

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH ~ SYNOD OF SCOTLAND

MINUTE OF SYNOD MEETING

**Saturday 17 March 2007
In Saughtonhall United Reformed Church**

Present: Revd Jan Adamson (FOLMD), Mr Maxwell Allan (Morningside United), Revd Peter Arthur (Retired Minister), Revd Brian Bailey (Retired Minister), Revd Ian Baillie, Miss Marjory Bain (Thurso), Mr Barclay Bannister, Mrs Joyce Bannister, Mr David Barr (West AC Secretary), Mrs Rita Barr, Revd Delia Bond, Mr Clive Bonner, Revd Connie Bonner (Annan), Mrs Janet Boyd (East Greenock), Revd John Bremner (Bathgate), Mr John Brown, (Park, Airdrie), Revd Stephen Brown (Fraserburgh), Revd Mary Buchanan (Ecumenical Officer), Revd Mitchell Bunting (Augustine United), Mrs Doris Caldwell, Mr Ian Cameron, Revd Danny Cheyne (Dumbarton), Ms Carole Chisholme (Barrhead), Mrs Henrietta Colwell (Stewarton), Mrs Margaret Cooke (Newburgh), Revd Deborah Cornish (Granton), Mrs Anne Cowan (Stonehouse), Mr Jim Cowan, Mr Stewart Cutler (YCWDO), Miss Anna Davidson, Miss Morag Donaldson (Portobello), Revd Dr John Dyce (Education Secretary), Mrs Maureen Geddes, Mrs Margaret Gillan (Hamilton), Revd Elspeth Harley, Mr Douglas Hay (Mission and Ecumenical Convener), Revd Haydn Higton (Retired Minister), Mrs Sally Huc (Helensburgh), Revd Tim Huc (Helensburgh), Miss Irene Hudson, Revd John Humphreys (Moderator), Mr Ceri Jenkins (Morningside United), Revd Craig Jesson (Park Airdrie/Coatbridge) Revd Dr Irene John (Carlisle), Revd Paul Jupp (Pollokshields), Mrs Anne Kennedy, Miss Elizabeth King (South AC Secretary), Mr Mark Kirkbride, Revd Sue Kirkbride (Saughtonhall), Revd Anne Lindsey (Retired Minister), Revd Murdoch MacKenzie (Retired Minister), Revd Peter Mackenzie (Retired Minister), Agnes MacLeod, Mr Steve Manders, Mr Ron McKillop (Cumbernauld), Mrs Helen Mee (Ordinand), Mrs I Merrilees (St Nicholas), Dr Jim Merrilees (Synod Clerk), Dr Brenda Moon (Augustine United), Revd Lesley Moseley, Revd Jack Muir (Kirkwall), Revd Richard Murray (Granton), Revd Kristin Ofstad (Thurso), Revd Alan Paterson (Righead/East Mains), Mrs Babs Paterson (Righead), Mr Simon Peters, Revd Kathryn Price (Drumchapel Partnership), Mrs Hazel Pryde (Saughtonhall), Mr Peter Ranscombe (SynNews Editor), Revd Linda Rice (Newburgh), Mrs Lesley Richmond (Shawlands), Mrs Betty Robinson, Dr Leslie Robinson (Rutherglen), Mrs Gweneth Robinson (Annan), Miss Myra Rose (Pastoral Committee Secretary), Revd Lindsey Sanderson, Moira Simpson, Mr Bill Simpson, Mrs May Simpson (Morison Memorial), Miss Wilma Sinclair (Fraserburgh), Revd John Smith (Morningside United), Revd Gordon Smith (Synod Officer), Revd Kathryn Smith-Anderson (Stonehouse), Revd Carolyn Smyth, Mr Patrick Smyth, Mrs M T Sneddon (Wishaw), Mrs Maureen Stewart (Giffnock), Miss Janet Stirling (Dunfermline), Mr John Summers (Dundee), Revd George Sykes (East AC Secretary), Revd Mary Taylor (Selkirk/Galashiels), Revd Stephen Taylor (St Nicholas), Revd Andrew Thomson (Cumbernauld), Ms Meg Wainwright (Pollokshields), Mr Brian Walker (Convener Finance Committee), Ms Zam Walker (Ordinand), Mrs Margaret Wilson (Port Glasgow), Revd John Wylie (Racial Justice Co-ordinator), Mrs Moyra Young (Secretary Women's Union), Miss Sheen Young, Mrs Kathleen Ziffo.

Guests: Ms Lorna Finley, Revd Alex McAspurren, Canon Tim Morris

Apologies: Revd Dr Angus Allan, Mr Jim Anderson, Revd Tony Ashcroft, Miss Aileen Baird, Miss Jennifer Barrie, Revd Sidney Bindemann, Revd James Binnie, Revd Ian Bird, Revd David Brown, Mrs Sheila Brown, Pastor John Clark, Mrs Nan Clark, Revd David Coleman, Revd Henry Cook, Revd Derek Corner, Revd James Dey, Revd Willie Downie, Mrs Effie Dyer, Revd Tom Gordon, Revd James Graham, Revd Suzanne Hamnett, Revd John Hinds, Revd Wilfred Hough, Revd David Marsden, Mrs Agnes Martin, Revd Dr William McNaughton, Revd Robert McVey, Mrs Molly Millan, Revd Leslie Morrison, Mr Tom Murray, Mr Keith Muskett, Revd Bill Nicol, Revd Don Powis, Revd John Sanderson, Revd Dr Henry Sefton, Revd David M Taylor, Mrs Frances Thomson, Revd George Towson, Revd Hamish Walker, Revd Robert Waters, Revd John Wilson, Mr Tom Woodbridge, Revd John Young.

