

PRESBYTERY OF GREENOCK AND PAISLEY

December 13th 2016

At Bishopton and within The Cornerstone there, the thirteenth day of December 2016, the Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley met as appointed and was constituted with prayer.

SEDERUNT

Rev Ann McCool, Moderator, with 40 ministers, 50 elders, 2 deacons and 9 corresponding members, as recorded separately.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from 7 ministers, 5 elders, 3 deacons and 3 corresponding members, as recorded separately.

MINUTES

Minutes of the ordinary meeting on November 8th 2016 being in print and in the hands of members were approved.

APPOINTMENT OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING

The next meeting was approved as February 14th 2017 in The Cornerstone, Bishopton.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The order of business was approved as printed with an addition from the Business Committee.

NOTICES

The Clerk highlighted the notices.

7. VACANCY PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

Rev Jim Cowan, Convener, presented the report of the Vacancy Procedure Committee and the following deliverance was approved:

Presbytery:

1. receives the report;
2. having previously noted the Rev Ritchie Gillon's intention to retire, grants permission to him to demit his charge at Paisley: St Luke's from the 29th January 2017;
3. grants permission to Rev Alistair Cook to demit his charge of Paisley: Lylesland in order to take up the call to Hawick: St Mary's & Old linked with Teviot & Robertson;
4. affirms that Mr Cook remains the Minister of Paisley: Lylesland until the date of his translation to Hawick: St Mary's Old linked with Teviot & Robertson and instructs him to await the direction of the Presbytery of Jedburgh in that regard;
5. grants an extension of one year of permission to call a minister without restriction to Langbank linked with Port Glasgow: St Andrew's;
6. sustains the call from Bishopton to Ms Yvonne Smith and remits to the Moderator and Clerk the arrangements for the service of Ordination and Induction on Tuesday 10th January 2017;
7. sustains the call from Inchinnan to Mrs Ann Knox and remits to the Moderator and Clerk the arrangements for the service of Ordination and Induction;
8. grants permission to Houston & Killellan to call a minister without restriction in accordance with the Presbytery Plan

LEAVE TAKING REV RITCHIE GILLON

Mr Jim Miller spoke on behalf of the congregation of Paisley St Luke's and Mr Gillon replied in suitable terms. The Moderator thanked him for his faithful service and wished him well for a long and happy retirement.

LEAVE TAKING REV ALISTAIR COOK

Mr John Armit spoke on behalf of the congregation of Paisley Lylesland and Mr Cook then replied in suitable terms. The Moderator thanked him for his service to Presbytery and wished him well in his new charge.

OVERTURE UNDER THE BARRIER ACT

Registration of ministries overture – see appendix 1

There were a number of questions and comments regarding the substance of the overture before the Moderator called for a vote. There were no votes in favour of the overture and there were 92 votes against it.

The Clerk summarised the comments as follows:

Presbytery does not believe that the case has been made for the necessity of this proposed new legislation. Furthermore, the degree of change envisaged in this legislation is not merited by its original impetus – namely – that there is a degree of 'confusion' and variance surrounding the current practice re the awarding of practising certificates. This could have been dealt with via small amendments and clarifications to existing legislation. Moreover, it finds the proposed distinction between categories O and E to be arbitrary and divisive. All Ministers covered by this legislation are trained 'generalists' in parish ministry. The suggestion that Associate Ministers and Chaplains working in specialised 'sector ministries,' – often involving the gaining of additional qualifications and expertise – somehow lose the foundations of their general training in the timescales envisaged is somewhat unconvincing. The assurances that moving from category E to O in such circumstances will be unproblematic is confusing. Either a decision of substance is to be made in this regard, or the distinction itself is meaningless and somewhat superfluous. Insufficient information is given as to the criteria that will be used when forming a judgement as to what further training might be required in the move from category E to O. It was also suggested that in an age of over two hundred vacancies it adds a further unhelpful layer of bureaucracy before a Chaplain or Associate could apply for a pastoral charge. As such Presbytery finds the three year timescale in which ministers are believed to begin to lose their skills to be overly brief, and it rejects the concept that ministers necessarily cease to exercise a full ministry subject to Presbytery three years after they demit their charge.

