

2 NOVEMBER 2021. On Tuesday the second day of November 2021, the Presbytery met by Zoom at 7 pm for Ordinary Business. The meeting began with a reading, Isaiah 2:2-4, given by Karen Ritchie. The Moderator, Rev. Victoria Linford, then screen-shared an image of a bronze sculpture "Let Us Beat Our Swords into Ploughshares", a gift of the Soviet Union to the United Nations which was installed in the grounds of the United Nations HQ in New York in 1959. The sculpture was inspired by the words in the reading from Isaiah, which helps turn our thoughts, as we approach the season of Remembrance, to all those who have served us, and hope that their sacrifice was not in vain. And we think also of the United Nations as Scotland hosts the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, and reflect on the hope that greater peace between humanity and the world of God's creation will follow from deliberations there. She reminded us that the passage from Isaiah speaks of a vision that peace will only be realised perfectly when our Lord comes again, then constituted the meeting in prayer.

SEDERUNT AND APOLOGIES: There were present 13 ministers and 23 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 Rev. Dr Tony Foley to his first meeting of Presbytery following his induction.

MINUTES: The minutes of the meeting of 5 October 2021 and 25 October 2021 (pp130-132) were submitted and approved as circulated. The Moderator then announced the sad news of the death of a long-standing and very active member of Presbytery, Tom Fairbairn, who was Moderator from 2011 to 2012 and to whom tribute would be paid at a future meeting.

TRIBUTE TO COL. ANDREW CAMPBELL: Rev. Calum Macdougall thanked Julian Birchall, an elder at Stobo and Drumelzier, for writing a warm tribute to Col. Campbell, who passed away on 28 September 2021. Andrew studied divinity at New College and had a distinguished and varied military service in many parts of the world with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. After retirement from the Army, he was a popular and successful Secretary of the New Club in Edinburgh. In 1996 he settled in Stobo, serving as an elder of the Kirk, a member of the Worship Workshop, and taking services regularly in Stobo and other churches. He was a Presbytery Elder and most diligent Treasurer at Stobo and Drumelzier for many years. He was a fine singer, Secretary of the Community Council, and actively involved in many other organisations. Despite failing health, he managed to continue participating in Church life until just over a week before his death. He will be remembered for his charm, kindness, efficiency and great sense of humour, and was much loved and respected. Our sympathies are extended to his wife, Fiona, and children.

ORDER OF BUSINESS: The Order of Business was approved as circulated.

ORDER OF THE DAY 1 – OVERTURE UNDER THE BARRIER ACT ON CHURCH COURTS ACT: The Moderator reminded Presbyters about the Guidance Note that had been included in the Agenda and Papers for the Presbytery Meeting of 5 October 2021. The Guidance Note included the procedure for postal voting by any full members of Presbytery present at this meeting. She explained that the Overtures were adopted by the General Assembly of 2021 and are now coming to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act. An Overture will only become law if it is approved by a majority of Presbyteries and then by the General Assembly of 2022. She set out the background to the Overture on the Church Courts Act and invited comment and discussion. One Presbyter pointed out that there would be far fewer commissioners representing the Borders at the 2023 General Assembly if the Overture was approved at the 2022 General Assembly and the proposed amalgamation of Presbyteries took place at the start of 2023. Another wondered why there would be no equalising elder or minister appointed in the event that Moderators from the last five years are appointed as commissioners. The Moderator commented that there was nothing to stop Presbytery adding comments to the result of the votes when reporting them to "121" in December.

ORDER OF THE DAY 2 – OVERTURE UNDER THE BARRIER ACT ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE: The Moderator explained that the General Assembly instructed the Legal Questions Committee to prepare legislation enabling ministers who wished to be nominated to lead same-sex weddings to do so, while providing safeguards to protect those ministers who do not wish to do so. The General Assembly of 2021 remitted this legislation to Presbyteries as an Overture under the Barrier Act. In the discussion that followed various concerns were expressed. Firstly, that as previous legislation on whether congregations would accept ministers in same-sex relationships had divided churches, this risks dividing the clergy at a time they are already under a lot of stress. Secondly, that ministers may be put under pressure to conform with prevailing secular trends. Thirdly, a lot of time, effort and money have been expended on the Overture at a time the Church of Scotland should be addressing the core issue of the loss of members and congregations. These concerns were not shared by all Presbyters who expressed an opinion.

BUSINESS COMMITTEE: Prof. Murray Campbell, Convener, presented the Report of the Business Committee, which Presbytery received. Congregations of Channelkirk and Lauder and Earlston - The Convener, followed by the Moderator, outlined the background and options relating to a proposal to help these congregations: namely that an application is made by the Clerk to the Faith Nurture Forum for permission to call a minister (whether interim, transition or other) to Channelkirk and Lauder, or to both Channelkirk and Lauder and Earlston. If this application was approved by the Faith Nurture Forum the congregations might get a minister much sooner than would otherwise be the case. A member of one of the congregations was concerned that the Permission to Call Protocol requires that the ministry post must be compatible with the ministry numbers in the Presbytery Mission Plan, and this could mean the loss of one full-time equivalent post. He stressed that the lack of a minister was having an impact on the spiritual well-being of his congregation, which relied on a small and dwindling number of elders to maintain worship. Prof. Campbell accepted that this argument should be included in the application for permission to call, with which Presbytery agreed to

proceed. Future shape of the General Assembly - Presbytery noted that an invitation has been received from the Assembly Business Committee to take part in a consultation on the future shape of the General Assembly. No arrangements have yet been put in place. In the meantime, Presbytery welcomed the opportunity to take part in the consultation and instructed the Clerk to respond accordingly to the Assembly Business Committee.

