

PRESBYTERY OF MELROSE AND PEEBLES

The Presbytery will meet **BY ZOOM** on Tuesday 3 November 2020 at **7pm** for Ordinary Business.
Victoria Linford, Clerk

HOW TO JOIN THE MEETING – ZOOM INVITATION:

Topic: Melrose and Peebles Presbytery Meeting

Time: Nov 3, 2020 07:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/93268312731?pwd=dUJoUHR6aHMwL0EyVCtrSitnUDdBUT09>

Meeting ID: 932 6831 2731

Passcode: 870926

Dial in number: 0131 460 1196

BUSINESS

1. Constitute
2. Sederunt and Apologies
3. Minute of meeting on 6 October 2020 (p116)
4. Order of Business
5. Business Committee
6. Vacancy Procedure Committee: Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn (p2)
7. Committee on Re-opening of Church Buildings (verbal report)
8. Presbytery Planning Implementation Group (pp3-4)
9. Standing Committee reports:
 - (a) Governance (verbal report)
 - (b) Mission and Service (verbal report and presentation)
 - (c) Property and Stewardship (pp5-6)
10. Intimations
11. Adjournment

Business Committee

1. Presbytery invites certain of its commissioners from the General Assembly 2020 to speak on their experience of the first online General Assembly.

Intimations

1. An updated Presbytery Yearbook is now available in electronic format.
2. Congregations are reminded that regularly updated information about Coronavirus rules and regulations can be found on the Church of Scotland website.
3. There is an opportunity for church members to serve on the various committees and agencies of the Church of Scotland; more information can be obtained from the Clerk, and applications must be made by 30 November 2020.

Report of the Vacancy Procedure Committee

November 2020

Further to the Presbytery decision of June 2020, that Innerleithen Traquair and Walkerburn be given the right to call a minister, the Committee (excluding Rev Miller Milloy as an interested party) agreed to a sole nominee for Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn preaching on 29 November 2020 under the interim procedures (due to the ongoing Covid restrictions) agreed by the Commission of Assembly meeting in July 2020.

It noted that, under Covid restrictions, the tenants in the Manse must be given six months' notice and therefore work on the Manse could not start until the tenants leave. It noted that arrangements are in place for the new minister, if elected, to start work from home before the Manse work.

Deliverance:

1. Presbytery receives the report.
2. Presbytery notes the decision of the Vacancy Procedure Committee that a sole nominee for Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn would preach on 29 November 2020 under the interim procedures agreed by the Commission of Assembly meeting in July 2020 due to the ongoing Covid restrictions.
3. Presbytery notes that arrangements are in place for the necessary work on the Manse to commence once the tenants leave the premises, and that the new minister, if elected, may be inducted to the charge before the work begins.

Melrose and Peebles Presbytery

Report from the Presbytery Plan Implementation Group 3 November 2020

Following the decision of the General Assembly on 3 October, the proposal from the Legal Questions Committee has been incorporated into the Appraisal and Adjustment Act. As individual working groups begin to consider the implications for them, a number of requests have been made to clarify some points of detail. The following identifies them and gives either further clarification or a recommendation. The intention is to ensure where possible we adopt a consistent approach across Presbytery.

Agreeing the use of the Protocol

It is unclear from the appendix as to whether the intention is for all Kirk Sessions to meet together or separately to agree the basis of adjustment and the procedure for use of the protocol. If numbers are small and Kirk Sessions are in agreement over meeting together then a combined meeting may well be appropriate. If numbers are large or Kirk Sessions prefer to meet separately then individual meetings should be held. Whichever approach is used the following require to be determined:

1. All sets of office bearers have voted in favour of the basis of adjustment;
2. It is agreed by all Kirk sessions that the protocol should be used for the congregational vote;
3. The Presbytery representative(s) agrees that the protocol should be used.
4. Agreement by each Kirk Session and the Presbytery representative on:
 - a. How the process for holding the congregational vote will be intimated – by email, letter, phone or hand-delivered. There may also be narrative to accompany the Basis of Adjustment. This may differ between different congregations;
 - b. To whom questions should be submitted;
 - c. How the Questions and Answers document will be prepared;
 - d. The form and mechanism for handling the vote particularly how verification of eligibility to vote is handled. It is recommended that the completed voting slips are sent to the Presbytery representative;
 - e. How the count will be undertaken and how the result will be intimated;
 - f. How the Presbytery report will be produced.

