

## PRESBYTERY OF MELROSE AND PEEBLES

The Presbytery will meet **BY ZOOM** on Tuesday 22 June 2021 at 7pm for Ordinary Business.

Victoria Linford, Clerk

### BUSINESS

1. Constitute
2. Sederunt and Apologies
3. Election of Moderator
4. Minutes of meetings on 4 May and 28 May 2021 (pp124-125)
5. Welcome to New Member – Rev Scott Guy
6. Order of Business
7. General Assembly 2021: (for a summary of the main business, see the Life and Work Special Supplement: <https://www.lifeandwork.org/resources/general-assembly-2021-special-supplement>)
  - (a) brief presentation by Commissioner
  - (b) breakout rooms for discussion
8. Business Committee
9. Accounts Inspection Committee (pp2-3)
10. Registration of Ministries – annual update (*to follow*)
11. Statistical Return (*to follow*)
12. Committee on Re-opening of Church Buildings (*verbal report*)
13. Standing Committee reports:
  - (a) Mission and Service (*to follow*)
14. Intimations
15. Appreciation of Retiring Members
16. Adjournment

### Business Committee

1. Presbytery appoints Conveners to its Standing Committees for 2021/22 as follows: Business Committee – Murray Campbell; Governance Committee – David Brackenridge; Mission and Service – Fiona Burnett; Property and Stewardship – Isobel Hunter.
2. Presbytery approves the following dates for its meetings in 2021/22 (venues to be confirmed):
  - 7 September 2021
  - 5 October 2021
  - 2 November 2021
  - 7 December 2021
  - 1 February 2022
  - 1 March 2022
  - 3 May 2022
  - 28 June 2022.
3. Presbytery notes that, for 2021/22, the Business Committee will meet on the morning of the second Thursday before each Presbytery meeting.
4. Presbytery notes that a Steering Group has been formed to take forward the proposal for Presbytery to join a larger Presbytery of South-East Scotland.
5. Presbytery notes that an appeal was made against its decision on 3 September 2019 to accept the findings of the Special Committee appointed under the Protection Against Bullying Act 2007, namely that there had been three instances of bullying by the Respondent. Presbytery further notes that the appeal hearing has now been held and the Judicial Commission has unanimously decided to uphold the appeal and quash the previous decision in its entirety.

### Intimations

1. A new Presbytery Prayer Diary has been prepared and this will be circulated shortly.

## Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles

### Report of Accounts inspection Committee (June 2021)

The Accounts Inspection Committee, consisting of Isobel Hunter, Michael Knott and Fraser Simm is tasked with reviewing the accounts of all congregations and confirming to each congregational treasurer whether they comply with accounting and charity regulations – and if not, what is required to achieve that.

By 12<sup>th</sup> June, accounts had been received for all congregations (bar one, which was in the process of audit/inspection). As has been the case in past years, the quality of accounts varies through “excellent”, “mainly good” and “requiring significant amendments”.

Bearing in mind that all accounts have gone through the independent examination process, the fact that several sets require significant changes is a source of concern, but through the convener, advice to treasurers is always offered.

In examining the accounts, it is interesting to read how many congregations have risen to the challenges and some of these extracts are annotated below:

*“Income down by 27%”.*

*“Online meetings of Minister’s reflections were accessed via the website”; “Members of our congregations have received regular pastoral letters”.*

*“The minister recorded weekly reflections which were available on the charge website or by email. There has been a positive response to the opportunity for inline worship”.*

*“New ways of reaching out to our members and the community were continually developed inc. weekly media reflections”; “The Kirk Session agreed that there would be one weekly service in the Charges, rotating round the churches”; “additional outreach was added as worship was live-streamed to Facebook and available on YouTube, uploaded to the Charge website”.*

*“Zoom format reached most people”; “Some very generous, individual responses”; “regular catch-up offerings”.*

*“Pastoral care continued with telephone calls and visits where allowed (in doorways, cafés, out for walks)”.*

*“A donation button on the website gives another option”; “Online church goes well beyond the parish and memberships”.*

*“It was noted that the number of people who logged in for electronic recordings was greater than the weekly attendance at church”; “Offerings fell by 22.5%”.*

Presbytery will recognise many of these situations and may wish to reflect on them.

With regard to financial accounts for next year, a little advice has been given to the treasurers of the two new unions, who will face the challenges of identifying which former congregations will be deemed as “ceasing” and which will be “continuing”; this has an effect on how their accounts should be drawn up for 2021 and it is hoped that the advice given, including in respect of changing standing orders and direct debits in favour of a new charity, has been of help.