Presbytery rejects the centralisation which this legislation will necessarily create and reminds the General Assembly of the important principles of the parity of ministry and centrality of Presbytery on which our Presbyterian system is based. What is presented as piece of administrative tidying up by way of the drawing up of a centralised roll of Ministers does in fact mark the beginning of a significant shift in the relationship of Ministers to Presbyteries and to the newly created Registration of Ministries Committee. Presbytery believes that in time this will completely invert the relationship between Ministers and Presbytery to one in which the primary authorisation of the Minister is via the Registration of Ministries Committee, and the roll of Presbytery will simply be a bureaucratic one of maintaining a list on behalf of the Assembly Committee. Finally, Presbytery found that the implied analogy with the practice of other professions is inapposite. For other professional bodies are independent of any particular employer and exist solely for the maintenance of standards and the development of expertise within the particular profession concerned. In contrast the needs of the de facto 'employing body' – i.e. the Church - are as much at the heart of this proposed legislation as the needs of the ministry profession *per se*. As such its proposals draw attention to the fact that we do not yet possess a truly independent 'College or Society of Ministry' that might function as an appropriate professional body on behalf of all Ministers.

It was agreed these would be included with the return to the Principle Clerk's office.

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 Peter Gill;
 3. receives the report at **appendix 2** from the ad hoc committee established to look at “empowering local leadership” and instructs the Clerk to submit this report as a response to the Panel on Review & Reform;
 4. notes that Rev Liz Geddes has accepted an appointment as locum in Rome from 9th December 2016 until 29th January 2017 and agrees to this appointment, and further notes that she will temporarily transfer to the International Presbytery during that time;
 5. approves the application from Paisley St Luke’s to change to the Unitary Constitution;
 6. approves the application from Neilston to change to the Unitary Constitution;
 7. notes that the congregation of Bridge of Weir St Machar’s Ranfurly will hold a joint service with Bridge of Weir Freeland Church in Freeland Church on Sunday 25th December 2016;
 8. notes that the congregation of Kilmacolm St Columba and Kilmacolm Old Kirk will hold a joint services in St Columba Church on the 25th December 2016 and in Kilmacolm Old Kirk on Sunday 1st January 2017;
 9. notes that Kilmacolm Old Kirk and Kilmacolm St Columba will worship in St Fillans Scottish Episcopal Church, Kilmacolm on Sunday 22nd. January 2017 as part of the week of Christian unity;
 10. notes that the congregations of Barrhead St Andrew’s and Barrhead Bourock Church will hold a joint service in Bourock Church on Sunday 1st January 2017;
- The Convener proposed further sections as follows:*
11. approves the appointment of Mr Douglas Scott as representative elder for Greenock Westburn and instructs the Clerk to add his name to the roll of Presbytery;
 12. notes that Paisley Wallneuk North and Paisley St Ninian’s Ferguslie will hold joint services on December 25th and January 1st;

Presbytery approved.

TREASURER

Rev Alistair Cook presented the accounts and budget and the following deliverance was approved:

Presbytery:

1. receives the accounts for the year ended 30 June 2016;
2. approves the accounts of the Presbytery, as contained in **appendix 3** (with a minor amendment), for the year ended 30 June 2016, subject to any amendments which may be required following the Independent Examination which is currently being carried out;
3. approves the Budget for 2016/2017 as detailed at **appendix 4**;
4. approves the proposed Presbytery assessments for 2016/2017 as detailed in **appendix 5** and instructs congregations to make payment as soon as possible but no later than 31st May 2017;