VACANCY PROCEDURE COMMITTEE Rev. Margaret Steele, Convener, presented a verbal report. She was pleased to report that the Rev. Aftab Gohar, currently Minister of Abbotsgrange Parish Church, Grangemouth, was the choice of the overwhelming majority of the congregation of Eddleston linked with Peebles Old linked with Stobo & Drumelzier. He preached as sole nominee, with 104 votes for and only 1 against. Once the paperwork has been completed, a formal written report will be presented. The proposed induction date is Tuesday 28th December 2021 at 2 pm, with Rev. Andrew Anderson preaching.

COMMITTEE ON RE-OPENING OF CHURCH BUILDINGS / QUINQUENNIAL REPORTS: Mr Keith Simpson, Convener, reported that the only Church not yet open is Maxton. At a recent meeting of the Kirk Session of Dryburgh District Churches moderated by Rev. Rosie Frew it was agreed to keep the Church closed until Rev. Sheila Moir resumes her duties. The Convener also reported that the Quinquennial Reports which should have been done in 2020 have now been completed this year and issued to the various churches. Invoices from the surveyors, Adams Napier Partnership, have been received and passed on to Mr Fraser Simm, Presbytery Treasurer, for payment. Given the importance of these reports, the Convener wondered if it would be financially feasible to carry out two years of Quinquennial Reports in 2022. The Treasurer suggested liaising over this and reporting to Presbytery on possible options to cover the backlog.

GOVERNANCE: Mr David Brackenridge, Convener, referred to his paper on the remit from the May 2021 General Assembly that Presbyteries co-operate with The Safeguarding Service in a compliance audit of Safeguarding data in readiness for the implementation of the Disclosure Act. He stressed that it is important that PVG certificates, which now only last for 5 years, be kept up-to-date, and reminded congregations to return their completed SG7 and SG11 forms to him if they have not already done so. Presbytery received the report and approved the deliverances.

MISSION AND SERVICE: Dr Fiona Burnett, Convener, reported that the World Mission Group asked Presbytery to continue remembering Lebanon in their prayers, such is the dire situation there. It is hoped to organise a prayer service in the near future: anyone interested in being involved or who would like to attend should let the Convener know, and she would pass this on to Eve Hartswood. There is also a proposal to invite Peter Ford, who did the lectures at the end of August, to give an update in December on what the current situation is in Lebanon and with the Near East School of Theology (NEST). Dr Burnett intimated an event happening the next evening at 7 pm, the screening in Innerleithen Parish Church of an inspiring documentary film, 'The Ants and the Grasshopper', which explores the impact of climate change in Malawi. The Assistant Clerk would email out to Presbyters a time-limited link to view the film on their personal digital devices. Dr Burnett further intimated an annual service at 10.30 on Sunday 21st November 2021 in Innerleithen Parish Church to celebrate our Presbytery and Parish Partnerships. The service will be streamed live on the Innerleithen Traquair & Walkerburn Parish Church YouTube channel and available to watch afterwards. Rev. Margaret Steele reported that the Moderator had been enjoying her study leave and had passed all the courses to date, which were proving very relevant to ministry in Scotland. The next block of study leave would start in January 2022, but it is as yet unclear whether this will be online or take place in the United States. Miss Steele wished the Moderator well in her continuing studies.

PROPERTY AND STEWARDSHIP: Mrs Isobel Hunter, Convener, reported that Presbytery is due to approve Ministry and Mission contributions for the coming year. She screen-shared a series of slides with details of the proposed contributions, and asked the Assistant Clerk to circulate the documents so they could be viewed before approval at the December meeting of Presbytery.

PRESBYTERY REFORM STEERING GROUP: Prof. Murray Campbell reported that a get-together was planned with two new Presbyteries, Fife and Clyde, as well as with Northampton Methodist District, to gauge how relationships between the centre and constituent parts are faring. It is also hoped that the various Mission Plan Committees of the existing Presbyteries will liaise.

INTIMATIONS 1. Presbytery noted that the Church of Scotland's Nomination Committee is seeking nominations for the Church's various Forums and Committees by the end of November 2021 2. From Galashiels Church of Scotland: We are hosting Tearfund's Big Quiz Night on Saturday 20 November 2021, to take the charity's fundraising efforts past the £1 million mark, helping their work in some of the world's poorest countries. 3. The Assistant Clerk reported that progress was being made on the reinstatement of the Presbytery website. 4. Rev. Rosie Frew asked if a Minister could volunteer to lead a Sacrament of Communion for Dryburgh District Churches; one of our Readers, Mrs Fran Selkirk, has kindly offered to provide supply for anyone willing to do a swap. The Moderator added that Presbytery is actively seeking volunteers for various roles, such as Interim Moderatorship, which urgently need to be covered.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the Presbytery adjourned to meet at 7pm on 7 December 2021 for Ordinary Business, of which public intimation was made, the venue to be agreed, and the sederunt was closed with the saying of the Grace.

Moderator

Assistant Clerk