

Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles

Guidelines for Self-Certification of Congregational Records

Background

With the present restrictions in place, it is not possible to hold our annual inspection of records as we have done in the past. It was agreed that the Presbytery would issue guidelines to help congregations self-certify some of their records where it is possible to do so. The following are based on guidelines used by those members of Presbytery responsible for checking the congregational records. This should allow congregations to self-certify Kirk Session minutes, the Communion Roll (and Supplementary Roll) and Baptismal Register.

Kirk Session Minutes

1. Each meeting should show it was properly constituted and closed.
2. Once approved, each minute should be signed by the Moderator and Clerk.
3. Blank spaces at bottom of pages should be crossed with a line to prevent unauthorised insertions. Any amendments to the minutes must be initialled by the Moderator.
4. For loose leaf records:
 - a. Each page should be numbered consecutively.
 - b. If only one side of a page is printed on, the reverse side should be scored through or headed "Blank Page".
 - c. Any insertions to the minutes should be initialled by the Moderator.
 - d. Once approved, each page should be initialled by the Moderator.
 - e. When sufficient pages have been completed to comprise a suitable volume (the recommended number is 100 pages), the pages should be bound into a permanent form.

These guidelines also apply to Board minutes.

Communion Roll

This should record the membership as at 31st December 2020 and be attested by the Kirk Session. If you have a Supplementary Roll this should also be up-to-date and attested by the Kirk Session.

Baptismal Register

This should contain all the relevant details of baptisms – both child and adult – and blessings and each entry should be signed by the Minister officiating at the Baptism.

Records which cannot be self-certified

1. Safeguarding Forms

The safeguarding forms, SG7 and SG11, should be emailed to the Convener of the Presbytery Governance Committee.

2. Congregational Accounts

These should be sent to the Presbytery Treasurer.

3. Property Register and Manse Schedule

The Property Registers and Manse Condition Schedules should still be completed, and in the fullness of time these will be collected for inspection by the Presbytery Property Convener. There is a reminder that:

- Regular inspections should still be carried out; during lockdown this should be weekly to comply with the insurer's regulations.
- Check that the buildings are lockfast, wind and watertight, and that there are no leaks from services.
- Remember the legionella protocols of flushing loos, running water etc.
- Ensure that annual boiler servicing, cleaning of gutters, checking of roof coverings etc., are still carried out.
- Electrical Installation Condition Reports, Gas Safety Records and Landlord's Certificates (if your manse has gas), are all kept up to date.

4. Minister's Log Book

This should be maintained as the information may be required in the future by HM Revenue and Customs.

I trust this is useful to you and hopefully next year we shall be able to revert to previous practice regarding the Inspection of Records. If there are any queries on the above, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

David Brackenridge
Convener, Presbytery Governance Committee