STEWARDSHIP & FINANCE

Mr Leon Marshall, Convener, presented the report of the Stewardship & Finance Committee and the following deliverance was approved:

Presbytery:

1. receives the report;
2. encourages congregational Treasurers and others sufficiently experienced to offer their services to act as Independent Examiner for congregations within the bounds and to register their willingness with the Presbytery Secretary ;

PROPERTY

Mr Ian Russell, Convener, presented the report from the Property Committee and the following deliverance was approved:

Presbytery:

1. receives the report;
 - 2a. notes that the 2016 quinquennial inspections for Greenock: Wellpark Mid, Westburn, and The Mount Kirk; by Allied Scotland, Chartered Surveyors, and the 2016 quinquennial inspections at Paisley:Abbey, Lylesland, Martyr's Sandyford, St. Columba Foxbar, St. Luke's, Stow Brae and Wallneuk North; by DM Hall, Chartered Surveyors are now in the process of being issued.
 - 2b. instructs the foregoing congregations to complete the items identified in the reports as urgent within the prescribed period of 1 year, and to report on progress to the December 2017 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. notes that the Bishopton manse has been inspected and found to be ready for occupation;
 4. approves an application in by the Inchinnan congregation for a feasibility study to find the source of water ingress at the chancel window and form a suitable repair scheme, assistance will be sought from both the General Trustees and CARTA. The estimated cost is £7,200 inclusive of VAT and funds are available;
 5. approves, subject to the approval of the General Trustees and CARTA, an application by the Old Gourrock and Ashton congregation to extend the Chancel area, fit a wheelchair lift and remove choir pews and replace with movable seating. The estimated cost is £75,000 inclusive of VAT and fees and funds are available;
- The Clerk proposed section 6 as the convener declared an interest*
6. notes the decision of the Paisley: Stow Brae congregation to seek a replacement manse with assistance being sought from the General Trustees;

MISSION & DISCIPLESHIP

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

Presbytery:

1. receives the report;
2. notes that nominations for Presbytery Youth Representative to the General Assembly 2017 are to be with the presbytery clerk by 1st Feb 2017;
3. grants, from the Newark Fund, the sum of £2546 to Port Glasgow: St Martin's, to fund the purchase of an electronic hymnal;
4. notes the closing date for the next round of grant applications is 12 noon on Friday 24th February 2017.

WORLD MISSION & ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

Rev Alan Birss, Convener, presented the report of the World Mission & Ecumenical Relations Committee and the following deliverance was approved:

Presbytery:

1. receives the report;
2. commends to congregations the World Mission Council's Stamp Appeal;
3. encourages congregations to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with other denominations in their area either in January or at some other time, such as Pentecost, that is appropriate for them.

PRESBYTERY PLAN REVIEW

Rev Ken Gray, Convener, presented the report of the Presbytery Plan Review Committee and the following deliverance was approved:

Presbytery:

1. receives the report;
2. suspends the presbytery plan for Howwood and Lochwinnoch and sists proceedings there;
3. notes the intention of the committee to change the Presbytery Plan for Howwood and Lochwinnoch by severing the linkage and instructs the committee to draw up a Basis of Severance to be presented to both congregations;;
4. instructs the committee to notify the PPTG of this intention;
5. notes that the committee will seek discussion with the churches in Johnstone regarding a linkage with Howwood which may lead to a change in the plan for Johnstone;
6. notes the committee will not seek discussion with any other church in regard to Lochwinnoch;
7. notes the intention is for both congregations to come under the Guardianship of the Presbytery when the linkage is severed;
8. notes the intention of the committee to bring forward proposals to reallocate OLM's which will result in changes to the Presbytery Plan

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment to meet on **Tuesday 10th January 2017 at 7.00pm** in Bishopton Church for the Ordination and Induction of Ms Yvonne Smith and thereafter for ordinary business on **Tuesday 14th February 2017 at 7.00pm** in The Cornerstone, Bishopton

Moderator

Clerk