SUMMARY OF PRESBYTERY MEETING, JUNE 10th 2025

The Presbytery of Perth met at Perth: St Matthew's on Tuesday 10th June 2025

INSTALLATION OF THE MODERATOR FOR 2025-2026

The Presbytery confirmed its decision to appoint the Rev Drew Barrie as Moderator for 2025/26 and, after prayer, he assumed the office of Moderator. The new Moderator thanked the Rev Alan Reid for his distinguished service as Moderator. Despite managing a parish undergoing union, he dedicated countless hours to inductions, linkages, and unions, alongside behind-the-scenes responsibilities. His commitment had been invaluable, and the Presbytery deeply appreciated his service as Moderator throughout the year. The Moderator said he was grateful to members of Presbytery for their support and encouragement as he assumed the role.

INTIMATIONS

- The Clerk announced a Digital Doors Open Event: Helping Your Church Build a Welcoming Website to be held on Wednesday 25th June at Perth: Riverside Church from 11am until 12.30pm.
- The Very Rev Albert Bogle intimated that Daily worship was broadcast every day on the Sanctuary First website. Booklets were available for collection at the main entrance of St Matthew's Parish Church.

TRIBUTES TO DECEASED MINISTERS

The Moderator gave thanks for the life and witness of those who had died recently and upheld them in prayer: Rev James Powrie, Rev Ray Gaston and the Rev Robert Ramsay.

VACANCY PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

- The new Call, Election and Appointment of Ministers of Word and Sacrament came into effect on June 1st 2026. There were no major changes. The setting up of the new Vacancy Procedure Committee and the creation of a pool of people for the Advisory Panel would be implemented over the summer.
- The Vacancy Allowance (whereby Giving to Grow costs were reduced to cover the costs of employing a Locum) was ended at the end of 2025 and from January, congregations would receive an allowance to cover Locum and Pulpit Supply costs only if they have employed a Locum. From January 2026, a congregation would only be considered to be vacant when permission to call has been granted. While in some cases, especially if no adjustment was in involved, this may be granted fairly quickly, in many other cases, a congregation could be vacant (under the present definition) for months or even years. This meant that if a congregation wished to employ a Locum prior to being granted Permission to Call, they would require to do so without any support from the central Church. This could have serious financial consequences for many congregations.
- It was noted that a letter had been received from the Rev Carleen Robertson seeking permission to demit from Strathmore Parish Church on August 31st 2025

and Presbytery granted permission for the demission to take place. Carleen said that it had been a privilege to serve as Parish Minister and she had made many friends over her 33 years. The Rev John Duncan will be appointed as Interim Moderator in August.

- It was noted that a letter had been received from the Rev Linda Stewart seeking permission to demit from Kirkmichael, Straloch and Glenshee linked with Rattray on July 2025 and Presbytery granted permission for the demission to take place.
- The Moderator thanked Carleen and Linda for their many years of service.
- The Rev Andrew Gardner had been elected as Minister B at Broughty Ferry Parish Church, to work alongside the Rev Lorna Tunstall in a Team Ministry. Andrew was thanked for his work as Interim Minister at St Blane's linked with Lecropt. The Rev Jim McNeil was appointed as Interim Moderator at St Blane's linked with Lecropt.
- The Rev Emma McDonald, Pioneer Minister in Dundee, had been elected as minister of Peterculter Parish Church, Aberdeen and she was thanked her for her services as a Pioneer Minister.
- The Clerk intimated that the Very Rev Dr Martin Fair had been appointed Minister Elect at Christ Church, Warwick, Bermuda.

REPORT FROM THE PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATIVE ON THE FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM –

The Rev Dave Rankin highlighted the following:

Following the General Assembly, the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team met in Edinburgh on 2nd June to discuss new work, governance feedback, and priorities from the Vivid Vision. Short-term focus groups were considered to support existing programme groups, covering topics like church culture, ministry relationships, and evangelism. The Church was shifting to a lead academic partner for ministerial training.

