

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY
17 September 2018

MINUTES

The Council of Assembly met within the Macdonald Cardrona Hotel, Peebles, on Monday 17 September 2018, and was constituted with prayer. A list of those attending is attached to this Minute as Appendix I.

18. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Convener welcomed Bob Cowan, Deputy General Treasurer, who was in attendance. Gemma King and Connor MacFadyen were also in attendance representing the National Youth Assembly. Deputising arrangements had been put in place, with Finlay Buchanan attending for the Convener of the Church and Society Council and Maureen Jack attending for the Convener of the World Mission Council. Apologies were noted.

19. AGREE AGENDA

The Agenda for the meeting was agreed.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Convener declared an interest in relation to Min 23.1, Social Care Council, in light of her former role as Convener of the Social Care Council.

21. COMMISSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Following discussion, the Council agreed to submit a report to a Commission of the General Assembly to request the appointment of a Special Commission which would be tasked with reviewing the governance structures of the Church of Scotland; recommending key principles for a national structure; and reviewing the current pattern of Councils and Committees. It was noted the Commission of the General Assembly, to be held on 3 October 2018, would be clerked by the Principal Clerk and that the Commission may alter the wording of the proposed deliverance. There would then be independent clerking of the Special Commission.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to the Commission, if names of suitable persons who may be willing to serve on the Special Commission were brought forward for consideration. Accordingly, the Council formed a delegated group who would scrutinise a list of suggested names, decide who should be approached to ask whether they would be willing to put their name forward and to then recommend five people including a named Convener. The delegated group would consist of the Convener and the Acting Council Secretary along with 3 non-Convener Trustees, David Watt, Andrew McGowan and Norma Rolls. Consideration would be given, as far as practicable, to have a balance of geography and gender on the Special Commission.

A supplementary document would be produced, to set out the principles for the proposed names, which would be circulated to the Council and submitted to the Principal Clerk who would forward this to the Commission. The Commission would be in a position to accept, reject or substitute any or all of the names put forward.

22. **RADICAL ACTION PLAN – WORK STREAMS**

The Principal Clerk presented an overarching theme of *'Follow Me!'* whereby every person and agency in the wide family of the Church would be encouraged to participate in the renewal of the Church. This was positively received and the Council considered the key areas and priorities around which to focus on, under the theme of *'Follow Me!'*, which would be part of working towards a Radical Action Plan and addressing financial issues.

A project group would be established to offer coordinating oversight and be tasked with identifying leadership for each of the work streams. An interim report would be brought to Council in November.

Each of the Councils was asked to reflect on the discussion and to ensure that all ongoing work contributed to the theme *'Follow Me!'*.

23. **COUNCILS' BUSINESS**

23.1 **Social Care Council**

A written report was received and Bill Steele reported that the issues with quality and service had been addressed. A critical incident review took place which revealed that there were isolated issues but nothing systemic throughout the organisation. A number of recruitment initiatives were underway, with leaflet mail drops proving to be successful. The average time from point of acceptance to starting in post had reduced.

A working group had been established to consider opportunities for a whole church celebration during 2019 to mark 150 years of provision of social care to the people of Scotland. Ruth MacLeod was part of this working group and input was sought from Councils and Committees in terms of time, ideas and sharing stories, as well as funding. The programme would be an outworking of discipleship and must connect with the theme of *'Follow Me!'* and the coordinated work streams for the Radical Action Plan. The Council of Assembly was invited to nominate a representative to sit on the working group.

The Social Care Council has identified some funds and a member of staff to coordinate this piece of work. Grant funding would be explored and possible funding opportunities through legacies and restricted funds would also be looked at.

The Church and Society Council will host the Eurodiaconia Conference in March 2019, in collaboration with the Social Care Council, which will look at health and wellbeing and Church in local communities. CrossReach will provide a keynote speech at the Conference around formal social caring over the years.

23.2 **Mission and Discipleship Council**

Details of current and future areas of work were provided in a resource and impact matrix along with a written report. A separate projects register had also been constructed and it was noted that Re-wilding the Church was a successor of Invisible Church. Angus Mathieson highlighted that the Mission and Discipleship Council had adopted a definition of discipleship from the Anglican Consultative Council which states: "Discipleship is a God-ward transformation which takes place when individuals and communities intentionally, sacrificially and consistently live every aspect of their daily life in commitment to following Jesus Christ. It is a lifelong, whole-life reorientation which will have challenging implications for our self-identity, our belonging within community, our belief systems and our daily behaviour."

The Council commended the useful presentation of work provided in the matrix document.

23.3 **World Mission Council**

Following upon the report to the General Assembly the World Mission Council had produced resources and organised events as part of a focus interfaith engagement. A

conference on global interfaith engagement was due to take place at St Matthew's Church in Perth on 22 September 2018.

A proposal to help teenage mothers in Zambia living in poverty was accepted as one of the 6 new Guild Projects for 2018-21 and work around this was ongoing.