Welcome: The Synod Moderator welcomed everyone to the Synod Meeting and invited the minister of Saughtonhall, Revd Sue Kirkbride, to present a welcome from the host church.

Welcome from Saughtonhall United Reformed Church

Revd Sue Kirkbride offered a welcome on behalf of the congregation. When she had originally been asked if the church would host the Synod meeting, she had been somewhat apprehensive. The presentation included detail of fire exits, evacuation procedures, arrangements for lunch and a history of the church, which had been rebuilt after a fire in 1993. Details were also given of activity within the church in close partnership with Murrayfield Churches Together.

Worship: The Synod Moderator led worship with the help of the choir and members of Saughtonhall URC. During worship, he talked of the visit he and Revd Carolyn Smyth had paid to Cuba at the beginning of the week, presented greetings from the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba and spoke of the exhilarating sense of people discovering faith there and committing themselves to prayer; congregations in communities; congregations providing transport; and congregations coping with growth, where exploring the faith was the order of the day. He had found an impressive and moving openness and passion. While he had as yet had little time to reflect on the visit, he believed that our link is good for them and essential for us.

Welcome to Ecumenical Guests

The Synod Moderator welcomed Revd Gordon Smith as the new Synod Officer and invited him to present ecumenical guests from Murrayfield Churches Together:

- **Revd Alex McAspurren**, Associate Minister of Murrayfield Parish Church, deputising for the minister who was on holiday;
- **Canon Tim Morris**, the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd;
- **Ms Lorna Finley**, Convener of Murrayfield Churches Together and Communications Officer for the Scottish Episcopal Church.

All were warmly welcomed by the Moderator who commended their working partnership in Murrayfield Churches Together.

Notices: Revd Gordon Smith, Synod Officer, noted that collection boxes for Commitment for Life were available from Revd P Jupp; that pens would be on sale in aid of Chikballapur; and commended the Traidcraft shop. Revd Kathryn Smith-Anderson invited members to support her through sponsorship for Women's 10km run in May to support a Coeliac charity.

The Synod Moderator noted that seating was in "cabaret-style" format and that the morning session would be aided by Rosie, Eleanor and Clare, from the Girls' Brigade Company, providing any additional papers needed and roving microphones for members who wished to speak.

Greetings from Murrayfield Churches Together

Ms Lorna Finley, Convener of MCT, brought the greetings of the body to Synod. Murrayfield Churches Together is an exceptionally exciting partnership, comprising Saughtonhall URC, Murrayfield Parish Church and the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, on whose behalf she thanked Synod and the Church for their support. The body was formally constituted in 1987 and commitment renewed in 1994 and 2001. The churches are committed together in worship, mission and service to the community, worshipping together on occasions like Holy Week and the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and hosting pulpit exchanges. They run a Faith Development & Education Programme with lectures 3 times per year; Advent reflections; a monthly group on Justice Peace and the Care of Creation and Lent Studies. Pastoral care is provided weekly by the Murrayfield Club for sufferers of dementia and their carers, a hugely valued service, and a joint magazine is produced 3 times per year and distributed to almost all houses in the parish area. She highlighted joint Christian Aid Sunday lunch; Freshstart project for the Homeless; and Coffee Shop Monday-Friday. A website was launched last summer. Next year they will re-sign the 7-year covenant and continue to explore new ways of celebrating the partnership.

The Synod Moderator thanked Ms Finley for her greetings and asked her to convey the greetings of the Synod to MCT.

Minute of Meeting of Synod: 15-17 September 2007

Miss M Donaldson (Portobello) noted that Revd Deborah Cornish had appeared in both "Present" and "Apologies" categories and confirmed that she had been absent. Revd Carolyn Smyth noted under apologies that Revd Brian Kenrick should be referred to as "Bruce". Revd J Bremner (Bathgate) noted that, under the Bathgate Intentional Church Narrative, it is not that the church is not well known in the community, but not well known as URC, still being popularly regarded as EU.

With these amendments, the minute was adopted.

The Synod Clerk informed Synod of addition and amendment to the day's agenda. The Synod Moderator noted that the Cuba Report and the Church & Society Report on Sexuality would be switched to accommodate Revd Principal J Dyce, who would be presenting that report in the absence through illness of Revd John Young, C&S Secretary.

Report from Pastoral Committee on beginning deployment discussion

Mrs M Gillan, on behalf of the Pastoral Committee, asked all ministers to stand, then all retired ministers to sit, followed by all ministers who would retire by 2008 and then by 2010. She finally asked all who would be retired by 2015 to sit. She noted that this gave some understanding of how many would be with us over coming years, not taking into account any new ministers or those who might still be working following retirement.

Miss M Rose, Pastoral Committee Secretary, noted the diminishing number of ministers by 2015, requiring us to think and plan for the future. This report marks the beginning of this process. The Concise Oxford Dictionary definition of "deployment" is "the spreading of troops from column into line for most effect". There is no policy on deployment in the Synod of Scotland, but we need to arrive at one. The United Reformed Church does have a long-standing policy on deployment in that the number of stipendiary ministers will increase or decrease at the same rate as members increase or decrease. The 'share' of each synod takes into account its membership, number of churches and total population, which benefits Scotland. Figures for 2004 were used to illustrate this. Each synod must decide how and where to deploy its ministers. Assembly records the total number of ministers in each synod as the number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) ministers, so 1 FTE minister *might be one person or two or three people*. In November 2006 there were 8 part-time stipendiary ministers in the Synod of Scotland, representing 4.5 FTEs. Further figures were presented showing targets for Scotland to 2010 as they exist and on the basis of membership and number of churches only.