REPORT ON ANNUAL PRESBYTERY LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVES CONFERENCE

Margaret McVean reported that the Education Service of Stirling Council reported to the Children and Young Peoples' Committee, with a quiet year overall. Inspection reports had been positive, and members had engaged with headteachers. Plans were underway for new education provision east of Stirling. Religious Representatives focused on leisure activities, violence prevention, and counselling. The Education Representatives conference, co-hosted with Roman Catholic colleagues, included discussions on school improvement and Religious and Moral Education (RME). Concerns were raised about RME being overlooked due to attainment pressures. Margaret Conroy resigned as Presbytery Representative on Perth and Kinross Council, with thanks for her service. There followed a wide-ranging discussion. It was agreed that the Rev Stephen Miller would investigate the matters raised and report to a future meeting of Presbytery.

REPORTS ON THE 2025 GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

The three Youth Delegates presented a shared report on their experiences of the General Assembly.

They highlighted shared faith and experiences among young church members. While some were first-time commissioners, all engaged confidently in discussions. Sitting together in the gallery and hosting an evening session fostered connection. They emphasised the importance of modernising worship to attract young people, advocating for a blend of traditional and contemporary elements. They further stressed inter-church collaboration to support young adults and called for better communication about involvement opportunities. The report reinforced the need for an intergenerational church, active youth participation, and stronger church relationships to shape the future of the Church of Scotland.

Mr Douglas Gow also presented a report. He had attended the General Assembly for the second time and felt better prepared, though overwhelmed by the late release of documents. The Pre-Assembly Presbytery meeting in Perth had been invaluable. The Assembly had been well run, though key debates felt rushed. Church closures, unions, and linkages received less discussion than expected. The interactive Faith Action Programme Leadership Team session had been engaging but needed more time. Debates like assisted dying could have benefited from reflection breaks. Shorter Assembly sessions from 2026 would demand prioritisation. The Moderator, the Right Rev Rosemary Frew, conducted proceedings with grace, though a longer term could improve efficiency. Ecumenical relations with the United Reformed Church had progressed. Budget cuts had impacted Life and Work and CrossReach. Despite challenges, the Assembly had been informative and engaging.

The full reports are contained as an Appendix.

GUILD REPORT

Christina Paterson, National convener of the Stirling and Clackmannanshire Guilds Together submitted her final report. The Church of Scotland Guild had restructured into Central Guilds Together and Angus & Tayside Guilds Together, officially formed on 1st June 2025. The Guild's new strategy, "Let Us Build a House," emphasised faith and mission over physical buildings. Four new project partnerships supported Christian communities, vulnerable families, and children's welfare in Scotland, Egypt, and Bulgaria. Over £50,000 had been raised since January. The Guild continued its strong relationship with Malawi, supporting environmental and educational projects. Despite church unions and closures, the Guild remained committed to serving communities through faith. The young adult Guild, LIFT, held its first in-person event to engage members aged 18-40.

SAFEGUARDING

- The Rev Emma McDonald thanked Session Clerks for their diligence in returning the requested SG07 and SG11 forms. These would allow specific targeting of training courses. A number of congregations were still to supply these forms and would be pursued. Since April 2025, 8 training courses had been attended by a total of 165 people. Recruitment of new Trainers continued, and those willing to serve were encouraged to contact: safeperth@churchofscotland.org.uk
- **Information on the Safeguarding Learning Pathway could be found at:** https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/departments/safeguarding-

service/training where online courses could be booked. Courses arranged by the Perth Safeguarding team were advertised in the weekly Friday Roundup.