23.4 Ministries Council

Rich Robinson delivered a session on discipleship at the recent overnight meeting of the Ministries Council which was affirming of the Church of Scotland. Leslie Francis also attended the overnight meeting as a guest speaker to share details of how work around resilience was being developed. It was noted that the Panel of Review and Reform was also working collaboratively with Rich Robinson.

23.5 Review of Reporting Process

Further to discussions at the June Council meeting around a review of the reporting process for Councils there was nothing to report at this time.

24. WORKING GROUP FOR PROPERTY ASSETS STRATEGY

In response to a request from the General Trustees the Council agreed that David Watt would serve as a Council of Assembly representative on a working group which would look at a property assets strategy for the church.

25. TOGETHER WE PRAY – NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

An update report on the National Day of Prayer on 3 November 2018 was received. Council thanked the Convener, Neil Glover and Norman Smith for their contributions and Pauline Wilson for coordinating this positive piece of work.

26. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council meetings held on 20 June (COA1 (2018-2019)) and 20 August (COAExtra1 (2018-2019)) were approved.

27. MATTERS ARISING

27.1 World Mission Council (Min COA1 7.2)

Neil Glover offered to have a conversation with World Mission Council regarding the *Vocations Information Day* events which were organised and delivered by the Ministries Council.

27.2 Radical Action Plan (Min COA1Extra1 3)

Norman Smith confirmed that a group within the Mission and Discipleship Council had begun work around a deliverance to facilitate and promote a national dialogue between elders younger than 40. The group would further consider how to seek the views of these elders and how best to reflect these in the Radical Action Plan. Mr Smith offered to speak with Jenny Adams regarding possible funding towards this piece of work.

28. FINANCE

28.1 Minutes of Finance Group

The Council received the Minutes of the Finance Group Meeting of 30 July (FG2 (2018-19)) and the Draft Minutes of the meeting on 3 September (FG3 (2018-19)). David Watt agreed to make minor amendment of the July minutes.

28.2 Pensions

The Pensions Working Group met on 26 June to reflect on the position of the Group. A revised remit would be considered by the group, when it meets on 25 September, and brought to the Council of Assembly thereafter. It would be proposed that the Pensions

Working Group would be reconstituted to become the Pensions Forum. It was noted that the Forum would have no authority to take decisions.

In fulfilment of the deliverance from the General Assembly the Pensions Trustees wrote to the three employing agencies to seek their views. In order to have a sense of language, manage risk and for good governance, Catherine Skinner had offered to assist in coordinating the responses.

28.3 Back to Back Loan

Mr Watt reported that work had concluded and recommendations were to be brought to the World Mission Council and thereafter to Council of Assembly for approval.

28.4 Review of Ministries and Mission

Initial work had begun in the review of the Ministries and Mission system. Broad representation would be required in those participating in the review.

28.5 National Office Buildings Project

The Property Group includes representation from the General Trustees. Names of General Trustees representatives who would participate in Finance Group meetings in relation to the National Office Buildings Project were to be confirmed.

In light of the financial position the Finance Group encouraged the Property Group to constrain use of external consultants around options evaluation. Whilst the Property Group continued to look at 3 options, the Finance Group took the view that, for option 3, the Property Group should look only at realistic possibilities for execution in consideration of the costs to be incurred. The Council supported this recommendation. Liam Fennell had given reassurance that maintenance of the Church Office was in keeping with health and safety requirements.

The General Trustees were due to meet on 18 September and it was anticipated that they would bring a report to the Council of Assembly thereafter.

28.6 National Stewardship Coordinator

Council welcomed the appointment of David Lynch to the post of National Stewardship Coordinator with a start date of 1 October 2018.

28.7 Management Accounts to 31 July 2018

Bob Cowan reported that the forecast operating deficit for 2018 was £6m compared with a budget deficit of £4m. The increased deficit was due to changed circumstances for CrossReach, World Mission Council, Support and Services and other funds, specifically unrestricted funds. Mr Cowan agreed to amend the Management Accounts narrative relating to CrossReach in consultation with Viv Dickenson.

28.8 2018 Financial Forecast and Mission and Renewal Fund

Mr Watt reported that unrestricted legacy payments had been used to support recurring work of Councils and Committees through the Mission and Renewal Fund. It had been highlighted previously that the Mission and Renewal Fund may deplete significantly in 2019 and unfortunately this had happened earlier and was impacting on the 2018 budget. Assumptions made were optimistic and unrestricted legacies were not materialising.

The Senior Management Team was made aware of the issues and had initial discussions when they met on 27 August, prior to the Finance Group meeting.

In addition to the interim measures already agreed in June 2017 the General Treasurer provided a paper with proposals for remedial action. Council considered the paper and the following points were noted:

- a) Council voted in favour of the proposal to withhold Mission and Renewal Fund payments to Councils (13 for; 1 against) on the understanding that Stewardship and

Finance Department staff were in discussions with Councils around how this could be achieved. There was agreement in principal that the Senior Management Team would be asked to explore whether Councils, Committees and Departments could financially support one another. Clarification would be sought on where it would be competent to move funds.

