

PRESBYTERY OF MELROSE AND PEEBLES

The Presbytery will meet **BY ZOOM** on Tuesday 2 February 2021 at 7pm for Ordinary Business.

Victoria Linford, Clerk

BUSINESS

1. Constitute
2. Sederunt and Apologies
3. Minutes of meetings on 1 December 2020 and 5 January 2021 (pp118-119)
4. Order of Business
5. Presbytery Planning Implementation Group (pp2-7)
6. Basis of Linking – Eddleston, Peebles: Old and Stobo and Drumelzier (p8)
7. Business Committee
8. Vacancy Procedure Committee (p9)
9. Committee on Re-opening of Church Buildings
10. Standing Committee reports:
(a) Property and Stewardship (p10)
10. Intimations
11. Adjournment

Business Committee

1. Presbytery appoints the following commissioners to the General Assembly of 2021 (to be held online from Saturday 22 May to Thursday 27 May 2021): Rev Margaret Steele and Mrs Fan Heafield (Ashkirk and Selkirk); Rev Sheila Moir and [elder] (Channelkirk and Lauder and Earlston); Mr Fraser Edwards and [elder] (Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn); [minister and elder from Galashiels churches]; Very Rev David Arnott and [elder]; Very Rev Finlay Macdonald and [elder].
2. Presbytery thanks the Committee on the Re-opening of Church Buildings (Mr Keith Simpson, Convener, Rev Calum Macdougall and Mrs Fan Heafield), which was appointed in June 2020 for a period of six months, for their advice and support to congregations in the continuing Covid-19 situation. Presbytery agrees that the Committee will remain in existence until the end of 2021 and thanks the members of the Committee for being willing to continue.
3. Presbytery notes that, sadly due to ill health, Mr John Henderson is no longer able to administer the Presbytery website. Presbytery extends its warm appreciation to Mr Henderson for all his work on the website over a number of years and notes that the Assistant Clerk, Mr Peter Sandison, is currently administering the website.

Intimations

1. The Congregational Statistics forms have now been sent out to Session Clerks and should be returned to the Assistant Clerk as soon as reasonably possible.
2. Presbytery notes that the Principal Clerk is hosting a meeting on Presbytery reform to take place on 26 February 2021, involving representatives from the three Borders Presbyteries, Edinburgh Presbytery and Lothian Presbytery.
3. Lothian Presbytery has kindly shared with us their notes and video from a webinar held recently on Lent and Easter ideas and resources. The Clerk will circulate this to members of Presbytery.
4. Covid-19 Guidance for churches continues to be updated and placed on the homepage of the Church of Scotland website: www.churchofscotland.org.uk.

Melrose and Peebles Presbytery

Report from the Presbytery Planning Implementation Committee: February 2021

It is with much pleasure I present the report from the committee on the first congregational vote using the new protocol. This covers the new linking between Eddleston and Peebles: Old Parish and Stobo & Drumelzier and now leaves the way open for Presbytery to approve the Basis of Linking and then to the Presbytery Planning Task Group at 121 to concur with the approval.

After a lot of hard work by the committee and the various congregations we now have another five bases of adjustment being prepared for a congregational vote. These are listed here along with the timescale when they are likely to come before Presbytery for approval:

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Basis of Union for Maxton & Mertoun and Newtown and St Boswells | March |
| 2. Basis of Linking for Upper Tweeddale Parishes and Carlops,
Newlands & Kirkurd and West Linton | March |
| 3. Basis of Linking for Ashkirk and Selkirk and Ettrick & Yarrow | May |
| 4. Basis of Linking for Caddonfoot and Stow & Heriot | June |
| 5. Basis of Union for Galashiels Churches | June at the earliest |

The seventh basis of adjustment is still to be progressed.

Deliverance:

1. Presbytery receives the report of the Presbytery Planning Implementation Committee.
2. Presbytery also receives the report on the congregational vote on the Basis of Linking between Eddleston and Peebles: Old Parish and Stobo and Drumelzier (see below).
3. Presbytery approves the Basis of Linking between Eddleston and Peebles: Old Parish and Stobo and Drumelzier (agenda item 6).