We need to remember that, as a 'calling church' we need to have more pastorates than there are ministers; that Area Councils determine the basis of a call and that Scotland has a much higher proportion of 100% single pastorates than any other synod – is this fair to other synods? We need a policy and Pastoral Committee needs help to devise it. We need to put people where there is a need and we need to make more effective and creative use of the ministers we have. Scoping needs to take into account mission potential; ecumenical involvement; self sufficiency and vision. Synod representatives were asked to read the paper again and discuss the questions with their churches, feeding back to the committee any comments and suggestions. We must remember that the policy which emerges will at some point affect all of us.

Revd E Harley, committee member, noted the difficulty in grappling with these ideas and distributed a sheet for discussion on deployment, illustrating three differing kinds of imaginary churches - housing scheme, city centre and small town - all without a minister for the past two years. Representatives were given a brief time in groups to discuss related deployment issues. There was no plenary session, but committee would receive and consider results of discussions. **Revd K Price** asked if CRCWs might be factored into discussions. This was agreed.

Following the discussions the Synod Moderator thanked the members of the committee for their presentation.

Church & Society: Report on Sexuality

Revd Principal J Dyce reported on behalf of the Committee and its Secretary, Revd J Young, absent through illness. There had been some overlap in discussions with College and Education Committee on how to develop an issue on which everyone has opinions, there is strong feeling throughout the country regarding difficult though engaging issues and what might prejudice mindsets, etc. This deepens into quite fundamental questions regarding church and society, traditions, scripture and contemporary thought – many of which facets lead into other areas. The Synod came into being at unification in 2000 when the URC was looking at these issues arising from a particular case in the life of the church. Deep and extensive reports had exercised a number of General Assemblies and resolutions had been carried. For those in the URC as elsewhere there emerged no clear common mind, but strong and deeply entrenched points of view. A moratorium on resolutions had been agreed, but even this had been interpreted differently by different groups. It had not, Principal Dyce suspected, been intended to impose a ban on dialogue, though some thought so, but to create space to have dialogue without decision. There is now, however, reason to talk, as life has moved on and the moratorium is coming to an end. We may put the issue to one side, but society does not. There has been fresh equality legislation and the law shapes attitudes as well as proscribing with regard to Race, Gender and Civil Partnerships, for which people are seeking blessings. A Mission Council paper has addressed the latter issue for churches. At this year's General Assembly the moratorium will end and what will happen next is difficult to predict as we are not a 'managed' church. Quite possibly Assembly, Districts or Synods may seek to move the Church on. Conversations with Church & Society Committee have resulted in a feeling that we need to deepen knowledge, understanding and awareness here as we have

been largely outside the debate. We must start to address our core beliefs and values and who we think we are. What things speak to our hearts? The General Committee of the former CUS did produce a statement for the wider URC which demonstrated our more inclusive sense of sexuality, but this needs wider discussion. It also needs to be an ecumenical journey, not closed down by lowest common denominators in preserving unity, but speaking our share of the truth into ecumenical discussion. There has to be some process of dialogue. We must report on work in progress and highlight the issues coming on to our agenda.

The Synod Moderator expressed thanks to Principal Dyce for this presentation. This was not an issue for discussion at this moment, but a statement of the wider church process. It would be helpful to be in tune with the issue following General Assembly in July and to reflect on it in the September Synod.

“Synod Words” Exercise

The exercise had been prepared by the Synod Development Team, comprising Mr S Cutler, Revd J Adamson, Revd M Buchanan and Revd Principal J Dyce. **Principal Dyce** hoped that all present had been engaged in the process of the road shows, by means of which the Team and the Moderator had been helping churches to work on their intentions through small group work, generating ideas and further work. This had resulted in huge amounts of paper and diverse thought. The Team had been looking at cards completed and key ideas which had come through. Clustering these is always subjective, but the Team had come to a reasonably common mind on this. Principal Dyce then addressed the issues clustered in no particular order. Strong recurrent themes had included **Welcoming**, which could be addressed in a number of ways – being friendly and nice; being tolerant and accepting; respect for other people and their beliefs and lifestyles; inclusivity in creative and diverse groups; free of barriers – physical, social, cultural; **Forward Thinking** - open to change; tackling issues of moving on; journeying; innovative; taking risks; radical - in the sense of root - change. **Building the Church** – developing people; enabling; sharing; togetherness. **Ecumenical** – willing to ‘give up’; the thorn; sacrificial. **Community** – active locally; global; multicultural; marginalised. **Faith** – witnessing; living; questioning.

Groups were given flipchart paper and pens and encouraged to create an ‘H’ diagram whereby, choosing one of the words and marking on a scale for the particular congregation how much has been achieved, how much there is to do; then listing things happening to suggest achievement; listing signs of non-achievement; and setting down up to five concrete ideas to improve performance. Groups were given 15 minutes to do this and papers were gathered by the Team for consideration later in the agenda.

ACTS Statement: 2007 Bi-Centenary of the Passing of the Act Abolishing the Slave Trade

Revd M Buchanan, Ecumenical Officer, presented the declaration prepared by ACTS in consultation with the churches to be signed by the Synod Moderator if Synod agreed the appropriate resolution. Revd Buchanan noted that from earliest days the Church was opposed to slavery. She quoted Paul: “Neither Jew nor Christian ...”. Christians, however, had compromised with slavery as with other evils. The doctrine of equality was again espoused by William Wilberforce in his campaign to abolish the Act. The Repeal on 25 March 1807 was the most important of all the great reforms of the nineteenth century inspired by the conversion of Wilberforce. ACTS has asked the leaders of the churches to sign the statement and therefore Revd Buchanan asked Synod to endorse the resolution:

Synod agrees to endorse the ACTS Statement and agrees that the Synod Moderator sign it on behalf of the Synod of Scotland of the United Reformed Church.

Seconded by Mr C Bonner (Annan).