The two new unions will be working out various offices, including treasurers; if these discussions mean that treasurers (and other office-holders) decide to stand down, it is appropriate to acknowledge the tremendous work done by them over many years.

Finally, I wish to thank Isobel and Michael for sharing the burden of doing this complicated work.

**Deliverance:**

1. Presbytery receives the report.
2. Presbytery notes that the accounts of all congregations have been examined.
3. Presbytery thanks the Committee for carrying out the task of inspecting accounts.

**4 MAY 2021.** On Tuesday the fourth day of May 2021, the Presbytery met by ZOOM at 7pm for Ordinary Business, and the Moderator, Rev M Jefferson, constituted the meeting in prayer.

**SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES:** There were present 13 ministers and 27 elders whose names were recorded by the Clerk in the attendance book. The names of corresponding members in attendance were also noted, as were apologies. The Moderator welcomed members of the congregations whose union or linking would be considered in the meeting.

**MINUTES:** The minutes of the meetings of 2 and 23 March 2021 were submitted and approved as circulated.

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

**PRESBYTERY PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE AND BASES OF ADJUSTMENT:** Mr David Brackenridge, Convener, presented the report of the Presbytery Planning Implementation Committee. Presbytery received the report. Presbytery intimated the concurrence from the Presbytery Planning Task Group on the Basis of Linking of Ashkirk, Ettrick and Yarrow and Selkirk and set the date of linking to be 4 May 2021. Presbytery received the report on the congregational votes and approved the Basis of Linking of Caddonfoot and Stow St Mary of Wedale and Heriot. Presbytery received the report on the congregational votes and approved the Basis of Union of Galashiels: Old Parish & St Paul's, Galashiels: St John's and Galashiels: Trinity.

**COMMISSIONING OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY COMMISSIONERS 2021:** Those appointed by Presbytery to be members of the forthcoming General Assembly were commissioned in prayer and charged by the Moderator to be diligent in fulfilling their duties as Commissioners. The Moderator then led the Presbytery in prayer for the Commissioners and for the work of the Assembly.

**BUSINESS COMMITTEE:** Prof Murray Campbell, Convener, presented the report of the Business Committee. Presbytery received the report. Presbytery noted that elders' commissions for 2021-2022 should be returned to the Clerk by 1 June 2021. Presbytery noted the nomination of Rev Victoria Linford to be the next Moderator of Presbytery; if elected, Mrs Linford would remain as Presbytery Clerk with the Assistant Clerk acting as Clerk to Presbytery meetings. Presbytery noted that Mr Peter Sandison, Assistant Clerk, has updated the Presbytery website and Year Book to reflect recent changes in charges. The link to the website pages is: [https://www.melrosepeeblespresbytery.org.uk/page2\\_draft.html](https://www.melrosepeeblespresbytery.org.uk/page2_draft.html) (the congregations page on the website is also now live), and a copy of the updated Year Book was included with the Presbytery papers. Please could all members of Presbytery check the information for their charge and individual entry, and confirm to the Assistant Clerk whether any changes are needed.

**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 the Committee had given approval to 25 applications to re-open church buildings after the second Covid lockdown; all but one of these (Galashiels: St John's) had previously re-opened after the first lockdown. Mr Simpson thanked congregations for completing the necessary paperwork in order to re-open buildings, and reminded congregations of the ongoing need to keep risk assessments up-to-date as circumstances change. Mr Simpson also highlighted the new legal requirement, from 17 May 2021, for all church buildings to display a PDBC (Physical Distance-Based Capacity) notice. Presbytery received the report.

**GOVERNANCE:** Mr David Brackenridge, Convener, presented the report of the Governance Committee. Mr Brackenridge reminded congregations who had not done so to send to him their SG7 and SG11 safeguarding forms. Mr Brackenridge also reminded Presbytery that a new Presbytery Safeguarding Co-ordinator is still required, and asked members to contact him with details of anyone who might be interested in taking on this role. Presbytery received the report.

**MISSION AND SERVICE:** Rev Margaret Steele, Ministries Co-ordinator within the Mission and Service Committee, presented the report of the Committee. Presbytery received the report. Presbytery nominated Mrs Sarah Cook, a member of Dryburgh District Churches, as a Candidate for the Full Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament and wished her well in her studies; Presbytery notes that Mrs Cook will be added as a Corresponding Member of Presbytery. Presbytery noted and approved the Study Leave request from Rev Victoria Linford in order to undertake a DMin Course through Edinburgh University and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary with a focus on Reformed Theology as a rich resource in the cultural contexts of 21<sup>st</sup> Century ministry.