David Brackenridge

Convener, Presbytery Plan Implementation Committee

Report from Presbytery Plan Implementation Committee: January 2021

Re - the parishes of Eddleston linked with Peebles Old and further linking with Stobo and Drumelzier.

Following the acceptance of the Radical Action Plan and the Presbytery Plan for Melrose and Peebles Presbytery the Kirk Sessions of Eddleston, Peebles: Old and Stobo and Drumelzier each met to consider forming a linking comprising all three congregations. Stobo and Drumelzier Kirk Sessions simultaneously considered delinking from the present Parishes of Upper Tweeddale (comprising Broughton, Glenholm, Kilbucho, with Skirling, with Stobo and Drumelzier, with Tweedsmuir).

Very positive discussions took place at all the three of the Kirk Sessions of Eddleston, Peebles: Old and Stobo and Drumelzier beginning with Session representatives on 23rd February 2020. From this first meeting it was clear that all three Kirk Sessions were keen to work together. The three Kirk Sessions agreed to this plan at separate and formal meetings chaired by Mrs Fan Heafield and minuted by Catriona Bird (PPIC representatives).

- The Eddleston Kirk Session Meeting to agree the new Basis of Linking took place on 17th November 2020 and was agreed unanimously.
- The Peebles Old Kirk Session Meeting to agree the new Basis of Linking took place on 18th November 2020 and was agreed unanimously.
- The Stobo and Drumelzier Kirk Session Meeting to agree the delinking from Tweedsmuir and Broughton, Glenholm & Kilbucho linked with Skirling and also agree the new Basis of Linking took place on 26th November 2020 and both were agreed unanimously.

Due to the restrictions of the current pandemic the General Assembly passed an amendment to the voting procedures to allow for this to take place remotely or by post (2nd & 3rd October 2020). This procedure has been followed rigorously.

The intended new linking was widely advertised within services, on the parish web site, church notice boards and in the parish magazine.

A copy of the Basis of Linking together with an explanatory note was sent to every member and adherent of the three parishes on the 27th November 2020. It was made clear that if they should have questions regarding this matter they should send it in writing to their own Session Clerk. None were received. The Voting Papers for the Basis of Linking were posted to all members and adherents of all three parishes together with a brief report answering the questions on the 18th December 2020. The return date for votes was 6th January 2021.

Voting papers were received by 9th January 2021 and collected by Fan Heafield. The delay was due to Christmas and the postal service.

Catriona Bird and Fan Heafield conducted a zoom count of the votes on 10th January ensuring that all votes were legitimate and marked off against the electoral register numbers.

Votes in agreement for the Linking of Eddleston and Peebles Old with Stobo and Drumelzier were:

Eddleston Parish = 42

Peebles Old = 186

Stobo and Drumelzier = 25

Total votes in agreement = 253

Votes against the Linking of Eddleston and Peebles Old with Stobo and Drumelzier were:

Eddleston Parish = 0

Peebles Old = 2

Stobo and Drumelzier = 1

Total votes against = 3

Voting slips deemed non-valid = 3

Total Votes cast = 256

Total replies received = 259

Electoral Roll numbers and % responses

Eddleston 93 listed therefore return of 42 voting papers = 45%

Peebles: Old 322 listed therefore return of 189 (including against and non-votes) = 58.69%

Stobo and Drumelzier 62 listed therefore return of 28 voting papers (including against and non-votes) = 45%

All votes have been counted and the result was announced in an open and transparent manner within services, on the parish web site, church notice boards and in the parish magazine.

This vote does not preclude opportunities to appeal this process as per Church of Scotland law. Such an appeal may be taken only upon one or more of the following legal grounds: (a) an error in Church law; (b) breach of the principles of natural justice or material irregularity of process; (c) decision influenced by incorrect material fact; and (d) the severity of any sanction imposed. The appeal can only be intimated at a Presbytery meeting by a member of Presbytery or by a Kirk Session where the Kirk Session has approved the raising of the appeal."

Therefore, the views of the congregations regarding Eddleston linked with Peebles Old to further link with Stobo and Drumelzier have been recorded. This matter will now be placed before the Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles.

My thanks go to the members of the Kirk Sessions at all three parishes, to Pamela Strachan and Calum Macdougall for their support and help throughout this process. I would also like to thank David Brackenridge for his unfailing advice and Catriona Bird for her multiple roles in seeing this procedure ran correctly.

