

**THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND - MINISTRIES COUNCIL
COUNCIL**

The Westerwood Hotel, 1 St Andrews Drive, Nr Glasgow, G68 0EW

Wednesday 30 - Thursday 31 August 2017

MINUTE

PRESENT:

Convener: Rev Neil Glover

Vice-Conveners: Dr John Dent
Rev David McLachlan
Rev Eleanor McMahan
Rev Sarah Ross

Members & Observers: 29 others recorded in the Register of Attendance

Staff in Attendance: Jayne Scott plus 21 staff as recorded in the Register of Attendance

Apologies: Apologies were noted in the sederunt

ACTION

14 Opening Worship

The meeting was opened with worship from the Rev Andrea Price. The Convener welcomed those present and introduced members of the Ministries Council staff team in attendance. Apologies were noted.

15 The 'Why?' of Ministry

The Convener introduced guest speaker the Rev John Bell. Council heard of the potential for positive discussions about the future where permission is given to those involved to think imaginatively and creatively and to be a part of the decisions. It is also an opportunity to recognise skills and experience. Mr Bell went on to explore the possible influence, impact and inclusiveness of how church buildings are used in terms of design and layout. The Convener thanked Mr Bell for the presentation.

16 Vision for Ministries Council

Council considered the General Assembly instruction to develop a Vision for Ministry and a Strategic Plan for the Council which identifies the key objectives and priorities for the next 5 years, which supports the Council of Assembly 10-year Strategic Plan.

A small number of members offered to look through the comments received out of the discussion paper (MC2-01) and to feedback on Thursday 31 August 2017.

Business Session

17 Minutes

The Minutes of the Ministries Council meeting held on Thursday 22 June 2017 was approved.

18 Registration of Ministries

The membership of the Registration of Ministries Committee was provided in paper MC2-02 along with a note of the current agenda items for discussion by the Committee.

19 Convener's Report

Council received the *Convener Report MC2-03*.

19.1 Presbytery Conference 1 - 2 November 2017: The conference will be hosted jointly by Ministries Council and Council of Assembly who will discuss their vision for the Church. Spaces for delegates from Ministries Council and the Council of Assembly are limited to allow as many spaces as possible for the Presbytery representatives.

19.2 Membership: Council noted the resignation of the Rev Dorothy Granger as member of Council and offered thanks for her contributions.

Council agreed to the appointment of Mr David Stewart as a co-opt on the Presbytery Planning Task Group and Mr Tom Armstrong as a co-opt on the Go For It Fund Committee.

19.3 Housing and Loan Fund: The Convener met with the Rev Ian Taylor, Chairman of the Housing and Loan Fund to discuss a considerable reduction or zero payment from 2018 subject to a written agreement being drawn up to confirm that Ministries Council would resume payment to the Fund should reserves of the Fund fall below an agreed level. Payment would continue at the agreed amounts for 2017. There will be further conversations between Ministries Council and the Housing and Loan Fund Trustees along with the Council of Assembly on the details of this agreement and an update will be provided to Council in due course. Ministries Council remains fully committed to the principle that all those who are eligible and who apply to Housing and Loan Fund for assistance, receive the assistance they require.

19.4 Council of Assembly Strategy Group: Some of the key themes for the strategy for the Church include: love God and love your neighbour; enabling Congregations to engage in active worship; and discipleship and engagement with communities. A set of outcomes will be produced.

19.5 Pensions: Discussions around the Defined Benefit Schemes continue and details will be brought to a future Council meeting by Mrs Catherine Skinner, Head of Strategic Projects.

19.6 Tomorrow's Calling: Following negotiations it has been proposed that £50k of the Tomorrow's Calling budget goes to the Council of Assembly for national Church strategy development. It is likely that the money will be used for the 'Call to Prayer' initiative. £50k will remain in the Ministries Council budget to fund the recruitment strategy.

19.7 Church of Scotland Email Support: A support service has been in place since April 2017 to offer advice on configuration and access to the Church email system. This arrangement will be extended while the IT Department explores how they can offer this support.

20 Priority Areas

Council noted the details contained in the *Highlights Report MC2-04* and that the Priority Areas Committee was due to meet on 7 September 2017.

21 Education and Support

Written report *MC2-05* 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.