Revd Carolyn Smyth queried whether the wording of the resolution was tight enough and subsequently suggested that the word “Synod” be amended to “The Synod of Scotland of the United Reformed Church” and that the title of the statement be included following the word “Statement”. This was accepted. **Revd J Bremner**, with reference to the middle paragraph of the statement, highlighted the continuing disruption in family life among those whose ancestors had been slaves, particularly in the Caribbean and regretted that this had not been addressed.

Revd M Buchanan noted that the statement had been revised and weakened in securing acceptance by the churches. The Moderator then put the resolution, as revised, to Synod as follows:

The Synod of Scotland of the United Reformed Church agrees to endorse the ACTS Statement on the 2007 Bi-Centenary of the Passing of the Act Abolishing the Slave Trade and agrees that the Synod Moderator sign it on behalf of the Synod of Scotland of the United Reformed Church.
The resolution was agreed with one vote against.

Revd M Buchanan, under the ACTS umbrella, also asked Synod to agree to the use of an Ecumenical Review in Ecumenical Partnerships. She recommended it as a good tool and would like Synod to agree to accept it as a working document. It is to be available on the ACTS website soon under the National Sponsoring Body and is to be trialled later this year. **Revd John Smith** asked if it would be possible to see the document before committing the Synod. The Synod Moderator asked if Synod would wish to commend the document for trial at this time or wait to see it first. **Synod agreed that it would wait to see the document before committing.**

Notices: **Revd Gordon Smith**, Synod Officer, urged members to complete expenses forms even if not claiming expenses, as the forms would provide a record of attendance. **The Synod Clerk** asked those who had, as asked, brought copies of **We Belong** which contained mis-prints to hand these to Ms Patricia Dickie so that replacement copies might be obtained. **The Synod Moderator** expressed the thanks of Synod to Rachel, Matthew and Eleanor who had helped in worship and other arrangements that morning. He then asked new members of Synod to stand. Five people stood.

Cake: The Synod Moderator reminded members that, at the last March Synod, we had cut a cake to mark Patsi's 30 years working for Synod and the CUS. Without seeking to make a precedent, a cake had been obtained this year to celebrate the achievement of a doctorate by one of our number, Revd Principal John W Dyce. He commended Jack's achievement amid all the pressures of his work and invited him to cut the cake before lunch.

Liturgy for Abolition of Slavery

Following the showing of a trailer for the film *Amazing Grace*, Revd John Wylie, Revd George Sykes and Revd Lindsey Sanderson presented a Liturgy Commemorating the Passing of the Act Abolishing the Slave Trade.

Following this, Revd Lindsey Sanderson urged representatives who could to join the commemorative walk the following Sunday from the bandstand in Musselburgh to Inveresk Lodge.

Report on Sannox

Mr Patrick Smyth, Convener of the PPS Sannox Task Group, referred representatives to papers circulated prior to the meeting, including the Feasibility Report. He presented 4 images of site and buildings in setting the scene and reminding Synod of what we are looking at. He presented Stage One of the Outline Feasibility Study on behalf of the PPS Sannox Task Group, with the supporting material mentioned.

He began with three anecdotes regarding local people: Marvin Elliot who has lived in Corrie for the last 19 years, is a Woodcarver Sculptor and has put forward a proposal for a workshop studio for his own and the community's use; Jim Lees is chair of the Corrie & Sannox Village Committee and has informed us that Peter Wilson, a tenor and teacher of singing at RSAMD, living in Corrie, is interested in the Sannox Centre as a possible venue for summer schools; and John Inglis is a Community Councillor living in High Corrie, who has informed us that North Ayrshire Council has produced a report proposing that settlement Local Plans be altered, or relaxed, to allow re-designation for particular uses, the lack of which is presently constraining social and economic sustainability in mainly rural communities. The Isle of Arran has acute difficulty in identifying and acquiring land for social and affordable housing for first time indigenous buyers and key workers such as teaching and medical personnel. It is impossible to propose affordable, or any form of, housing at present as we lie outside the village boundary. Can the Council and Historic Scotland agree a new way forward?

These demonstrate what can happen when you open up an exploration of this kind.

Mr Smyth briefly introduced the 4 costed options:

- Sell Site and Buildings
- Develop and Sell Site and Buildings
- Develop and Extend Dundarroch, Develop Manse/ Church (22 Bed-Spaces); the only option which retains the whole site under control of the Synod
- Sell Dundarroch, Develop Manse/ Church, Develop New Courtyard Facility (Up to 32 Bed-Spaces) which, the Planners say would "impact" on our Listed building, and might only possibly be justified if the uses for the courtyard were established in the present facilities beforehand, and were shown to be capable of sustaining such future expansion.

The options the Group chose not to pursue were:

1. Only develop the present structures.
2. Sell Dundarroch and develop the church/ manse only.

as these would neither present enough accommodation to be viable, other than self-catering holiday accommodation, nor be capable of supporting the resource of an on-site Director who would manage the Centre and run its programmes.

The cost exclusions are stated in the Report on pages 13 and 14, which costs are indicative, and therefore should be used for comparison purposes only at this stage. The Group felt that it was not its remit to advocate a preferred option, but presented some assessed possibilities, any of which would have to be supported with an acceptable business plan covering at least the first five years, to be voted for by Synod.

PPS has agreed to propose the completion of the Feasibility Study with its Stage Two by end of April, comprising:

- Any refinements to reflect this Synod's view of the Options presented;
- Identification of further possible sources of grant assistance;
- Some consideration of Disabled Access and Health & Safety ramifications; and
- Ascertainment of the access road, site boundary and Tree Preservation Order issues.

PPS also wishes to set up a Planning Group, to take over from the Task Group. The new group will work on the details of the information found to date, running the chicken-and-egg conundrum concurrently, the vision and technical practicality together.