Fan Heafield

Appendix 1: Covering letter with Voting slip

Please note that as there were no questions asked in response to the letter intimating the voting process and containing the Basis of Linking, there is no Questions and Answers document. The voting paper was identical for all three congregations with the exception of the Location.

17 December 2020

Dear Member/Adherent

Proposed new linking:Eddleston I/w Peebles:Old to be linked with Stobo and Drumelzier

At the end of November you were notified about the proposed new linking of our three parishes. As we have all been in linked charges since the 1970s, this is familiar territory and should not present any problems. The Basis of Linking which has been agreed by all Kirk Sessions, specified the proposed service times for worship and set out how shared expenses would be apportioned. We have now had a 14-day period of notice in which any questions could be raised by members of the three congregations, but as of 15 December nothing was raised for further clarification.

The ballot paper is now enclosed on which you are invited to signify whether or not you are in favour of the proposed linking and we would be grateful if this could be returned by 6 January 2021. A franked return envelope is enclosed. The ballot papers will be opened and counted by Presbytery representatives and a Report prepared to go to Presbytery for its meeting on 2 February. There are two further opportunities at Presbytery meetings for appeals to be heard should they arise.

We believe this is an exciting new chapter in the life of the evolving Church and look forward to the time when we are given permission to call a new minister to serve in the newly linked charge.

Thank you for taking part in this vital process. May I wish you all a blessed and peaceful Christmas.

Revd Pamela Strachan

Interim Moderator

Eddleston I/w Peebles: Old



PRESBYTERY OF MELROSE AND PEEBLES

VOTING Form

Basis of Linking

LOCATION: STOBO & DRUMELZIER

Registered Member /adherent: - Number.....

The parishes of Eddleston linked with Peebles:Old seek your vote to link further with Stobo and Drumelzier.

We will retain one full time Minister with additional parish support. Please refer to the Basis of Linking form and Introduction you received earlier.

This vote does not preclude your further opportunities to appeal this process as per Church of Scotland law.

We have included a pre-addressed envelope for you to use to return your vote.

Please put a cross in the statement reflecting your view.

I **agree** with the Basis of Linking for Eddleston linked with Peebles:Old linked with Stobo and Drumelzier.

I **do not agree** with the Linking for Eddleston linked with Peebles:Old linked with Stobo and Drumelzier.

BASIS OF LINKING [DRAFT]

The linking between the congregations of Stobo and Drumelzier and the congregations of the Parishes of Upper Tweeddale shall be severed in order to facilitate the linking of Stobo and Drumelzier to the congregations of Eddleston l/w Peebles: Old, the severance to take place at the same date as the new linking is made.

The congregations of Eddleston (SCO10081), Peebles: Old (SCO13316) and Stobo and Drumelzier (SCO01866) shall be linked as from the.... day of, and that on the following terms and conditions:

1. **Transference of Property and Funds:** The property and funds belonging to or held on behalf of each congregation shall remain the property and funds of each congregation as at present.
2. **Places of Worship:** All churches at present used and occupied by the congregations shall be the places of worship of the linked congregations. Services shall be conducted in
Eddleston Parish Church at 11.30am and in
Peebles Old Parish Church at 10am and in
Stobo Kirk at 11.30am each Sunday
and at Drumelzier Kirk on occasion
or all services at times to be decided by the minister and the Kirk Sessions, subject to the approval of the Presbytery. The minister will have the support of trained lay worship leaders from the congregation of Stobo and Drumelzier to enable simultaneous services to be held at 11.30am each Sunday.
3. **Territorial Responsibility:** The bounds to be served by the linked charge shall be the bounds of the three parishes or as the Presbytery shall determine.
4. **Kirk Session:** The Minister of the linked charge shall be the Moderator of each Kirk Session. The Kirk Sessions may meet together, as they deem it desirable.
5. **Congregational Management:** The temporal affairs of each congregation, all of which have Unitary Constitutions, shall be administered as at present. The office-bearers of the congregations shall meet annually to decide on their portion of the contribution to stipend and related expenses, listed expenses and maintenance of the manse, as may be agreed from time to time by the office-bearers and subject to the approval of the Presbytery. The initial apportionment will be as follows: Eddleston 12%, Peebles: Old 73% and Stobo and Drumelzier 15%.
6. **Minister:** All charges being vacant the linked charges shall proceed to the Election of a minister.
7. **Manse:** The manse of Peebles Old Parish Church shall be the manse of the linked congregations.
8. **Ministerial Support:**
The stipend of the minister shall be payable in terms of the National Stipend Scheme.
9. **Power to Readjust:** While these articles and terms shall form the Basis of Linking for the congregations now linking, the linked congregations shall be free like other congregations, to adjust arrangements under the authority of Presbytery as need may arise.