- The Presbytery Safeguarding Register continued to be updated. Completed training courses, whether undertaken by OLM's, MDS, IM's Ministers or Locums should be reported to Mairi at safeperth@churchofscotland.org.uk with the level of training completed, together with the name and congregation and role of the person concerned.
- PVG'S require to be renewed every 5 years. If 5 years had elapsed since the PVG was issued, the person concerned should contact their congregational co-ordinator who would advise the next steps. Updated guidance re regulated roles which require a PVG had been sent out to congregations. It was an important update which congregations must observe. It would be a criminal offence for someone to continue in a role without a PVG. All those visiting in care homes or leading or part of worship group going into care homes required a PVG.

BUSINESS COMMITTEE

- The Committee was delighted to report the appointment of Mrs Vic Olu-Audu as our new Finance Officer who would be employed for 4 days per week. This would be reviewed in six months to ensure that it was adequate time for the work required. It had been agreed that Mrs Olu-Audu would also be the Presbytery Treasurer. Presbytery was indebted to Mr Martin Dunsmore who stepped in as Treasurer pro-tem until a new appointment could be made.
- Earlier in the year Staff Appraisals were carried out for all our paid staff (except for those recently appointed.) There were two recurring themes in these reviews: the workload that each carried, and the value of that work to the Presbytery.
- The Presbytery team of chaplains had provided invaluable support to Ministers and others, and the Rev Ian McDonald had been appointed to replace the Rev Carleen Robertson who had resigned as a chaplain due to her impending retirement.
- Presbytery agreed to change Standing Orders and add an extra Ordinary meeting of Presbytery on the first Thursday in May.
- Members of Presbytery had received an email explaining new legislation concerning Trustees of Charities. All Trustees were required by law to submit the details listed in the email (and associated ChurchDesk Form.) An exemption could be requested, for but only on the grounds of personal safety and security of a Trustee. The information would be held by the Presbytery and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and a publicly available list could be obtained from OSCR but that list would only contain the names of Trustees and not contact details. Likewise, when Presbytery accounts were prepared they would list the names of Trustees but no other details. If an exemption had been granted these names would be removed from public documents. It was the responsibility of individual members who sought an exemption to apply for that themselves. This exercise related only to Presbytery. Each Kirk Session was required to do the same for their own Trustees.
- The Moderator of the General Assembly, the Right Rev Rosie Frew, would be visiting the Presbytery of Perth. Two separate 5-day visits were being planned – October 1st.-5th 2025 & March 25th-29th 2026.The sub-committee appointed to plan the visit had

begun drafting a programme. The committee sought to consider the requests made by congregations though it may not be possible to fit in every request. A detailed programme would be published when it was finalised.

- Amendments to the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act 8, 2021) agreed by the General Assembly would have significant consequences for congregations from 2026. Should a congregation be assessed to be insolvent, a process would be implemented which could lead to the ministerial pastoral tie being severed. The Finance Committee were invited to look into this new legislation and assist congregations with any concerns or questions they may have.
- The Aberfoyle Church mission plan encouraged closer working together of Aberfoyle and St Mary's Episcopal Church. There was a tradition of good relations between the two churches. Aberfoyle was currently in Guardianship with the long-standing linkage with Port of Menteith severed in May 2024. In January 2024, monthly joint services started on the first Sunday of the month with the location alternating. All these services have been taken by the Rector of St Mary's, Rev Jon Connell, and been well received by both congregations. Jon is also responsible for St Andrew's in Callander. At a meeting on Sunday May 18th, the congregation of Aberfoyle voted unanimously to approve the setting up of this Ecumenical Partnership. Presbytery agreed this proposal in principle and granted powers to the Business Committee to approve the written agreement between the two congregations in order to allow this arrangement to begin.

FINANCE AND STEWARDSHIP

- Under normal circumstances the 2024 accounts would have been presented to Presbytery for its approval at this meeting. The timing of the Finance Officer vacancy and the need to reconfigure the 2023 accounts (which were unusually complicated due to the need to capture the union of the five former Presbyteries) had precluded this; however, the accounts were now in the final stages of preparation and would be presented to Presbytery for its approval as soon as possible.
- The subject of Presbytery Funds and Bursaries had recently been under discussion by both the Ministries Committee and the F&S Committee. The F&S Convener was working with the Depute Clerk to review each of the funds – and associated bank accounts and investments – the new Presbytery of Perth inherited from its predecessors so that payments may recommence. The aim was to complete this process before the next Presbytery meeting.

