

**UNITED REFORMED CHURCH - SYNOD OF SCOTLAND
GLASGOW AREA COUNCIL**

Minutes of Meeting Nr 25, held at Giffnock URC, on Wednesday 10 May 2006,
at 19.30 hours.

Attendance: Members (24/39)

Barrhead; Jim Boulton, Rev David Coleman, Rena Hannah

Morison Memorial; Barclay Bannister, Iris Gillan, Rev David Pattie

Essenside; -

Giffnock; Sarah Brown, William Pook

Mosspark United; Rev Helen Pattie (Acting Area Convenor), Rev Seija Wallace

Pollokshields; Rev Paul Jupp (Area Treasurer)

Priesthill/Shawlands JP: Rev David M Taylor

Shawlands; Lesley Richmond, Robert Wright: Priesthill; -

Rutherglen; Elinor McCulloch

Drumchapel Churches' Partnership; Rev Kathryn Price

Moderator; Rev John Humphreys

Glasgow-Based Synod Officers; Rev Mary Buchanan (Ecumenical Officer),

Rev John (Jack) Dyce (Education Secretary)

Retired Ministers; Rev Peter Arthur, Rev Mary Barr

Others; Myra Rose (Co-Opt Area Pastoral Committee),

Patrick Smyth (Co-Opt Synod Pastoral Committee/Area Secretary),

Maureen Stewart (Co-Opt Area Pastoral Committee Secretary).

Visitor; Simon Peters (FURY).

Apologies; Rev Ian Baillie (NSM), Rev Jim Graham (Ret Min), Rev Leslie Newton (Ret Min),

John Park (Pollokshields), Rev John Sanderson (Acting Area Pastoral Convenor),

Rev Carolyn Smyth (Essenside), Graham Templeton (Rutherglen), Zam Walker (Ordinand),

Rev John Wilson (Ret Min).

25.1 WELCOME

25.1.1 The Acting Convenor, Rev Helen Pattie, welcomed everyone, and invited Sarah Brown to lead the opening devotions.

25.2 OPENING DEVOTIONS

25.2.1 On a glorious evening, Sarah asked us whether we'd had a stressful day - we should learn to prioritise on what we can do well. We are called to be ministers, not messiahs. Sarah led Council in prayer.

25.3 MINUTES OF MEETING NR 24, 8 FEBRUARY 2006

25.3.1 The Minutes were approved on the motion of Barclay Bannister and Rena Hannah, and signed by Helen.

25.4 MATTERS ARISING FROM COUNCIL NR 24 OF 8 FEBRUARY 2006:

a) (Para.24.4b, page 2) Training

Patrick Smyth reported that he and Barclay had attended the 9 March TLS night at Synod Offices at which the Rev Stanley Jackson had travelled a long distance to be the main facilitator. The attendance was extremely poor, perhaps due to haphazard publicity. Stanley gave a guided tour of the content and ethos of the 2-year

Foundation, three 1-year Gateway, the Lite, and some upcoming modules. To become an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher, one was expected to successfully complete the Foundation and Gateway to Worship modules, taking a minimum total of three years. It took five years to go to the Diploma Level awarded by the University of Wales - Bangor; something Barclay stated he may consider. Helen felt the enquiry, that we had started at the Council meeting at Priesthill URC in August 2005, had reached the end of the road.

b) (Para.24.4d, page 2) Area Youth Proposals

Patrick reported that the Drumchapel Churches Partnership (DCP) held Games Nights from time to time and suggested that, to encourage our young people, we would ask DCP if it could invite other young URC participants to these. Also agreed that we would enquire about Morison's Wet BBQ Club when it re-started in September, any other Glasgow youth events, and request the Survey data from Stewart Cutler as far as Glasgow Area churches were concerned. **Patrick to follow up.**

c) (Para.24.4e, page 2) Reflections on Pulpit Exchange 2006

Helen noted that the two Sundays of the Scheme had passed and that we were therefore in a position to reflect and decide on what to do next. She reported that Rev Carolyn Smyth had offered to facilitate another scheme if Council so wished. Rev Mary Buchanan noted that the second Sunday had fallen on a local holiday weekend. There was a debate as to whether it was possible to widen the scheme to include all Ministers (et al) residing in the Area; there were far more of such people than churches! Mary, and Jack Dyce, offered their services. David Coleman noted that this was the first time he had led worship at Essenside URC, and felt that such exposure for preachers and churches was a good and healthy thing. Helen asked the Secretary to thank Carolyn for Council. Kathryn Price recommended we fix a time well in advance so that churches' and preachers' diaries can be effectively blocked off. A range of February 4/11/18 was agreed - **for investigation by Executive.**

d) (Para.24.7b, page 3) Synod Resolution, September 2005

Patrick reported Synod's clarification, as requested, that the resolution did cover Ecumenical Guests and Ecumenical Representatives.

e) (Para.24.13.1, page5) St Albert's RC Primary School

Helen asked Paul Jupp to update Council. He explained the background, and how the difficult situation had blown over - the protest group had not been well supported. Paul intimated that Andrew Sarle was to speak at a seminar on 1 June at 7pm. Only PCT churches were invited - Paul advocated a strong inter-faith element in addition, to increase effectiveness.

