

## Presbytery of Perth

### Summary of Presbytery Meeting: Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2025

The Presbytery met in St Matthew's Church, Perth, for ordinary business on Saturday 1st February.

#### INTIMATIONS

An invitation from the Rev Dr Alister Bull, Head of Spiritual Care and Bereavement services at NHS Tayside, to attend an event for spiritual leaders on the 13<sup>th</sup> February at 2pm at St Matthew's Church, Perth.

An opportunity to hear the Rev Stuart Gillan from St Andrew's Church, Jerusalem at St Matthew's Church, Perth on 13<sup>th</sup> February. Full details would be published in the weekly Roundup.

#### VACANCY MATTERS

It was noted that the Vacancy Procedure Committee had sustained the Call from Montrose Trinity Church to the Rev Derek Peat, signed by 174 members and 35 papers of concurrence and agreed the Induction date of February 13th at The Steeple, Montrose.

It was also noted that the Planning Committee had agreed that, following a positive report from the Rev Andrew Gardner as Interim Minister at St Blane's, Dunblane linked with Lecropt, the congregation could now begin the process of calling a minister.

#### SPEAKER – REV GRAHAM DUFFIN

The Rev Graham Duffin gave a visual presentation entitled 'Growing Young'. One of the greatest challenges facing the Church was the engagement of young people. As a Church, this had to be an intentional step to provide teaching around what was important, and to experiment. He encouraged Churches to embark on this with enthusiasm, perhaps with a core group of up to 5 leaders. Growing Young would provide support in the form of: Regular Webinars; Congregational profile; Coach/mentor; Networking opportunities and Sermon outlines. In addition, there would be 2 or 3 full day conferences per year.

The Moderator thanked Graham for his excellent presentation.

#### BUSINESS COMMITTEE

**Next Moderator:** The Business Committee is seeking nominations for Moderator of Presbytery for 2025-26. Members of Presbytery were invited to nominate a possible candidate drawn from the membership of Presbytery.

**Finance Officer:** The Presbytery currently employed a part-time Congregational Support Officer and the Treasurer's role had been done on a voluntary basis, both undertaken by the

same person, Rhona Nicol. Rhona had written to the Clerk resigning from both these roles and was thanked for her services to the Presbytery. The Business Committee proposed that the two posts should be combined into one full-time position and the post has now been advertised. [Finance-Officer-job-description-Feb-2025.pdf](#) The creation of this post would not lead to an increase in Presbytery Dues this year.

**Safeguarding Administrator:** Mairi Macleod had been appointed to this new role at 10 hours per week. Mairi was warmly welcomed to her new role.

**Congregational Statistics** – 15 Congregations had not submitted their annual statistics and were urged to address this matter urgently.

**Presbytery Review** - The Presbyteries of Perth and Edinburgh & West Lothian were chosen to be part of a Pilot programme of Presbytery Reviews and two of the review team attended the last meeting of Presbytery. The Review had gone well and a summary of the Committee's report would be presented to the 2025 General Assembly.

**Visit from the Moderator of the General Assembly** - The Moderator Designate of the General Assembly, the Rev Rosie Frew, would be visiting the Presbytery of Perth during her year in office. Those with any suggestions about what might be included in the itinerary should contact the Convener. There will be two five day visits spread throughout her year in office.

**New Members:** Presbytery welcomed the Rev Joanne Foster, the Rev. Louis Kinsey, the Rev Scott Raby and the Rev Eddie McKenna as members of the Presbytery, and they signed the Formula and affirmed their Ordination vows.

**Deaths of Ministers:** Presbytery noted with sadness the deaths of the following ministers, and gave thanks for their years of service and sent the condolences of the Presbytery to their families:

- The Rev. Alexander Strickland, formerly of Dairsie, Kemback and Strathkinness in Fife.
- The Rev. Don Cameron, formerly of Juniper Green Parish Church, Edinburgh.
- The Rev. Sydney Graham, formerly of Iona with Kilfinichen and Kilvickeon and the Ross of Mull.
- The Rev. Bernard Liddiard, formerly of Brechin, Gardner Memorial and East.
- The Rev. Samuel Ovens, formerly of Slamannan Parish Church.

**Retirement:** Presbytery noted that the Rev Beverley Stevenson would retire at the end of February 2025 as an OLM and warmly thanked her for her services to Presbytery.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

The Convener, the Rev Emma McDonald, presented the Report. The new Safeguarding Committee met on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and a meeting with safeguarding trainers took place on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2025 to compile a list of training dates, which would be sent out in the next few weeks for all levels of safeguarding training. The booking would take place online and details

would be sent out with training dates. Any late cancellations should be notified to the Convener.