21.1 Readership: Council values the role and contribution of Readers and agreed to commit to review the current infrastructure, resource and strategy for the ongoing development and support of Readers. The Education and Support Committee will provide a broad outline, for Council, of the current position and clarify where responsibilities lie. The Training Task Group will consider training and development opportunities.

21.2 RUK (Rest of UK)/International Fees: Council approved the Committees proposal to pay all successful UK and RUK applicants fees where they are not covered by Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) funding. For international students a cap will be set annually if affordability is an issue.

The Ministries Finance Manager and Education and Support Secretary will agree the budget

where tuition fees required are less than £55k. If more than £55k is likely to be required then this will be taken to Education and Support Committee for approval and then Ministries Council through the budget process.

Mrs McMahon will speak further with the Convener about financial support beyond training.

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21.3 Recruitment Strategy: The strategy will serve the church beyond the immediate future as well as allow the shaping of policy and practice for a 15 to 20-year period. The development of the strategy will involve several strands of the Council's work and the initial stages will consist of a series of focus groups that will bring together our stakeholders, including our ecumenical partners. Council approved the proposal to delay the reporting of the strategy until 2019 to allow for this development work.

The Recruitment Task Group has requested an additional Council Member following a recent resignation. Council Members were invited to consider joining this group.

21.4 Postgraduate Fund: The first awards have been made under this Fund. Concern was expressed around the time commitments for a minister working full-time and also studying part-time.

22 Partnership Development

A written report *MC2-06* 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.

22.1 Chaplaincy Agreement: Council received the agreement setting out the provision of chaplaincy services within the Scottish Prison Service (*MC2-09*) and agreed that the Convener be authorised to sign this.

22.2 Disposal of Property: Council had previously agreed to dispose of St Columba's Rosyth, a redundant Church building located within the former Naval Dockyard at Rosyth. Council noted the current position and the details provided in the written report from the Partnership Development Committee and reaffirmed its decision of March 2014 and June 2015 to dispose of this property. Contact will be made with the General Trustees and the Council of Assembly to seek the required consents.

22.3 Presbytery Planning Task Group: Council noted that the Rev Jim Teasdale has agreed to take on the role of Presbytery Planning Task Group Leader following the General Assembly of 2018.

22.4 Membership: There is an urgent need for additional members on both the Interim Ministries Task Group and the Presbytery Planning Task Group to allow these groups to function appropriately. Council Members were invited to consider joining these groups.

Council noted that several groups across the work of the Council were looking to increase their membership, both in terms of co-opted members and General Assembly appointed Members. The Convener agreed to look at the factors which impact on membership and participation. Permission may be sought to increase the number of co-opts on certain groups so that co-opts outnumber Council Members and the Convener will explore the issues with the Governance Group. The Nomination Committee will receive completed nomination forms until the end of November as part of the annual cycle for General Assembly appointed membership.

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22.5 Hub Style Ministries: A day conference for those Presbyteries who have been engaged with the concept of Hubs will take place on 26 September 2017, at Letham St Mark's Church in Perth. This will also be on the agenda at the Presbytery Conference on 1-2 November 2017. Council noted that updates would be made to the *Project Initiation Document MC2-07*.

22.6 Interim Moderators and Eligibility to Apply for Vacancies: Members were asked to direct comments and questions relating to the details offered in paper *MC2-08* to the

Partnership Development Secretary, Rev Angus Mathieson, or Vice-Convener, Dr John Dent.

The business session concluded with worship by the Rev Alison Notman.

23 Integrated Values

The Rev Eleanor McMahon and the Council Secretary shared thoughts and reflections, following their visit to America in June, and led discussion around the theme of 'values'.

On the morning of Thursday 31 August the Rev David McLachlan opened with worship.

24 Development Programme

Further to discussions at June Council a revised *Development Programme Business Case (MC2-13)* was presented for consideration. The Programme is a grouping of projects which incorporates both new and developing pieces of work and does not include all ongoing work of the Council. Project costs and staffing costs are set out along with details of sources of funding. Staffing capacity has been a main consideration and proposed new staffing appointments would be from 2018 on a 3-year basis. Restricted reserves are being reviewed in order to release as much as possible in support of the Programme.