It may be that draft proposals have been prepared in advance to show how the above may be addressed and the Kirk Sessions are asked to approve the approach. The meeting or meetings will be convened by the Presbytery representative.

The Questions and Answers Document

The appendix is quite clear in that the Questions and Answers document should be prepared after those eligible to vote have had the opportunity to ask questions and the document addresses these. It is not recommended that this document is prepared in advance but reflects the questions asked. There may well be issues that it would be helpful to address and can be identified in advance. If this is the case it is recommended that an accompanying note be included with the Basis of Adjustment when the voting process is first intimated to the congregations.

De-linking and Linking

It has been noted that there are instances where a congregation is de-linking from one linkage and linking with another linkage or union. The mechanism for addressing this is not contained in the appendix. The recommendation from 121 is that the de-linking is referenced in the basis of linking and a separate congregational vote on the de-linking is not required as long as the Kirk Sessions have agreed to the de-linking.

Deliverance:

1. Presbytery receives the report;
2. Presbytery approves the recommendations mentioned in the report with regard to the protocol on congregational voting on an adjustment, namely:
 - a. Completed voting slips are sent to the Presbytery representative;
 - b. The Questions and Answers document references questions raised by the congregation subsequent to the initial intimation of the voting process;
 - c. An accompanying note may be sent out with the initial intimation addressing specific issues that may be raised;
 - d. No separate congregational vote is required for de-linking.

David Brackenridge
Convener

Property and Stewardship Committee

Report for Presbytery 3rd November 2020

Presbytery is asked to approve the Kirk Session of Channelkirk and Lauder's request to let out their manse. There is a family in Lauder who have sold their house and are looking to rent the manse while their new home is being built – the family is known and are regular attenders at Church.

If Presbytery so approves the Business Committee suggest that Presbytery creates a 'Good Ideas Fund' of £10,000 funded from the Ministry & Mission contributions (M&Ms) rebate remaining from 2019 and 2020. This would be available to draw down as small grants for individual congregations for outreach. With a maximum grant of £250/£500, payments can be quickly approved by the Property and Stewardship Committee and disbursed by the Treasurer without the delay of going through 121.

We are aware that there is great uncertainty as to the financial outturn for many congregations this year. The closure of churches has hit plate offerings and the closure of associated halls has pretty well eliminated rental income. Many congregations have only maintained their M&Ms by digging into reserves. We would like to encourage any Treasurers finding themselves in trouble with their church finances to contact this committee through the Convener, the Presbytery Treasurer or Presbytery Clerk, and Presbytery will do its best to provide advice and support. The 2021 M&Ms will be sent out to Treasurers when approved by Presbytery and we will repeat this offer to them directly.

Included with your Presbytery papers was a copy of the 2021 congregational M&Ms for the congregations in our Presbytery. The total amount approved by October's General Assembly from congregations was £38.172m, being an 18% reduction from 2020. This, together with stipend endowment income, covers the estimated stipend and salary cost of parish ministry including vacancy allowances. Forums (the old Ministries, Mission & Discipleship, World Mission and Church & Society Councils) are targeting a reduction of £4m against their 2020 budgets and the balance required, forecast at £8m, will be met from National Reserves. The review of the way that the M&Ms are calculated is ongoing and due to report to the General Assembly 2021. In an interim report the working party set out a number of principles to guide its thinking. Any new contribution system should aspire to be:

Fair
Transparent and easy to understand
Adaptable to changing circumstances
A driver of change
An incentive to mission
Effective

What it must not be is:

Unfair
Obscure or difficult to understand
Inflexible
An obstacle to change
A disincentive to mission
Ineffective

Deliverance:

1. Presbytery receives the Report.
2. Presbytery agrees to the charge of Channelkirk and Lauder letting their manse during their vacancy.
3. Presbytery approves the creation of a Presbytery 'Good Ideas Fund' of £10,000 from available M&M rebate, to be allocated in grants of up to £250/£500 to congregations or charges to support outreach.
4. Presbytery encourages Treasurers who are concerned over their church's financial position to contact any of, the Convener of this Committee, the Presbytery Treasurer or the Presbytery Clerk before a problem becomes too large. Presbytery will offer advice and help in any way it can.
5. Presbytery approves the congregational Ministry & Mission contributions and instructs that they be sent out to congregational Treasurers along with an offer of support from Presbytery.

28 October 2020