

**PRESBYTERY OF GREENOCK AND PAISLEY***December 9<sup>th</sup> 2014*

**At Bishopton and within the Cornerstone there, the ninth day of December 2014, the Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley met as appointed and was constituted with prayer.**

**SEDERUNT**

Rev Ritchie Gillon, Moderator, with 37 ministers, 46 elders, 2 deacons and 7 corresponding members, as recorded separately.

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from 8 ministers, 7 elders, 3 deacons and 4 corresponding members, as recorded separately.

**MINUTES**

Minutes of the ordinary meeting on November 11<sup>th</sup> and the induction on November 27<sup>th</sup> being in print and in the hands of members were taken as read and approved.

**APPOINTMENT OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING**

The next meeting was approved as February 10<sup>th</sup> 2015 in The Cornerstone, Bishopton.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The order of business was approved as printed with an amendment to the Business Committee report.

**NOTICES**

The Clerk highlighted the notices.

**WELCOME TO REV DAVID BURT**

The Moderator welcomed Mr Burt to Presbytery, following his Induction to Gourrock: Old Gourrock & Ashton Church and looked forward to working with him in Greenock & Paisley.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO VERY REV DR LORNA HOOD**

The Moderator congratulated Mrs Hood on behalf of Presbytery following her recently being awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity from the University of Glasgow.

**LEAVE TAKING REV ANDREW MACLEAN**

There spoke on behalf of the congregation Mr Robert Guthrie, Session Clerk and Mr MacLean replied in suitable terms. The Moderator wished him well for a long a happy retirement and noted that he wished to remain a member of Greenock & Paisley Presbytery.

**OVERTURE**

Debate was invited regarding the OVERTURE UNDER THE BARRIER ACT - MINISTERS AND DEACONS IN CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS.

There spoke for the Overture, Mrs Hood, Messrs Sorensen, Paton and Reid. There spoke against Messrs Cook, Cranston, Forrest, McHugh, Mathieson, Gray and Cameron. The Clerk clarified the process leading up to the Overture being brought under the Barrier Act.

Presbytery moved to a vote using the prescribed ballot paper and there voted in favour of the Overture 52 with 28 against. The following people wished their dissent noted in the minute: Mrs Ann McCool, Messrs Stevenson, Cranston, Mathieson, McHugh, Cook and Cameron.

Comments were invited.

Rev Alistair Cook proposed the following, seconded by Mr John Armit:

The footnote on page 1 of the Overture raises the issue of same sex marriage in relation to this Overture.

Following on from this footnote, at the 2014 General Assembly it was agreed that before the Overture is presented to the 2015 General Assembly for consideration, the Theological Forum and the Legal Questions Committee will jointly report to the Committee on Returns to Overtures as to whether or not same sex marriage should be recognised as equivalent to civil partnership in terms of the Overture. The Committee on Returns to Overtures will either comment on this question or bring amendments to the Overture to reflect their conclusions. (*Section 6 of Legal Questions Committee deliverance at GA 2014*).

In light of this:

1. We oppose the recognition of same sex marriage as equivalent to civil partnership in terms of the Overture. This is in keeping with the position of the Church of Scotland that marriage is between one man and one woman and which the General Assembly has not been asked to change (*Church of Scotland submission to the Scottish Government consultation on same sex marriage 1 December 2011*). To recognise same sex marriage as equivalent to civil partnerships for this Overture would be tantamount to changing the church's position that marriage is between one man and one woman.
2. We urge that, if the General Assembly is asked to recognise same sex marriage and civil partnerships as equivalent in terms of this Overture and amendments are accordingly made to the Overture, then (if passed) those amendments are sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act.

Following discussion some difficulty was expressed with regard to accepting section one as it seemed to presume upon an as yet unknown set of conditional responses which had not yet been made by the Theological Forum and the Legal Questions Committee; moreover it also assumed a debate and indeed a decision that Presbytery had not yet had or taken. Consequently, Mr Cook agreed to withdraw section one and Presbytery agreed that section two of his comment be included in the return to the Principal Clerk.

