

Summary of Presbytery Meeting

Saturday 7th February 2026

Business Committee

The Convener, the Rev Colin Renwick, thanked the Rev Fraser Penny for his hard work and outstanding service as the first-ever convener of the Business Committee of this Presbytery and express his gratitude to the Clerks for their great patience, wisdom and support.

Presbytery was pleased to welcome the Rev Hilary Beresford following her retirement from Kilwinning: Mansefield Trinity Parish Church. Hilary is now serving as Locum at Methven & Logiealmond linked with Almondbank & Tibbermore. The Rev Gordon Strang, lead Chaplain and head of Spiritual Care at NHS Grampian was also welcomed. Both signed the Formula, which has been revised following a decision by the General Assembly and the first sentence now reads: 'I believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith expressed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. I promise to be guided in my life and doctrine by the Book of Confessions of this Church.'

The Convener gave thanks for the life and service of the Rev William (Bill) Buchan, formerly Minister at Kilwinning Abbey, Rev Alastair McCormick, formerly Minister at Creich with Rosehill, and Marlyn Lawson, who served as Administrator within the legacy Presbytery of Dundee.

The Business Committee recognised the harm caused by the 2025 General Assembly's decision to withdraw the Vacancy Allowance from congregations not yet permitted to call a Minister and therefore not deemed 'vacant.' Although aimed at churches reluctant to engage in Mission Planning, the change also affected cooperative congregations now unable to fund locums or pulpit supply. The Presbytery Clerk had appealed on behalf of most of the congregations affected and these appeals had been upheld. However, the Committee still intended to bring an Overture to the 2026 Assembly to address these concerns going forward.

Commissioners were appointed to the 2026 General Assembly, which this year takes place from a Friday to Monday.

Vacancy Procedure Committee

A Call to Michael McMullin, Probationer, subscribed by 85 members, was received from the congregation of Blairgowrie and the Call was sustained subject to the manse being ready.

A Call to Rev Dráusio Gonçalves, currently minister of Dingwall: Castle Street, subscribed by 60 members with 12 papers of concurrence, was received from the congregation of Dundee: Northeast and this was sustained by Presbytery.

A Call to Alexander Johnson, Probationer, subscribed by 264 members with 37 papers of concurrence, was received from the congregation of Kinross-shire and this was sustained by Presbytery.

The union of Dollar and Muckhart to form East Hillfoots, having taken effect on 1st January 2026, and the Mission Plan proposing a deferred union with Tillicoultry, the Presbytery agreed that permission to Call be given and that a Nominating Committee of 13 be elected with 5 members from East Hillfoots and 6 members from Tillicoultry.

Planning Committee

The Presbytery Mission Plan had been updated and reviewed for 2025 and the Planning Committee thanked the congregations for all of their engagement during this last year. It was noted that, where dates for closure of category B buildings were concerned, the committee needed to follow the Presbytery Mission Plan Act which stated: - 'A Category B building should be sold, let or otherwise disposed of by a specified date within five years from the date the building is first classified as a B.

The Presbytery agreed a number of amendments to the Plan and it was then approved. The revised Plan will be issued to Kirk Sessions soon.'

The Presbytery welcomed the new Mission Plan Implementation Officer, Gayle Lennon and Gayle addressed Presbytery. Gayle is already undertaking the same role on a half time basis for Fife Presbytery.

Church in Community Committee

The future of the Perth Prison Visitors Centre was under discussion following Crossreach-led meetings. All involved wished the Centre's work to continue, but despite a planned £60,000 government grant application, an annual £50,000 shortfall remained. Greater local involvement was needed, with proposals including more volunteers, prayer support, financial contributions, fundraising, forming a Friends group, and joining an advisory group.

With fewer than 100 days until the Scottish Parliament elections, churches were urged to host Hustings to explore justice and ethical issues. JPIT offered resources, guidance, and prayer points. Churches and communities were encouraged to engage candidates and participate fully in the democratic process for the benefit of all citizens.