On Saturday 19 May there are taster sessions planned at the Centre on one or two of the ideas in the leaflet, as well as other alluring treats. Mr Smyth urged representatives to make the journey through North Ayrshire and over the Firth of Clyde; to see the Centre, the site, the mountains and the sea; to take in the ambience and decide what the place may be capable of. The key driver for the site remains future need. The issues are pastoral; they are not about fabric. Mr Smyth then offered to take questions.

The Synod Moderator noted that Nicola and Hannah were on the afternoon shift with roving microphones.

Revd I Baillie sought clarification as to what was meant by "bed-spaces". **Revd R Murray** sought information as to what was involved in the final item on retreats. He asked if there would be Friends of Sannox, a donation scheme and work weeks.

Mr Smyth responded that bed-spaces equated to the number of people to be accommodated and referred to the schedule on the feasibility plan for Options 2 and 3. There would be two bed-spaces per room. Dundarroch would have 2 triple rooms, and 2 single. The Director's family would occupy the manse and there would be 16 bed-spaces (2 a room) in the Courtyard. He noted for Revd Murray that, in the vision document, there were a number of things that might happen – ways of keeping a live connection between individuals and the work of the Centre.

Sannox Report: Resolutions

The Synod Clerk presented the resolutions on behalf of PPS Committee:

1 Synod receives the Outline Feasibility Report of the Sannox Task Group as detailed above, the accompanying Vision Leaflet projecting aims and activities for a Sannox Christian Centre and the Interim Feasibility Report (Stage 1 of Richmond Architects' Fee Proposal).

He noted an agreed change of wording from "accepts" to "receives".

Synod agreed.

2 Synod agrees that the Group's Feasibility Report be completed (Stage 2 of the Richmond Architects' Fee Proposal).

Revd R Murray queried whether further information was available with reference to available finance: i.e. from the Abernethy Trust. There was no such information available.

Synod agreed.

3 Synod agrees that a Sannox Development Planning Group now be set up with a remit to consider ALL the options in the Feasibility Report to co-ordinate with the demise of the present Sannox Task

Group; remits the formation of the group and confirmation of remit to PPS Committee; and remits to the Synod Treasurer, Finance & Property Committee and Synod Clerk the agreement of a budget to enable this Planning Group to pursue its work.

Revd R Murray queried whether costs would be contained within the quoted spending of £15,000 and whether the costing of staff would be included in the next proposal to Synod. **The Synod Clerk** responded that it was the intention to remain within the figure but that he could not give an absolute guarantee. PPS had accepted the figures as supplied by F&P Committee, but costs would be monitored. As regards the next proposal all appropriate costs would be included.

Synod agreed.

4 Synod expresses its thanks to Patrick Smyth, Convener, and the members of the Sannox Task Group for its thorough and excellent work on the feasibility study and related matters.

Synod agreed. Affirmation to the whole Task Group was expressed on behalf of Synod

Finance & Property Report

MMF Review: **Mr B Walker**, Convener, noted that the paper on MMF Review was for information only. The Synod Moderator, Synod Treasurer and himself had met with Area Treasurers on Saturday 9 December 2006. They had considered problems never previously discussed and addressed issues which were extremely important in the life of any church in Synod. Among the list of issues in the paper he particularly highlighted:

- what to do with members not giving;
- greater prominence for advocacy and stewardship;
- need to be truthful to congregations about the financial realities.

He commended representatives to share the paper with congregations and would welcome any comments.

F&P & Synod Team: Property Audit: **Mr Walker** stressed that it was a matter of good stewardship continually to look at and take account of the state of buildings and the needs of congregations. Three years ago a representative from Giffnock had asked about a fund for church repairs to be told there was none. The Synod Treasurer subsequently, with the permission of PPS and Finance & Property carried out some building audits on a test basis to try a contractor and assess results. Some churches represented today had had property audits carried out by D M Hall. One survey had been horrendous, two were quite frightening and the fourth had been reasonable. There had been variations in cost and the survey at Thurso had been more costly because of travel. It was felt to be valuable that we used one firm as variations were significant in some parts of Scotland. He then introduced **Revd Jan Adamson**, Field Officer, to comment on the visitation process.

Revd J Adamson noted that Appendix B constituted an outline of the visitation process. She noted that once a church receives a survey it becomes a focus for tough decisions to be made. What if there are development issues for the future? She would be working with F&P Committee through the Synod Treasurer. Once congregations start to assess property issues, there needs to be a holistic approach regarding intention for the future. Already the first draft of a guidance booklet has been prepared for congregations to work through prior to audit and visitation.

Revd Lindsey Sanderson noted that she fully supported the principle, but had concerns regarding delivery. When we are restructuring there is a danger that we will put too much responsibility on Links which are there primarily for fellowship.

Revd K Price welcomed the whole idea but had questions. If a programme of quinquennial visitation involved a minimum of ten churches per year, there were questions of manageability and a need to train other people to take a support role. She expressed disquiet that F&P should take the lead role. The link should not be to F&P but to other appropriate committees. She wondered how this would fit into the programme of ministerial appraisal.

Mrs M Stewart (Giffnock) echoed **Revd Price's** concern for the Field Officer's workload. She noted that the Ecumenical Officer had been overworked. This was a very good programme, but she was concerned by the implications for the Field Officer.

Mrs H Mee (ordinand) broadly welcomed the initiative and noted that it would be introduced as a pilot scheme. There needed to be some consideration for churches in an ecumenical situation and money which might be contributed by other denominations.

Revd Adamson thanked Revd Sanderson and accepted the point regarding added responsibility for Links. She would discuss this with the Synod Treasurer, but the programme would not be introduced in its entirety till restructuring settled down. She agreed with Revd Price that the Field Officer cannot do it all and there needs to be consideration of churches which request building surveys for other reasons. She thanked Mrs M Stewart for her concerns and informed Mrs Mee that she realised that ecumenical partnerships would have different implications. The question regarding ministerial appraisal would require response from the College Principal.