## **BUSINESS**

Rev Alistair Shaw, Convener, presented the report of the Business Committee and the following deliverance was approved:

Presbytery:

1. Receives the report;
2. Notes the continuing sick leave of Rev Fiona Maxwell;  
*The Convener proposed the following amendment to section 2*
2. Notes that Rev Fiona Maxwell has returned to work and thanks and discharges Rev Maureen Leitch as Interim Moderator at Neilston;
3. Approves the application from Langbank Church to adopt the Unitary Constitution;
4. Approves the continuing appointment of Rev Alan Sorensen as the Presbytery representative on Renfrewshire Educational Trust from February 2015, thanks Rev Peter Gill and Mr Alan Grant for their work there and notes that their period of service will end from the same date;
5. Homologates the decision of the Business Committee to allow Inverkip to worship in their halls on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November and Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December;
6. Notes that Linwood church will worship in their halls on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2015;
7. Approves the request from Kilmacolm Old Kirk to hold a joint service with St Fillans Scottish Episcopal Church, Kilmacolm on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at St Fillans;

8. Approves the Basis of Parish Grouping for Greenock: Wellpark Mid Kirk, East End and Mount Kirk as contained in **appendix 1**;
9. Grants permission for Greenock: Mount Kirk and Greenock East End Parish Church to hold a joint service at The Mount Kirk on Sunday 28th Dec at 10.30am;
10. Appoints Rev Alistair Shaw and Miss Helen Smith to the Superintendence Committee for purpose of serving on the complaints committee when required;
11. Approves the appointment of Ms Helen Bryers as Representative Elder for Renfrew: Trinity to replace Mr John Gardner who has resigned due to ill health, and instructs the Clerk to add her name to the roll of Presbytery;

### **TREASURER**

Rev Alistair Cook, Treasurer, presented the following report which was approved:

Presbytery:

1. Approves the Budget for 2014/2015 as detailed at **appendix 2A**;
2. Approves the proposed Presbytery assessments for 2014/2015 as detailed in **appendix 2B** and instructs congregations to make payment as soon as possible but no later than 31<sup>st</sup> May 2015;

### **PROPERTY**

Mr William Mathieson, Convener, presented the report of the Property Committee and the following deliverance was approved:

Presbytery:

1. receives the report;
2. instructs the congregations of Neilston, Barrhead: St. Andrew's & Bourrock, Paisley: Glenburn & Sherwood Greenlaw, Johnstone: High, St. Andrew's Trinity & St. Paul's, Linwood, Kilmacollm: Old & St. Columba's, and Port Glasgow: Hamilton Bardrainney, St. Andrew's & St. Martin's to complete the urgent items contained in the quinquennial inspection reports supplied by Wylie Shanks in October 2014, and in any supplementary updates provided at a later date, within the prescribed period of 1 year, and to report on progress to the December 2015 meeting of Presbytery. Also instructs the foregoing congregations to arrange to carry out work identified as essential in the same reports within the next 5 years, and to undertake as much of the work identified as desirable as possible;
3. a) approves in principle the installation of a new audio-visual system, at an estimated cost of £17,000, in the Paisley: Lylesland church, subject to the availability of funding and the approval of CARTA to the proposed removal of a section of 2 pews in order to locate the new control desk and to the location of the associated controls and equipment  
  
b) notes that, subject to the appropriate approvals being obtained and the installation proceeding, the Property Committee has approved a grant of £1,700 to assist with the cost of the new audio-visual system from the Cargill Bequest Fund;
4. approves in principle a major renovation/ repair to the tower, church and halls of Gourrock: St. John's at an estimated cost of around £280,000, subject to the availability of funding.

### **MISSION & DISCIPLESHIP**

In the absence of Rev Eileen Ross, Convener, Rev Dr Glenn Chestnutt presented the report of the Mission & Discipleship Committee and the following deliverance was approved:

Presbytery:

1. Receives the Report;
2. Draws special attention to the General Assembly 2015 Youth Delegate application documents and encourages congregations, Presbyters, Kirk Sessions and ministers to prayerfully encourage applications by eligible young people. Applications to be in the hands of the Convenor by 1<sup>st</sup> February 2015.

### **STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE**

Mr Peter Bennett, Convenor, presented the report of the Stewardship & Finance Committee and the following deliverance was approved:

Presbytery:

1. Receives the Report;
2. Agrees sums be allocated from the 4% discretionary allowance available for the 2015 Ministries and Missions contributions to reduce the 2015 contributions of congregations as follows – St. Machar's Ranfurly £3,750 : Freeland, Bridge of Weir £5,000 : Kilbarchan East £2,000 : St. Mark's Oldhall £5,000;
3. If the deliverance is accepted instructs the Convener to inform the congregational treasurers;
4. Notes that a Finance Seminar will be held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015 in the Cornerstone at 7.00pm for 7.30pm and encourages congregational finance teams to participate. Confirmation that the event is going ahead will soon be sent to congregations who have replied.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment to meet on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2015 at 7.00pm for ordinary business in the Cornerstone, Bishopton.

*Moderator*

*Clerk*