Report of the Vacancy Procedure Committee: February 2021

Further to the Presbytery decision of 5th January 2021 giving the VPC powers to make alternative arrangements should a service of ordination and induction for Mr Fraser Edwards to the charge of Innerleithen Traquair and Walkerburn (ITW) not be possible, the VPC noted that the Government had confirmed that no ordinations were possible under the current Covid restrictions. It noted that because of an arrangement put in place through the Faith Nurture Forum, Fraser will begin his ministry at ITW on Thursday 28 January 2021. An online Service of Welcome for Fraser took place through Zoom on 28 January at 7pm, to which all members of Presbytery, along with the congregation of ITW and friends and family of Fraser, were invited. A service of Ordination and Induction will take place when possible.

The Vacancy Procedure Committee has appointed an Advisory Committee for Eddleston, Peebles: Old, and Stobo and Drumelzier, to come into effect when the linking process is complete. Its membership is the Rev Miller Milloy, Prof Murray Campbell and Mrs Julia Stoddart.

Deliverance:

1. Presbytery receives the report.
2. Presbytery notes that a Service of Welcome to mark the appointment of Mr Fraser Edwards as minister of Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn was held on 28 January 2021, and that a Service of Ordination and Induction will take place on a separate occasion.
3. Presbytery notes the appointment of Rev Miller Milloy, Prof Murray Campbell and Mrs Julia Stoddart as the Advisory Committee for Eddleston, Peebles: Old, and Stobo and Drumelzier, to come into effect when the linking process is complete.

**Property and Stewardship Committee
Report for Presbytery - 2 February 2021**

In the absence of the Convener of the Property and Stewardship Committee, an application for M&M Rebate was considered by the Presbytery Business Committee. The proposed cluster of Ashkirk, Ettrick & Yarrow and Selkirk Churches sought additional pastoral support equal to 0.25% FTE to support the Minister in providing pastoral coverage to both the town of Selkirk and the geographically challenging parishes of the valleys. The Business Committee agreed to commend this proposal to Presbytery.

Here is also a brief reminder of the Good Ideas Fund offering small grants of up to £500 for outreach in these tricky times. There is no limit on the number of applications that can be made by any one charge so long as they are judged as good ones.

Deliverance:

1. Presbytery receives the Report.
2. Presbytery approves a rebate of £8,100 in total to the proposed linking of Ashkirk, Ettrick & Yarrow and Selkirk Churches to fund a part-time pastoral worker for the initial period of one year, the rebate to be apportioned as follows:
 - a. Ashkirk £745.20
 - b. Ettrick & Yarrow £3045.60
 - c. Selkirk £4,309.20.

28th January 2021

1 DECEMBER 2020. On Tuesday the first day of December 2020, the Presbytery met by ZOOM at 7pm for Ordinary Business, and the Moderator constituted the meeting in prayer.

SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES: There were present 8 ministers and 28 elders whose names were recorded by the Clerk in the attendance book. The names of corresponding members in attendance were also recorded, as were apologies.

MINUTES: The minute of the meeting of 3 November 2020 was submitted and approved as circulated.

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES: Rev Margaret Steele, Training and Supervision Co-ordinator, presented Mrs Pamela Kennedy and Mr Tim Linford, Candidates for the national ordained Ministry of Word and Sacrament. Mrs Kennedy and Mr Linford each gave a brief description of the highlights and challenges of their training in the past year, particularly during the ongoing Covid situation. On behalf of Presbytery, the Moderator wished them both well in their ministry training.

ORDER OF BUSINESS: The order of business was approved as circulated.