**PROPERTY AND STEWARDSHIP:** Mrs Isobel Hunter, Convener, presented the report of the Property and Stewardship Committee. Presbytery received the report. Presbytery agreed M&M rebates of £17,325 for Galashiels: Trinity and £1,488 for Stow and Heriot. Presbytery agreed an M&M rebate for west Tweeddale of £4,500 in 2021 and £8,000 in 2022, 2023 and 2024 subject to review. Presbytery was reminded of the existence of the M&M rebate scheme. Presbytery noted with approval the drawdown of funds by Stow and Heriot from the General Trustees to investigate dry rot in Stow Church. Presbytery agreed to the resumption of building surveys. Members were pointed to Stewardship resources to help with finances in the current environment.

**STUDY LEAVE/SUPPORT:** On behalf of the Mission and Service and Property and Stewardship Committees, Mr Graeme Donald presented a joint report on the Presbytery Study Leave Scheme. Presbytery received the report. Presbytery agreed to the introduction of a revised Presbytery Study Support Scheme (incorporating the Study Leave Scheme) under the single heading of Study Support with immediate effect. Presbytery instructed the Property and Stewardship Committee with advice from the Treasurer to monitor the financial elements of the Study Support Scheme and, if necessary, to seek funding sources that might augment the

Study Support budget. Presbytery agreed to delegate the administration of Study Support to the group already established to administer the Good Ideas Fund, that is, the Treasurer and the Moderator together with a representative from each of the Property and Stewardship and Mission and Service Committees and a Convener appointed by Presbytery. Presbytery agreed to the inclusion of the Study Support Application Form on the Presbytery website. Presbytery agreed to increase the annual award for Ministry students from the Bursary Fund to £250.

INTIMATIONS: Congregations are encouraged to submit relevant news items to the Assistant Clerk for inclusion in the Presbytery website.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the Presbytery adjourned to meet by ZOOM for Ordinary Business on Tuesday 22 June 2021 at 7pm, of which public intimation was made, and the *sederunt* was closed with prayer.

Moderator

Clerk

**28 MAY 2021.** On Friday the twenty-eighth day of May 2021, the Presbytery met by ZOOM at 6.30pm *pro re nata* in connection with certain Presbytery Planning Implementation matters, and the Moderator, Rev M Jefferson, constituted the meeting in prayer.

SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES: There were present 8 ministers and 17 elders whose names were recorded by the Clerk in the attendance book. The names of corresponding members in attendance were also noted, as were apologies. The Moderator welcomed members of the congregations whose union or linking would be considered in the meeting.

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

PRESBYTERY PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE: Mr David Brackenridge, Convener, presented the report of the Presbytery Planning Implementation Committee. Presbytery received the report. Presbytery intimated the concurrence by the Presbytery Planning Task Group on the Basis of Linking of Caddonfoot and Stow and Heriot and set the date of linking to be 28 May 2021. Presbytery noted that this also included the severing of the linking between Caddonfoot and Galashiels: Trinity. Presbytery intimated the concurrence by the Presbytery Planning Task Group on the Basis of Union of Galashiels: Old and St Paul's, Galashiels: St John's and Galashiels: Trinity and set the date of union to be 28 May 2021. Presbytery thanked and discharged the Presbytery Planning Implementation Committee.

VACANCY PROCEDURE COMMITTEE: Rev Margaret Steele, Convener, presented the report of the Vacancy Procedure Committee. Presbytery received the report. Presbytery noted the decision of the Vacancy Procedure Committee to grant permission to the united congregation in Galashiels to call a minister to its vacant charge effective from the date of union. The Committee noted that the finances are in good order and the Manse is in a satisfactory state. Presbytery noted that, should no minister be found by the end of December 2021, the right to call would be suspended in accordance with the Vacancy Procedure Act (as amended by the General Assembly of 2021). Presbytery noted the appointment of Rev Dr Miller Milloy, Mr Robert Turnbull and Miss Susan McDonald as the Advisory Committee for Galashiels Church of Scotland, effective from the date of union. Presbytery noted that the number on the Nominating Committee will be 9. Presbytery thanked Rev David Donaldson for all his work as Interim Moderator of Galashiels: Old Parish and St Paul's l/w Galashiels: St John's and latterly of Caddonfoot l/w Galashiels: Trinity and noted his appointment as Interim Moderator of Galashiels Church of Scotland.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the Presbytery adjourned to meet by ZOOM for Ordinary Business on Tuesday 22 June 2021 at 7pm, of which public intimation was made, and the *sederunt* was closed with prayer.

Moderator

Clerk