- b) Co-operation was sought in achieving reductions in deficits. Councils, Committees and Departments were asked to curtail discretionary expenditure for the remainder of the financial year and to delay spend where possible. All spends must be efficient, effective and essential in the furtherance of the work of the Church.
- c) Special contributions from Mission and Renewal to Ecumenical Bodies, Christian Aid and the General Trustees (for the Central Fabric Fund) should be considered. Furthermore, given the deterioration in the financial position, it was queried whether it was feasible to continue to make charitable payments to other bodies and charities. An updated list of grant payments with detailed comments against each item was requested. A revised proposal would be brought to the Council for consideration.

It was noted that progress was being made in the review of funds, with four applications to reorganise funds to be received later on the agenda. Members urged that this work was carried out as a priority and that consideration was given to all restricted funds to confirm where reorganisation may be a prospect. Mr Watt offered to speak with the General Treasurer to explore the possibility of increasing staff resource in order to see more rapid progress in this area.

- d) Council reaffirmed the stringent oversight and robust processes used by the Central Services Committee Executive (Staffing). Given the potential impact and risks related to a recruitment freeze, further thought should be given to the mechanisms which support the Committee to properly identify which posts were business critical and to consider the posts which were fully funded as well as take into account the on costs. A recommendation on a headcount cap was requested. A revised proposal around recruitment would be brought back to the Council for consideration.

Viv Dickenson highlighted that, although a blanket freeze on recruitment would not be workable for CrossReach, a revised proposal on recruitment could potentially be mimicked for central staff.

- e) A proposal to apply a percentage reduction to Mission and Renewal Fund expenditure to achieve a saving would be in abeyance.

28.9 Determination of Stipends and Salaries for 2019

It was noted that the Ministries Council had appointed a sub-committee to further examine the implications of various percentage rises in the stipend and salary scales. Details would be brought to the Council in November.

28.10 Restricted Funds Reorganisation Applications

The Trustees noted the details provided and agreed the following applications for restricted funds reorganisation:

- a) Alexander J Macleod Fund
- b) Kaye Foundation
- c) Ministry Benevolent Fund
- d) The Moffat Bequest

29. GOVERNANCE

29.1 Minutes of Governance Group

The Council received the Draft Minutes of the Governance Group Meeting of 13 August (GG1 (2018-2019)).

29.2 Report of Governance Group

The Council received a written update from John Corrigan who submitted his apologies for the meeting. It was noted that, due to there being no time-critical business, the planned September meeting of Governance Group was cancelled. The following matters were highlighted:

- a) Data Protection Policy: The Council approved the updated Data Protection Policy for Employees, Workers, Consultants and Volunteers of the Unincorporated Councils and Committees of the Church of Scotland.
- b) Safeguarding: The Council received the interim report on Safeguarding and liabilities in the Church of Scotland produced by the Church Solicitor. A detailed response to OSCR's recommended 10 step plan for Charity Trustees would be brought to a future Council meeting.

30. CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Council received the Draft Minutes of CSC meeting of 14 June (CSC1 2018-19) the Minutes of the CSC Executive (Staffing) meetings of 9 July (CSC Exec2 (2018-2019)) and 13 August (CSC Exec3 2018-2019)) and the Draft Minutes of 10 September (CSC Exec4 (2018-2019)).

31. SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

There was nothing further to report in addition to earlier discussions.

32. AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Council received the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting of 28 March (AC4 2017-18) and Draft Minutes of 28 August (AC1 2018-19).

33. COMMUNICATION

Council thanked Ruth MacLeod for providing a written report of the key areas of work carried out by the Communications Department in 2018.

34. CORRESPONDENCE

Retirement of Trustee: John Corrigan wrote to the Convener to indicate his intention to retire in May 2019 and confirmed that he would continue as a Trustee and Convener of Governance Group until that time. The Council valued the advice and input from Mr Corrigan and it was noted that the Convener had offered prayers and support on behalf of the Council. Given the earlier request to review governance structures it was suggested that the Trustee vacancy would not be advertised at this time. The position would be reviewed in due course.

Gaelic Group Funding Application: An application for funding had been submitted and conversations were ongoing with the funder. It was hoped that some funding may be offered.

35. TRUSTEES' MEETING

The discussion which took place under this item is contained in a Record Apart.

36. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.30am, Monday 15 October 2018.

The Meeting was closed with Prayer.

APPENDIX I

COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY

17 September 2018

Sederunt:

Jennifer Adams
Ian Alexander
Sally Bonnar
David Brackenridge
Derek Browning
Viv Dickenson
Alistair Gibb
Neil Glover
Isobel Hunter
Martin Johnstone
Anne Lamont
Elaine McCloghry
Andrew McGowan
Mary Macleod
Ruth MacLeod
Angus Mathieson
Norma Rolls
Alan Sorensen
Norman Smith
Bill Steele
David Watt
George Whyte
Ronald Wright

Apologies:

John Chalmers
John Corrigan
Alison Fenton
Richard Frazer
Anne Macintosh
John McPake
Jayne Scott
Martin Scott
Raymond Young

In Attendance:

Finlay Buchanan
Bob Cowan
Gemma King
Maureen Jack
Carron Lunt
Connor MacFadyen