F&P Resolutions

Mr B Walker presented Resolution 1 as printed in the Synod papers:

1. This meeting of Synod endorses the proposal that the incidence of property surveys be linked to the visitation process and that the funding of surveys will be as set out above.

He recognised the concern regarding Finance & Property Committee not taking into account the needs of other committees, but assured Synod that, with the Field Officer on board, there would be greater emphasis on such concerns. **Mr C Bonner** (Annan) expressed concern regarding the wording of the resolution which suggested that surveys are limited to the visitation process. If there is an urgent problem regarding a church property, will it be included or, if it is not part of the visitation process, will it be disregarded? **Revd T Huc** noted that Helensburgh had gone through the mission process with Lindsey Sanderson three years ago. What possibility was there as regards a property audit? **Revd H Highton** (retired) emphasised the need to clarify that surveys should include church-owned manses. **Mr R McKillop** (F&P Committee) noted that surveys would cover churches only.

Mr B Walker assured Mr Bonner that urgent requests would always be taken into account and such churches would not be excluded from survey at the appropriate time. Responding to Revd Huc he noted that surveys had not been in place at the time of their mission process. If the church wished to be considered a priority it should submit a request to the Synod Treasurer for consideration at the next F&P Committee. He informed Revd Highton that he himself had been concerned about manses when surveys were being considered. If he so wished, Mr Walker would take this back to F&P for possible recommendation to PPS.

Resolution 1 was put to the vote and accepted.

Mr Walker presented Resolution 2 as printed in the Synod papers:

2. This meeting of Synod welcomes the proposed visitation process and agrees to its introduction on a pilot basis initially.

Revd G Smith thought that the pilot process had already been carried out with the four original surveys. **Revd M Buchanan**, while in favour of the process, but stressed that ecumenical partnerships should be reviewed on an ecumenical basis. This is the concern of the review document which she had recommended to Synod.

Revd J Adamson noted that the process was still being piloted initially till the new structures could cope.

Resolution 2 was put to the vote and accepted.

Report on Cuba

Revd C Smyth in presenting the report thanked the Synod Moderator for his earlier reflections in the course of worship. On behalf of Synod he had handed over a cheque in Cuba following September Synod agreement to fundraising to support the Cuban church's printing needs. Initial hopes that we might raise £1,000 were far exceeded and the cheque totalled £2,100. This was a wonderful offering including the offering from the Synod Meeting and responses from 29 churches. This would be well used and she had learned that the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba had received a diploma for one of its publications - a quarterly devotional publication **Su Voce** - at the Havana Book Fair. It is fair to say that this was a genuine commendation by a government department which has had an increasingly positive relationship with the church.

At our partner church's Synod Meeting, there had been a change of leadership. This meant that several of the ministers (whom we knew from their recent visits to Scotland and who had led the Church in Cuba through difficult times of discrimination) had now retired, at least from senior leadership positions. However, several of those newly appointed are already known to us and Revd Smyth felt that this boded well for the

continued flourishing of our partnership, which is as important to the Cubans as it is to us. Leaders from two of their three presbyteries had specifically asked for more local church involvement. If any of our churches wish to enter into local partnership they should contact Revd Smyth; it would be most helpful if there was a link person with access to e-mail. There will be a visit to Cuba later in the year led by Douglas Hay, hopefully over Christmas and New Year. Whilst this timing may make it difficult for some people to go, the Mission & Ecumenical Committee felt it would be a positive experience to celebrate a major Christian festival with our partners.

There are of course links to slavery in Cuba. Revd Carlos Piedra's grandparents had been slaves from Africa. Their Women's Union celebrates its 80th anniversary in the near future and Revd Smyth hoped that our Women's Union would send appropriate greetings. The Synod Moderator, as Convener of the Assembly's Training Committee, had made some good contacts with a seminary and institute of theological studies. The seminary would be grateful for any gifts of books on Calvin and Knox which could be routed through Revd Smyth, but they would also be grateful for more contemporary works. Revd Smyth and the Moderator had been impressed by a visit to the ballet and had brought back 4 programmes – two to be presented to the Edinburgh Festival Director and an equivalent in Glasgow. She would welcome suggestions as to where the other two might go. There are opportunities for a 'gap' year with our partner church, for people of any age, through World Exchange; one URC woman from south of the border is there currently. She also encouraged people to consider going there on holiday, not just on the beaches but to local towns, villages and city centres. They might approach Revd Smyth regarding contact with a church. She would look forward to hearing how people fared.

Church & Society: Resolutions on Trident

The Synod Clerk, in the absence of Revd John Young, Committee Secretary, through illness, presented Mr Young's report on these resolutions.

The strategic significance of the deep sea lochs on Scotland's western seaboard became clear when the Trident nuclear weapons system, developed during the Cold War, was sited at Faslane, with weapons stockpiles sited adjacently.

Many of Scotland's Churches have a long history of opposition to nuclear weapons, rooted in their own social traditions.

- Catholic Bishops of Scotland in 1982 stated 'If it is immoral to use these [nuclear] weapons it is also immoral to threaten their use'.
- In May 2006 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has restated its long-held view of the immorality of nuclear weapons and called on the Government not to renew Trident. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 2006, said 'To replace Trident would represent a further announcement to the world that safety and security can only be achieved by threatening mass destruction; this is to encourage others to believe the same, and thus to hasten proliferation.'
- In April 2006 the Catholic Bishops of Scotland called for Trident not to be replaced but rather decommissioned and the money saved to be spent on programmes of aid and development.
- The United Reformed Church position is reflected in the paper containing the resolutions.

