and countries, can make taking a stance on particular issues difficult. The message from the most recent General Assembly shows it is possible to speak out strongly on certain issues whilst respecting the diversity of women involved

For example, the EFECW has released statements on the regression of women’s rights in countries like Latvia, where the ordination of women is being revoked. The EFECW has spoken out on where conservative churches are lobbying governments not to ratify the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe, which is legislation to prevent and combat violence against women.

- National cooperation – more projects and work taking place between countries, for example projects on refugees and migration taking place between Mediterranean countries
- Broadening engagement – an area Fiona has been very involved in

General Assembly

Main decision-making body of the Forum. It meets every four years - most recently at Soko Grad monastery in Serbia, where the new Co-ordinating Committee was elected.

An important decision was taken at the 1990 York General Assembly: the presidium shall consist of three Co-presidents, one from each of the three main denominational strands – Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox. The three Co-presidents work as equals.

Scottish Representation

One thing Fiona was very keen to do in her role on the Co-ordinating Committee was to build up engagement of women from Scotland in the Forum. She hoped to keep up the momentum – membership models are no longer the best way. There is question of how to link in with other organisations and work happening in Scotland and further afield.

Projects

Innovative ways of working inter-culturally and ecumenically:

Pop Up Monastery
Gardens of Eve
Stewards Programme

<http://www.efecw.net/activities/projects.html>

Strengthened relationships with the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches . There have been challenges over the years, but they have worked closely with Fulata Moyo from the WCC (and now Nicqi Ashwood) and, more recently, Katerina Pekridou from CEC attended the EFECW assembly.

WCC Decade event:

Lots of fertile ground in Scotland for the implementation of the recommendations from the event through:

Church of Scotland gender justice post and work
Side by Side movement for gender justice
Increase of involvement of women in EFECW
Increased engagement with ecumenical solidarity campaigns like Thursdays in Black