BUSINESS COMMITTEE: Prof Murray Campbell, Convener, presented the report of the Business Committee. Presbytery received the report. Presbytery approved the rota for the initial selection of commissioners to the General Assembly of 2021 and following years, noting that this may be affected by future Presbytery planning and reform. Presbytery remitted to the Business Committee the task of appointing commissioners to the General Assembly of 2021, to be completed by the end of January 2021.

COMMITTEE ON THE RE-OPENING OF CHURCH BUILDINGS: Mr Keith Simpson, Convener, presented the report of the Committee on the Re-opening of Church Buildings. Mr Simpson explained that a further three congregations have been given permission to re-open buildings for worship services or private prayer, with a further application being considered.

PRESBYTERY PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION GROUP: Mr David Brackenridge, Convener, presented the report of the Presbytery Planning Implementation Group. Presbytery received the report. Mr Brackenridge reported that there had been substantial progress on almost all of the adjustments to be implemented under the Presbytery Plan, and it was likely that some of these would come before Presbytery in February 2021.

PROPERTY AND STEWARDSHIP: Mrs Isobel Hunter, Convener, presented the report of the Property and Stewardship Committee. Presbytery received the report.

1. Presbytery encouraged Congregations to share with Presbytery their 2020 experiences in dealing with their finances.
2. Presbytery approved the formation of a sub-committee under the Property and Stewardship Committee to administer the Good Ideas Fund; the sub-committee may award grants and these will be reported to the next meeting of Presbytery.
3. Presbytery approved the following grants from the Good Ideas Fund:
 - a. £500 to Selkirk Parish Church to help them towards restarting their Open Door project with a meal delivery service;
 - b. Around £450 to St John's Galashiels to enable them to provide a home delivery of afternoon tea and a devotional book to isolated parishioners;
 - c. £250 to the Parishes of Upper Tweeddale towards their drive-in Christmas Concerts;
 - d. £500 to St Andrews Leckie, Peebles, to support their youth worker bringing around 20 young people together in a safe socially-distanced way at Broomlee Outdoor Education Centre in West Linton.

INTIMATIONS:

1. Meeting of the Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles World Mission Congregational Representatives: by Zoom on Sunday 6 December 2020 at 2.00 pm.
2. Edinburgh University School of Divinity: Introduction to Pioneer Ministry and Church Planting – a flyer with details of this course is available from the Clerk.
3. The Presbytery Prayer Diary for December/January/February has been sent out to Presbytery members.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the Presbytery adjourned to meet for Ordinary Business on Tuesday 2 February 2021 at 7pm by Zoom, of which public intimation was made, and the *sederunt* was closed with prayer.

Moderator

Clerk

5 JANUARY 2021. On Tuesday the fifth day of January 2021, the Presbytery met by ZOOM at 7pm *pro re nata* concerning the appointment of the new minister of Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn, and the Moderator constituted the meeting in prayer.

SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES: There were present 9 ministers and 19 elders whose names were recorded by the Clerk in the attendance book. Apologies were also recorded.

ORDER OF BUSINESS: The calling of the meeting and the order of business was approved.

VACANCY PROCEDURE COMMITTEE: Rev Margaret Steele, Convener, presented the report of the Vacancy Procedure Committee. Presbytery received the report. All relevant processes having been followed and the necessary documents submitted to the Clerk, Presbytery noted with approval that the Vacancy Procedure Committee had decided to sustain the call to Mr Fraser Edwards to be the minister of Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn. Presbytery also noted the proposed arrangements for the service of Ordination and Induction on Thursday 28 January 2021 at 7pm with Presbytery meeting at 6.45pm on that day, in Innerleithen Parish Church and by live-streaming in accordance with the temporary vacancy protocol adopted by the Church of Scotland in July 2020, subject to the Covid legislation in place at the time. Should the service be unable to take place as planned, Presbytery agreed that the Vacancy Procedure Committee should make alternative arrangements in order to allow Mr Edwards to take up his role as minister at Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn as soon as possible.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the Presbytery adjourned to meet in connection with the service of Ordination and Induction of Mr Fraser Edwards on 28 January 2021 at 6.45pm (if such a service is possible under the Covid restrictions) and for Ordinary Business on Tuesday 2 February 2021 at 7pm by Zoom, of which public intimation was made, and the *sederunt* was closed with prayer.

Moderator

Clerk