Work continued to consolidate the Presbytery Safeguarding records. Emails would be sent to all Ministers, OLM's, IM's, Locums. Worship Leaders, MDS staff and all employed at Presbytery level requesting information that was a legal requirement. Those concerned were urged to give this matter their urgent attention.

For the Attestation of records, Safeguarding records could be submitted online or in person.

## **PROPERTY**

The Convener, Ian McVean, presented the report.

**Longforgan Church:** The Property Committee had received an application from Longforgan Kirk Session for alterations and upgrade of Longforgan Church. The provisional cost of the work was £1,000,000. After discussion by the Committee they agreed that this initial application required more work and proposed to Presbytery that only provisional outline permission be granted for this project.

**Dollar Church:** Permission given for a new disabled toilet in the church at a cost of £53,171, subject to the approval of the General Trustees.

The Presbytery Clerk advised that the Buildings Officer would be organising a series of Roadshows to update Property Conveners, Treasurers and Session Clerks on property matters.

## **MISSION**

The Convener, the Rev Grant Maclaughlan, presented the report.

**Project Lead (Adults with Learning Difficulties and Autism)** - Rev Mairi Perkins had been recruited as the Project Lead for this one-year funded post. If congregations would be interested in exploring a possible partnership or for advice, please contact Mairi at [mperkins@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:mperkins@churchofscotland.org.uk)

**Renew Wellbeing Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> February** - Renew Wellbeing helps churches open spaces of welcome and inclusion for over 18s in partnership with mental health teams to improve mental and emotional wellbeing. For those interested in attending, please email [Gmaclaughlan@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:Gmaclaughlan@churchofscotland.org.uk) and a Zoom link will be forwarded.

**InTogether Church Covenant** – ‘InTogether’ Church is a Presbytery Mission Initiative and is sponsored by Perth North Church. A formal covenant will be signed soon.

**4) Seeds for Growth Application** - The Presbytery had submitted an Initial Proposal for Seeds for Growth in partnership with Tayside YMCA. The proposal was for-

- (1) The recruitment of a Youth Chaplain to lead on developing new ways of exploring faith that are appropriate to the age and interests of young people as well as seeking to create opportunities to bring young people from across current YMCA church partnerships together to explore more meaningful and profound engagement with the Christian faith.
- (2) Resource Perth Presbytery through a weekly time allocation of 7.5 hours to network, connect, support and resource youth work throughout the presbytery.

The feedback from Seeds for Growth had been positive and a full application was now being drafted which would be brought to the Presbytery for approval.

**Growing Young** - There was an opportunity to partner with Growing Young and become part of a two year Growing Young Learning Community (or cohort), as the Presbytery sought to build churches that are reaching and discipling young people in meaningful ways. Growing Young had scheduled two webinars for February. - Douglas Hamilton on 20<sup>th</sup> February and Gill Watson on 26<sup>th</sup> February. Both Webinars will start at 7 p.m. and finish by 8.15 p.m. The link is the same for both webinars.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87501923734?pwd=Dfwbb6oq1UOWTjGlSlt7ApBrEfk3e.1>

**Meeting ID:** 875 0192 3734

**Passcode:** 525536

To get the most from the webinar, it was suggested that at least two or three people from interested churches can join the webinar on the same evening.

**Bertha Park** - Perth Riverside wished to pass on their role as Supervising Congregation to Bertha Park, PMI to another congregation. The committee were grateful to the Kirk Session of Perth Riverside for all of their work since the formation of Bertha Park. It was imperative to ensure that another congregation was found to take over the important work at Bertha Park and it may be that other congregations could support this work by becoming Sponsoring Congregations.

## **MINISTRIES**

The Convener, Rev Mike Goss, presented the report.

**Accreditation** - Joanne Chinn, a member of Coupar Angus Abbey, had attended the Leading Worship course and applied to be accredited through the Fast Track Procedure. The

committee, using powers, agreed that Joanne Chinn should be Accredited as a Worship Leader in Presbytery.

**Support for Courses** - It was noted that there was a reticence for office bearers to apply to attend courses; a letter was sent from the Presbytery Office to all to highlight the range of courses available and asking for any members who had experience in presenting training to offer to join teams in Dundee, Perth and Stirling who would deliver locally to prevent excessive travelling. The following courses were advertised:

- a) Eldership Today. 8<sup>th</sup> February, St. Matthew's Church, Perth, 10.00 am – 4.00 pm.
- b) Pastoral and Bereavement visiting 22<sup>nd</sup> February, St. Matthews, 10.00 am – 4.00 pm.
- c) Being an Intergenerational Church 22<sup>nd</sup> March – provided by the Faith Action team.
- d) Leading Worship - *Dates 26<sup>th</sup> April, 10<sup>th</sup> May, 31<sup>st</sup> May St. Matthews, 10.00 am – 4.00 pm.*

**Training courses** - The Leading Worship course, scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> October, 9<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November had only two applicants so was cancelled and would be rescheduled for a future date. The Eldership and Pastoral and Bereavement Care course would be held at a venue in Perth to be advised.