CHURCH IN COMMUNITY

- Crossreach had failed to secure Scottish Government funding for Prison Visitors Centres at HMP Perth and HMP/YOI Polmont, disappointing the Presbytery. The government sought an alternative funder, recognising their value. Presbytery had engaged with both parties and awaited the outcome. They thanked Crossreach for years of support, offered prayers for staff facing uncertainty, and reaffirmed an ongoing commitment to the Centres despite the severed link, ensuring continued Presbytery support.

- The UK Parliament's Act increasing National Insurance Contributions posed a major challenge to the Care sector, potentially forcing some providers to reduce services or withdraw entirely. Despite lobbying efforts, local MPs opposed the Bill, but it was passed. Churches played a crucial role in addressing loneliness and isolation, and those already supporting communities through lunch clubs, drop-in centres, and dementia cafés were recognised and commended for their valuable contributions in helping vulnerable individuals.
- The committee continued to pray for a just peace in Israel and Gaza, where ongoing violence caused immense suffering. Members of Presbytery were urged to petition politicians and Government to do more than condemn these actions, and encourage meaningful and concrete action to bring pressure to bear on the current Israeli Government and to urge the release of hostages. A practical way to show solidarity was in supporting the Church of Scotland Stamp Appeal, (https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/stamps) benefiting the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, run by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.
- The Assembly Trustees had agreed to end the lease at the shop owned by the Church of Scotland at 123 George Street. The premises had been rented by an organisation seeking to support Palestinian farmers, craftsmen and other workers. Presbytery agreed that this decision should be reversed and was concerned that it had not been brought to the General Assembly.

PLANNING

- In accordance with the decision of the General Assembly 2025 that from 1st June, all future charges become reviewable at point of vacancy, the Planning Committee asked that Presbytery note that this would be the case for all future vacancies. Where charges were already in the process of Adjustment, Presbyteries had been given until December 2025 to effect the proposed Adjustment with Unrestricted Tenure.
- St Leonard's in the Fields and Craigie and Moncrieffe Church voted on a Basis of Union on Sunday March 30th 2025. While Craigie and Moncrieffe approved the Basis of Union, St Leonard's rejected it, with only four members voting in favour. The committee considered bringing this to Presbytery for its consideration, but decided that it would take a fresh look at the centre of Perth, taking in St Matthew's, St John's, St Leonard's in the Fields, Perth North, Craigie & Moncrieffe and Kinnoull. As a first step, the Planning Committee would hold a joint Kirk Session meeting for these Perth congregations to discuss a way forward. This was scheduled for Sunday 22nd June 2025.

MISSION

- The Rev Mairi Perkins continued to make good progress developing her work in this area. Her initial emphasis had been on networking. This had involved meeting with individuals and congregations expressing an interest; meeting with Bishop Iain, from the Episcopal Church to share what the initiative is about. She had also started to gather relevant resources which she was developing with the intention having this available for the wider presbytery.