Protests outside hotels housing asylum seekers in Dundee and Perth highlighted growing hostility toward immigrants. This raised vital questions about the church's role and whether its call to welcome the stranger was being heard. Dundee Law Parish Church offered a positive example through its Connections Café, providing English lessons, community, and support to

people from over 17 nations. Other congregations hosted refugee groups, support individuals, and joined peaceful counter-protests. Yet more can be done to challenge misinformation and reaffirm the biblical mandate to protect the vulnerable—especially as some protesters now carried crosses. Helpful resources are available at www.sfar.org.uk.

The Convener thanked those churches within the Presbytery who had hosted visits from our Mission partners, Keith and Ida Waddell: Bankfoot, Brechin, Callander, Cambusbarron, Crieff, Dunkeld, and Perth Prison all welcomed the Waddells and learned more about their work in Zambia. The committee wished Keith and Ida well, as they returned once more to their calling at Mwandi Mission.

Mission Committee

The Convener, the Rev Craig Dobney, presented the report which had previously been circulated. He encouraged those with a heart for mission to serve on the Mission Committee bringing gifts and enthusiasm to the team as they prayerfully sought God's will to discover missional opportunities in our Presbytery.

Following the sharing of missional activity during previous Presbytery meetings, the committee encouraged all congregations to consider sharing their stories. The Presbytery office issued a short Church Desk form to collect information on how congregations were connecting with the Five Marks of Mission. Ten congregations responded and a further seven were being approached. A Webinar would take place towards the end of February to enable congregations to share their Good News stories, discuss lessons learned and to help inspire other congregations in their missional projects.

The Rev Mairi Perkins had completed a highly successful first year of her newly renamed project, 'Same God, Different Boats'. The Mission Fund Committee had approved funding for the coming year, enabling Mairi and her team to further their work introducing adults and children with learning disabilities to the Good News of Jesus Christ. Congregations were encouraged to contact Mairi for support in becoming more inclusive and accessible communities for all of God's children.

Congregations were reminded that Sanctuary First provided a huge number of resources for Sunday worship, daily devotion, prayer, bible studies and more. The committee believed that every congregation should be able to hold bible studies, prayer groups and opportunities for discipleship. Further details were available from: www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk.

Congregations were encouraged to apply to the Presbytery Mission Fund for grants for missional projects subject to the following criteria:

The fund is intended to develop mission through new ways of being church, including: new worshipping communities, online worship, fresh expressions or pioneering initiatives. Proposals should conform to the Five Marks of Mission.

Awards are to be used with a revenue focus for:

- Activity, event, equipment or material costs
- Staffing or volunteer costs
- Training or development costs

Awards cannot be used for:

- Covering retrospective costs
- Making up shortfall in income.

The Mission Committee wished to enable under 40s networking and missional events to take place across the Presbytery. Congregations were asked to encourage their under 40s to contact the mission committee if they were interested in connecting with other under 40s and/or to join the Mission Committee under 40s sub-group using their gifts and talents to help shape Mission Strategy.

Ministries Committee

The Committee highlighted key findings from the recent Ministerial Wellbeing Survey conducted by Faith Action for the Church of Scotland. This first wave, comparable to similar Church of England surveys, showed closely aligned results and a strong response rate of over 60% of Ministers. It was noted that nearly one third reported signs of mild or clinical depression, while a similar proportion were not taking a weekly day off, and many were not using their full annual leave. The Committee stressed the need for the Church to ensure adequate rest and support. The full report offered deeper insight into wellbeing across different ministry contexts.

The Committee affirmed the accreditation of Eilidh Wynd from Stirling: Park as a Local Worship Leader in the Presbytery of Perth and was pleased to hear of the encouragement she had received from her Minister, Rev Attie van Wyk.

The Training Team would be offering three courses this year, each to be held in the Madoch Centre, St Madoes, from 9.45 am to 4 pm:

- (i) Eldership in the 21st Century – Saturday 28th March
- (ii) Pastoral & Bereavement Visiting – tba
- (iii) Leading Worship – April 25th, May 9th and May 30th at Bankfoot.

Details would be advertised in the weekly Presbytery Roundup with application and enquiries to: Alex Rae fourraes@btinternet.com

Progress was being made on expanding the Training Team with a view to having teams to serve the Presbytery based on the three cities of Dundee, Perth and Stirling. Numbers of volunteers had been identified to service the Perth and Stirling Teams to add to the existing Team which would focus on Dundee. It was anticipated that training courses would be run more locally in the future.