## **CHURCH IN COMMUNITY –**

The Convener, Marjorie Clark, presented the report.

**CareSound** Radio – The Committee congratulated CareSound Radio which had been awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service.

**Moderator's Challenge** – Marjorie thanked churches within the Presbytery who had already responded to the Moderator's Challenge "Let your little light shine", aimed at providing lamps and solar panels to enable students in Malawi (at primary schools and at college) to continue their studies after daylight fades. She noted that some collections at Christmas services had been earmarked for this appeal, which would run until May 2025.

**Support for Zambia** – The committee had been contacted by the congregation of Houston and Killellan in Renfrewshire, who had devised an enterprising fund-raising scheme to raise £11,000 to support Mission partners Ida and Keith Waddell with the challenges they faced at Mwandini in Zambia.

**Heart and Soul Swing** Band - The Heart and Soul Swing Band were congratulated for raising £40,000 over the last 11 years through their concerts in churches around the country. A decision had now been taken to discontinue the HIV Programme (launched in 2002, for a 3-

year term). The Heart and Soul Swing Band would raise money for Christian Aid (which was celebrating its 80th birthday.)

**Net Zero** – Marjorie commended the excellent resources to be found on the website to help churches on the pathway to Net Zero.

**Slavery** - The Church of Scotland, through the General Assembly, had committed to explore the legacy of slavery, and the extent of the Church of Scotland's historical involvement in the transatlantic slave trade. Last year's Moderator Very Rev Dr Sally Foster-Fulton visited Jamaica to explore that legacy. Faith Action had been instructed to prepare a draft apology, and wished to involve the whole church. The Racial Justice Group, along with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group, was engaged with Presbyteries and churches. There would be two open sessions, to which members would be invited: January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7 – 9p.m., and February 5<sup>th</sup> 1 -3p.m.) Members of Presbytery were asked to share this with their congregations, and encouraged all members to be involved.

**Interfaith service** – The Rev Peter Gill had produced a detailed report of the Interfaith service he initiated in Balfron Parish Church in November 2024. Representatives from the diverse religious communities in Scotland attended the Christian service, and at the meal afterwards there had been opportunities to hear from the Muslim, Jewish and Hindu communities, and hear about the challenges they faced. It was hoped that such an occasion could be repeated in 2025.

## **FINANCE AND STEWARDSHIP**

The Convener, the Rev Prof Lesley Stanley, presented the report.

Since the last Presbytery meeting, Liz Kidd, the former Finance and Stewardship Convener, and Lesley Stanley had undertaken a phased handover of responsibilities. Lesley conveyed Presbytery's thanks to Liz for all her hard work in establishing the committee on a firm footing. Lesley has now taken up the full responsibilities of Finance and Stewardship Convener. For matters relating to this role she may be contacted via the email address [finance\\_convener\\_perth@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:finance_convener_perth@churchofscotland.org.uk).

The Finance and Stewardship Committee sought new members. This was a great opportunity to contribute to the development of Presbytery's financial strategy and stewardship activities. Membership did not require professional financial experience; simply numerate common sense. Those interested in serving the committee were asked to contact the Convener by email.

Oversight of the Attestation of financial records continued to be one of the Committee's responsibilities. A working group was being established to carry out Attestation. Volunteers did not have to be members of Presbytery and no specialist expertise was required, although

familiarity with spreadsheets would be helpful. Training would be provided. Those interested should contact the Convener or Depute Clerk.

The Committee was working to develop a directory of funding bodies that might be willing to support projects being undertaken by Church of Scotland congregations. A preliminary list had been produced and would be enhanced with additional details of each funding body.

## **CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT COMMITTEE**

The Convener, Margaret McVean, presented the report.

The committee was grateful to all the congregations which participated in Local Church Reviews and would begin a new process for 2025/26.

Local Church Reviews had taken place of the following congregations:

Auchterarder  
Bridge of Allan  
Dundee: Logie and St John's Cross  
Dundee: Stobswell Trinity  
Glens and Kirriemuir  
Isla Parishes  
Oathlaw and Tannadice  
St Madoes and Kinfauns  
Stirling: Park Church

There followed a visual presentation of 'Good News' stories from St Madoes and Kinfauns, presented by the Rev Marc Bircham, Stirling: Park Church, presented by Dr Peter Murdoch and Dundee: Stobswell Trinity, presented by the Rev Dr Jean Kirkwood.

The Presbytery Clerk reminded Presbytery that it wasn't necessary to have to undergo an LCR in order to produce a Five Year Plan. All congregations can do this and were encouraged to consider it.