The objections of the Churches share many of the arguments of those in civil society opposed to maintaining nuclear weapons. It is, we believe, contrary to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty which is, in effect, an agreement between nuclear states (who undertake to reduce progressively their reliance on nuclear weapons) and non-nuclear states (who undertake not to develop such capacity). It is the ultimate in hypocrisy for the UK to argue that Iran, for example, should not be developing a nuclear weapons capability, while at the same time extending the UK capability in scope and in time.

In an innovative joint message for New Year 2007 the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Right Reverend Alan McDonald and the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland, Cardinal Keith O'Brien, stated:

'This year there is a wonderful opportunity for our Westminster parliamentarians finally to take steps to fulfil the obligations this country made many years ago to rid itself of nuclear weapons. We pray that our MPs will make a stand for the principles of peace, and will have the courage to refuse to endorse a replacement for Trident. Peace cannot be advanced by the commissioning of new weapons of mass destruction.'

[We know that this wonderful opportunity has been spurned – though not without political cost to the UK Government. This means that those who oppose the maintenance and renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons system on ethical grounds need to keep making their opposition known – so that the decision to maintain and enhance the weapons is reversed.]

A petition sponsored by the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Catholic Church in Scotland and supported by Christians from many denominations, stating that Trident should not be replaced was handed into the Ministry of Defence with around 20,000 signatures on 1st December 2006. The Synod Clerk then moved Resolutions 1 & 2 as printed in the paper:

1. The National Synod of Scotland endorses the statement made by the Baptist Methodist and United Reformed Church leaders on 4th December 2006 regarding the renewal of Trident weapons system.

2. The National Synod of Scotland asserts that the retention and renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons system is morally indefensible, and is incompatible with our commitment to peacemaking. Therefore

- a) **We call on the UK government to reconsider its commitment to trident.**
- b) **We call upon Scottish parliament to assert its opposition to plans for the continuing presence of Trident weapons system.**
- c) **We call on churches, as part of their commitment to peacemaking, to write to their local MPs and MSPs urging the removal of the Trident nuclear weapons system.**

The resolutions were seconded formally by Revd Craig Jesson.

Resolution 1 was put to the vote and carried.

Resolution 2 was put to Synod. Revd K Price proposed three amendments as follows (shown in italics), seconded by Revd C Smyth:

2. The National Synod of Scotland *notes the decision taken by the House of Commons but continues to assert that the retention and renewal of the Trident nuclear weapons system is morally indefensible, and is incompatible with our commitment to peacemaking. Therefore*

- a) **We call on the UK government to reconsider its commitment to trident.**
- b) **We call upon Scottish parliament to assert its opposition to plans for the continuing presence of Trident weapons system *in Scotland.***
- c) **We call on churches, as part of their commitment to peacemaking, *to continue to write to their local MPs and MSPs urging the removal of the Trident nuclear weapons system.***

The first and the third were accepted. **Revd P Jupp** spoke against the insertion of "*in Scotland*" in paragraph b. **Mr C Bonner** emphasised the inclusion of the words "in Scotland."

The amendment was put to the vote with 28 voting in favour, 23 voting against and 12 abstaining. ***The amendment was therefore carried.***

The Synod Moderator put the substantive resolution to Synod. **Revd P Jupp** saw a big opportunity to move forward as Church in ways not shown before. He spoke from experience having worked with nuclear weapons for 8 years. He argued for the challenge to Synod to speak and, with authority, to establish an understanding and come to moral decisions with reference to nuclear arms and cited his experience working with the group which produced the *Peacemaking* document. Those at opposite ends of entrenched viewpoints can come to common decision. He commended Shawlands URC for engaging the local community and church in discussions on Trident. He urged an end to posturing as the strength of any argument is in understanding the debate. Removal of weapons systems would not necessarily result in saving money.

Revd Murdoch MacKenzie (retired) spoke from his experience, living in Argyll and corresponding with MPs and MSPs. It is important to call the Scottish Parliament to account. MPs and MSPs will say they are expressing their own – or their party's – opinion rather than speaking on behalf of actual constituents, therefore there is ambiguity in the interpretation of their role. **Revd M Bunting** referred to the third clause in the resolution which reminds us that the approach to parliamentarians is part of our commitment. He referred to the Augustine banner which would be available for loan. **Ms Zam Walker** (ordinand) referred to her experiences at Greenham Common and conversations with her father who worked for British Aerospace and how they found they were coming from the same place. She commended what Paul Jupp had said and backed an unequivocal call for removal of Trident.

The Synod Clerk in response simply noted that the Augustine banner was featured on the Synod website.

The Synod Moderator put the substantive resolution to Synod, which was carried.

Announcements and Awards

Mr S Cutler, YCWDO, supplied information on NEXUS, the offspring of a union between the Scottish Churches Christian Exhibition and Big Saturday who were mounting this event in SECC, Glasgow, from 23 to 25 August 2007. This would be showcasing good practice and telling Good News and he hoped our churches would support it.

He then announced that Morison Memorial Church in Clydebank had qualified for the Child Friendly Church Award and the Synod Moderator presented the appropriate certificate to Mr Barclay Bannister, Youth Elder at the church.

Mr Douglas Hay, Convener of M&E Committee, was happy to report that 27 churches have now registered their commitment to Fairtrade in Scotland. The latest was Bathgate URC, but their representatives had gone so the presentation will be made at a later date. About 50% of our churches have now registered and he strongly suspected that there were churches which had not registered but fully promoted fair trade. Any church interested in pursuing this was invited to contact him.

PPS Report

The Synod Clerk presented the report with an update on the vacancy for the Ecumenical Officer which would be advertised in the April issue of *Reform* and circulated to churches. He also noted that some Synods had begun to review their Moderator after two years in post and that the Synod Treasurer and himself were putting arrangements in place to do so in the very near future. He then presented the report to Synod. There were no questions.