Concerns were expressed for the level of work for the Council and the need to resist any further work during the 3-year period. Furthermore, the Convener and Council Secretary will ensure the Programme is consistent with the content and timing of the delivery of the Council of Assembly Strategic Plan.

Council agreed with the broad outline of the programme and the costs of a temporary increase in staffing capacity. There will be further discussions with the Council of Assembly and the Staffing Executive. Detailed Business Cases for each of the projects with breakdown of figures will be produced for agreement.

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25 Finance

A verbal report was given by the Rev Alastair Cook in the absence of the Finance Convener.

25.1 Management Accounts to 30 June 2017: The Ministries Council Management Accounts to 30 June 2017 (*MC2-10a&b*) showed a deficit of £221k, against a budget deficit of £831k. The positive variance was mainly due to the number of ministers being fewer than budgeted for. The reserves of the Council were £44,736k with £13,251k of the total reserves being unrestricted. Work will be done to review restricted reserves to see how these might be used. A reserves policy was to be agreed by the Council of Assembly. The Finance Manager was thanked for producing the clear commentary on the accounts.

25.2 Budget: The costs of the Development Programme are presented in the 2018 bottom line deficit figure. In order that Council sees the full effects of the Programme on Ministries Council reserves the headline budget figures with and without inclusion of the Development Programme costs were provided in the *Draft 2018 Budget Highlights MC2-11*. The following points were also noted:

- a) No stipend increases have been built into the budget for 2018 in line with Council of Assembly instruction.
- b) Payments to Work Place Chaplaincy Scotland remain at a reduced level for coming years.
- c) For the purposes of the Budget the Housing & Loan Fund payments have been removed but this is subject to agreement/further discussions.
- d) Faith in Community Scotland (FiCS) to discuss the reduction in grant funding with their trustees and there will be further discussions at Priority Areas Committee.

Figures provided in the *Draft Budget 2018-2022 (MC2-14)* were also received. Council agreed the 2018 Budget as presented, as far as possible, subject to any stipend and salary increases being built in and approval of the Development Programme by the Council of Assembly.

25.3 Stipends and Salaries: The Ministries Finance Committee took the view that the pressure is such on our Ministers that an increase should be recommended. Reasoning and affordability of the recommended increase of 1.5% in 2018 were set out in paper MC2-12. When considering this matter the Committee was aware of the Council of Assembly request that any stipend increases be offset by budget savings elsewhere. The ‘Minimum Stipend Fund’ however had been identified as a restricted fund that was originally set up “to assist in raising the National Stipend Scale to a level with which the Church is satisfied and in keeping it at least at that level.” It would therefore be prudent to use this otherwise dormant fund to provide future stipend and salary increases whilst still satisfying the Council of Assembly request.

The Convener asked those with a conflict of interest, such as Ministers and those in a close personal relationship with a Minister, to leave the room before a vote was taken.

7 people voted unanimously for an increase of 1.5% in 2018 for ministerial stipends and Ministry Development Staff salaries. The Ministries Council recognises that other areas of the Church are unable to make increases.

The Ministries Finance Committee has also been asked to consider the deliverance on Relating Increases to Inflation Indexes. Whilst the Committee recognises the usefulness in using the indexes to deliberate stipend increases it cannot commit to tying future stipend decisions to an index. The Committee will report back to a future Council meeting with an official response to the deliverance.

26 Vision for Ministries Council Feedback

Brian Porteous offered feedback on behalf of the group tasked with considering the comments and suggestions received from paper MC2-01. The Council of Assembly is working on a vision and strategy for the Church. It was agreed that Ministries Council should wait for this overarching vision for the Church and use this to consider how the Ministries Council would fulfil this. The Council could then consider revisiting its remit as being a more detailed explanation of what the work of the Council was.

27 Ministries Development Staff (MDS)

As part of supporting and affirming MDS a competency framework will be created as well as launching an aligned appraisal process next year. These will be used as part of recruitment and development and an update will be brought to Council in due course.

28 Date of Next Meeting – The next meeting of the Council will take place on Wednesday 25 October 2017 at 10.30am St Andrew’s and St George’s West Church, 13-17 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2PA

The Convener thanked those present for their contributions and confirmed that work continued around the previous observations on participation of members during Council meetings. The Conference closed with a celebration of Holy Communion.

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Convener Date

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Secretary Date