A link to a School Chaplaincy Questionnaire had been sent to all Ministers in Charges and Interim Moderators but was also intended for all involved in Chaplaincy. Ministers were invited to forward the form to those concerned.

Safeguarding Committee

In December 2025 the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service issued new guidance on regulated roles and the training pathways required. This was circulated to all congregational Safeguarding Co-ordinators.

An email had been sent on 19th November by the Presbytery Clerk outlining the course of action the Presbytery would be taking for those who had not completed the pathway. The deadline was extended again to the end of February 2026 for completion.

Available courses were listed in the weekly Presbytery Roundup Newsletter and additional courses were also on the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service:

<https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/departments/safeguarding-service/training>

On completion of any Safeguarding training course, it was essential that the Safeguarding Register be updated. Trainees should inform the Safeguarding Officer, Mairi Macleod of the date it was completed.

All Presbytery appointed ministers in regulated roles legally requiring PVG clearance must be on the Presbytery Safeguarding Register. The register recorded the PVG clearance date, Mandatory Safeguarding Learning Pathway completion dates, congregation (or other) and the role. Information could be transmitted to the Safeguarding Administrator using the link below:

Property Committee

Brechin and Farnell - The Kirk Session had applied for a grant of £50,000 from the General Trustees for a Feasibility Study of the Gardner Memorial Church in Brechin. The Study would look at removing pews, division of the sanctuary into multi-purpose areas, solar panels on the roof and battery storage, improvements to heating system, improved access to all areas of the building, improved toilets, kitchen and office space.

Muthill - The Kirk Session had applied to Presbytery to increase the size of the kitchen and install modern units, increase storage facilities in the building, increase and upgrade the toilet facilities for Church and Community users. They had funds held locally to pay for this work.

Bridge of Allan - The Kirk Session had applied to the Presbytery for permission to install solar panels on the south facing roofs of both halls and install battery storage. The Contractor is OPTAMA who would carry out the work. They had obtained a grant of £57,712 which must be spent by 31st March 2026 on the project otherwise they would lose it. They

also had received a donation of £20,000 for the project. This change in energy provision will save money as at present they paid £20,000 a year for electricity.

Finance and Stewardship Committee

The Presbytery agreed that application be made to OSCR to vary the terms of the Presbytery Bursary Funds so that these may in future be applied “to provide financial support for Candidates for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, Ordained Local Ministry, Diaconate and Readership in the Presbytery of Perth.”

It was also agreed to transfer all other legacy Fabric Funds to the General Fund and remitted to the Business Committee a decision on the setting up of an Emergency Fabric Fund for congregations unable to meet urgent costs.

It was agreed that the St Ninian’s and St George’s Fund should be used to fund safeguarding training.

Congregational Support Committee

The in-person inspections of congregational records would take place during week commencing the 16th March and at 5 separate locations. 15 congregations had not responded and were urged to do so as soon as possible.

Action Plans – The deadline for submission was 31st March 2026, unless a later date had been agreed.

Conference

The afternoon conference session focused on Presbytery Mission Planning with the title: ‘Filling the Holes, Catching the Wind and Steeping into the Weirdness of the Waves’.

The session was led by the Rev Neil Glover. Following an introduction which covered the history of Church restructuring, members of Presbytery divided into groups to consider a series of questions. Feedback was shared from all groups, and those present were invited to send further comments to the Rev Neil Glover by email.

A summary of the feedback is below:

- Mission and people, not buildings and structures, must be the visible priority.
- The long-term collapse of work with children and young people is seen as the deepest underlying crisis.
- There is significant grief, fatigue and demoralisation which needs to be acknowledged and pastored.
- Governance and compliance burdens are overwhelming many volunteers; practical Presbytery support here would be a major help.

- Presbytery is being asked to be more than an administrative body: to be a praying, equipping, encouraging community that models spiritual depth and appropriate risk-taking.

Date of Next Meeting

The Presbytery would next meet for the conduct of Ordinary Business on Thursday 7th May 2026 at 7.00pm at St Matthew's Parish Church and online.