The Synod Clerk drew attention to the appointments matrix which had been circulated with papers and sought nominations under restructuring from Area Councils, Committees, Local Churches and Individuals. This was a mammoth exercise and he looked for a big response. There is an initial deadline of 26 March to coincide with a PPS meeting and a further deadline of 30 April. The Nominations Committee will meet in the first week of May to consider nominations received.

Structures: Resolutions

The Synod Clerk presented the update on Structures and addressed the resolutions attached. Resolution 1 addressed the interim situation prior to the legal removal of Area Councils and the wording had been agreed with Revd James Breslin, Clerk to the General Assembly:

1. Synod requests all Area Councils in Scotland to resolve that from 10th July 2007 they devolve all their responsibilities to the Synod of Scotland or to its committees and to recognise that the Synod meeting or duly authorised committees thereof will, until the removal of Area Councils from the structure of the United Reformed Church, act as XXXX Area Council.

The resolution was accepted.

The Clerk then addressed Resolution 2 which was intended to provide stimulus for Link meetings at the residential Synod meeting in September:

2. Synod agrees that four enablers be appointed to prime and encourage meetings of Links at the September Synod and that these enablers be prepared and resourced for this task.

Synod agreed.

PPS Report: Revised Standing Orders

The Synod Clerk reminded Synod of the notice of motion given at the September 2006 Synod, whereby changes to Standing Orders had been proposed to regularise the situation regarding voting for Ecumenical Guests. PPS Committee had further determined that changes should be made to the Standing Orders to reflect restructuring to take place from July 2007. The Clerk therefore moved the revised Standing Orders which incorporated the necessary changes:

Synod agrees to adopt the Synod Standing Orders, as revised in March 2007 to take account of Synod restructuring.

Synod agreed.

PPS Report: Consensus Decision-Making

Revd Lindsey Sanderson reported that she was acting as one of a URC group looking at how to move towards a consensus decision-making model and procedures for meetings. The group had been supported by Jill Tabard, an Australian adviser to WCC. A document has been produced which will offer an introduction and look at the roots of a process of consensus decision-making. The Clerk to the General Assembly has given advice in relation to standing orders. The document will be presented to Mission Council next week and the process will be used for Mission Council and other meetings throughout 2007 and at General Assembly in 2008. Synods will be encouraged to use the process as the programme rolls out. The Synod of Scotland will await the decisions of Mission Council next week and arrange induction to the process as appropriate. We look forward to exploring the process in this Synod following initial attempts at Tulliallan in September.

PPS Report: Resolution on Section O Process

The Synod Clerk presented the paper circulated to representatives and explained that this was a technical resolution following the failure of General Assembly 2006 to approve Resolution 9, which had subsequently been referred to Area Councils. However, Resolution 8, which had been passed at Assembly referred to Part 1 of the Section O Process and the correct version of that document had to be approved by Synod, hence the resolution:

In accordance with Resolution 8 (General Assembly 2006) Synod agrees the adoption of the second version of the above paper on Part 1 of the Section O Process.

Synod agreed.

The Synod Moderator thanked the Synod Clerk and Lindsey.

Synod Day: 23 June 2007

Revd John Wylie, as Convener of the Planning Group, reminded representatives of the presentation which had been displayed at lunchtime: Synod Day – “*Walk On!*” The date of 23 June should now be in all church diaries and the event takes place at Perth Racecourse, near Scone Palace. There is also a spread in the current edition of *SynNEWS*. The underlying theme is: *Building Confidence in the Church* and we will have a good time worshipping and working together. The day is still developing, but arrangements are well in place. An information pack will be circulated to churches in the next week or so and will include posters and leaflets. Some idea of numbers attending will be requested. The site is big so we are looking to accommodate big numbers – as big as 500 if possible. Notification of numbers will aid planning. Mr Wylie noted that at the start he had been quite apprehensive about the project, but now found it very exciting.

Close of “Words” Exercise

Revd Mary Buchanan presented feedback on the “Synod Words” exercise earlier – a copy of which is attached as an appendix to the minute.

She underlined that representatives must not simply say “O yes, that’s what we did”, but take the results back to the churches – “WE will check up on you!” This is part of the process of moving the Church forward. She highlighted the words and the actions developed from them. It was agreed that this should form part of the minute of the meeting.

Thanks and Next Meeting

The Synod Moderator expressed thanks to the Synod Clerk for preparation for today’s event and to Patsi for her administration – and for the child care duties which she had undertaken. He also expressed thanks to Nicola and Hannah for organising the roving microphones in the afternoon session; to Peter Ranscombe and Mark Kirkbride for their technological wizardry which was not yet finished; to Saughtonhall URC for hosting the event and for seating arrangements which had produced an effective jumble of people in a good atmosphere; and to Gordon Smith on his debut as Synod Officer.

We will next meet again at Tulliallan Police College from 14 to 16 September 2007, the first of two consecutive residential Synods as a result of restructuring and our return to Tulliallan from 29 February to 2 March 2008.

Benediction: The meeting closed with all saying The Grace to each other.

Appendix: Outcome of Words Exercise

ECUMENICAL

ACTIONS

- Better communication
- Identify global issues
- Work together more
- Covenant
- More discussion with partners
- Social activities with partners
- Serious consideration of change

FORWARD THINKING

- No change from within = no survival
- Congregations to be less minister-dependent

ECUMENICAL

COMMUNITY

- Facilitating better relations with other churches
- Good leadership
- More young worshippers

FAITH

- More prayer
- Holiday clubs
- Link in to global and local issues
- Modernise message

MOVING ON:

- Talk, listen, share
- Developing people

BUILDING THE CHURCH

- Building children's ministries
- Involving the community in the life of the church