- On Bertha Park, the Convener thanked the congregation of Perth: Riverside for their support in establishing the work. Craigie and Moncrieffe Church had agreed to become the Supervising Congregation, with Perth North Church becoming a Sponsoring Congregation. A new Core Leadership Team, chaired by the Presbytery Clerk, had met and would be providing oversight and guidance to Rev Anne Stott and her team of volunteers. It was hoped that over the coming months, more local people would become part of the group supporting this work.
- InTogether had a significant period of growth, launching a monthly coffee and chat, welcoming five new families through FunTogether, and hosting a successful parent Retreat for families with additional support needs. The retreat, attended by 24 parents, provided space for prayer and wellbeing, inspiring at least one to explore Christianity further. Perth North Church and Perth Presbytery signed InTogether's official covenant, and discernment was underway for the next FunTogether location, requiring a new team of volunteers.
- In February, two webinars introduced congregations to the Growing Young Cohort. Attendees heard from Graham Duffin, who had led the initiative in Scotland for five years, as well as Churches and coaches involved. Around thirty-five people participated. Congregations then formally expressed interest, and visits were made to Kirk Sessions to share further details. So far, five congregations had joined, two more have meetings scheduled, and two are deciding. Feedback had been highly positive, with excitement about the journey ahead. The first meeting would be on the 19th June, with conference sessions beginning in August/ September. Next steps include securing coaches and a venue.
- The Magnitude Initiative of SU Scotland would be held at Lendrick Muir from 19th – 23rd June. For further information please see https://magnitude.org.uk/2025
- A new report released by The Bible Society this Easter indicated that Church attendance in England and Wales had risen by 50 per cent over the last six years, setting aside the myth of Church decline. The findings came in *The Quiet Revival*, a survey commissioned by Bible Society and conducted by YouGov.from the Bible Society. (https://www.biblesociety.org.uk).

MINISTRIES

- Susan Morrison, an Elder in Perth: North, had been accepted as a Candidate in Training for the Diaconate following a discernment and assessment conference.
- Emma Whitham, a member at Kinnoull Parish Church, had been accepted as a candidate in training for the full time Ministry of Word and Sacrament, following a discernment and assessment conference.
- The committee wished to provide all ministers in their first five years with a mentor.
- Presbytery congratulated the Rev Daniel Spencer, an Assistant Minister in Dundee, on being elected as minister of Kingshill Parish Church in the Presbytery of the North East and the Northern Isles and the Rev Trish Archibald, an Assistant Minister based at Stirling North, on being elected to Gorgie and Palmerston Place Church in the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian.

PROPERTY

Presbytery approved the following major works, all subject to the approval of the General Trustees:

- Repairs to the roof and gables of Dunning Church at a cost of £84,087, noting that 50% of the funding was available, with the remainder to be obtained from grant funding.
- Alterations and improvements to the interior of Little Dunkeld Church at a cost of £590,000, noting that £213,000 was available from reserves, £250,000 from a building sale and the remainder from grant funding.
- The refurbishment and alterations to the Sanctuary and adjacent rooms of Tillicoultry Church, solar panels on hall roof and new disabled ramps at a total cost of £378,127, noting that £158,000 was available from reserves, with the remainder to be found from grant funding.
- Alterations and improvements to Murroes Church Hall at Monifieth South Angus Church at a cost of £788,950, noting that £470,000 was available from reserves, the remainder to be found from grant funding.
- Alterations and improvements to the interior of the Carnoustie Trinity building and new suite of toilets costing £809,378, noting that £471,000 was available from reserves, with the remainder to be found from grant funding.
- Alterations and improvements to the interior of Kingsgate Church, Dundee costing £460,644, noting that the congregation could fully fund this project.
- Essential works at the manse for St Matthew's, Perth at a cost of £70,000 and approved an application for funding from the General Trustees.

CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT

- The inspection of Congregational Records had taken place over the last few months. It had been noticed that a greater consistency was now being achieved over the Presbytery and the records inspected only raised a few minor issues. She thanked Session Clerks for submitting their records and also to all who helped in the inspections, in person or electronically.
- Records remained outstanding from 5 congregations, despite reminders being sent. Congregations in this category were instructed to comply.
- The General Assembly agreed that Local Church Reviews would no longer be undertaken and each congregation would be required to complete a Five-Year Mission Plan.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Presbytery of Perth would next meet for the conduct of ordinary business on Tuesday 9th September 2025 at 7.00pm at St Matthew's Parish Church, Perth.