Paul also intimated the URC-supported event, "Sacred Space - Sacred Steps", 2pm on 11 June.

25.5 NOTICE OF AOCB (AT ITEM 13)

25.5.1 Helen accepted five requested items.

25.6 SYNOD STRUCTURES GROUP (SSG) REPORT

25.6.1 Helen introduced what turned out to be a detailed and wide-ranging discussion on the SSG Report, which had been distributed to members who had responded to the invitation to apply to Patrick for copies (and was also downloadable from the Synod website).

25.6.2 As it had considered that the full SSG Report was too long and unwieldy to address as a whole in Council, Executive had decided to ask Council to examine in more detail the

procedures suggested for the Scoping of Pastorates and Deployment of Ministry, from Local Church to New Synod (should Assembly ratify the new URC structure at its meeting in July). This was the subject closest to the heart of what Council currently made formal decisions on. Patrick tabled Executive's discussion paper for Council.

- 25.6.3 In summary the main points raised were;
- 25.6.4 The guiding principle of the New Synod was to serve the mission of the local congregations;
- 25.6.5 The Link Pastoral Group was to be the most important part of the new structure for local churches in communicating with the Synod Pastoral Committee;
- 25.6.6 The SSG suggest a make up of the 'Western Link' - there was no adverse reaction;
- 25.6.7 The SSG had evolved from the Glasgow Area Council Resolution to Synod, but all Synods and the URC itself were working on structure changes at the moment and that these will be debated at Assembly as well as Synod in 2006, in their various forms. All thirteen Synods' structures would have to "sense-check" effectively with what Assembly agreed;
- 25.6.8 The outcomes of the Intentional Church process needed to be at the heart of the process of structure change;
- 25.6.9 There were discussions as to the powers of the Link Pastoral Group to make decisions - or are they just 'Talking Shops' which have to refer matters up for action?
- 25.6.10 The meeting clearly felt that the Link Pastoral Group ought to be able to make real time decisions on some matters, which should be clearly identified; perhaps there was a question of "trust" that was missing, in the proposals, between region and Synod;
- 25.6.11 There were concerns expressed that we would be setting up a 'Pastoral Executive' with too much power in one place; an observation made that in Pastoral terms we were lacking in opportunities for closer collegiality between Ministers - this needed some follow-up action - e.g. walks?;
- 25.6.12 It was also observed that Council was concentrating on Pastoral matters and that we were perhaps neglecting the work of the other proposed Committees in the structure (This had been Executive's idea);
- 25.6.13 Helen made an observation that, when Area Executive as a stand-alone was in abeyance, the Area Pastoral Committee combined well with it to work successfully.
- 25.6.14 There was a plea to remove hoops and hurdles, in order to simplify structures and avoid exhausting timescales.

25.7 OTHER NEW BUSINESS

a) Approval of New Constitution - Mossspark United Church

Helen, also Co-Minister of Mossspark Methodist/URC, pointed out that her Methodist colleague, Rev Seija Wallace, was present at the meeting. Helen described the new Constitution as a "working document". She then invited Rev Mary Buchanan, Synod Ecumenical Officer, to briefly speak to this document, which had been sent to Council members beforehand. Mary reported that the text was built on the generic form of words agreed by the Scottish Churches' National Sponsoring Body (SCNSB). It had been approved by the Church Meeting, Circuit, Synod and SCNSB - and now needed this Council's formal approval to proceed.

Patrick noted that in para. 6 - "Ordained Ministry", that not only would there be shared ministry as at present but there was also provision of the option to transfer to a single alternating ministry when one or other of the current ministers' terms came to an end. **Council formally approved the new Constitution** (draft 16 November 2005); and undertook to support and assist the United Church to implement its provisions as best it could.

b) Safe Church

Agreed we would await further recommendations that were promised by Mission Council, per the Synod Pastoral Committee, before considering further implementation.

c) Intentional Church (IC)

Helen sought to ask Council members and churches, with Rev John Humphreys present, as to how they were taking IC forward.

She had found the contribution by Rev Kristin Ofstad, a member of the Synod IC Focus Group, at Nairn March Synod, the most helpful she had heard on the subject.

Patrick reported that PPS were to review the process at its residential May meeting.

Paul asked how we were to enable IC conversations to take place; firstly by understanding why it was necessary to do so, what is this journey about? What are the new ways to ask the questions?

Lesley Richmond said Shawlands URC was speaking with the User Groups on its premises.

David Coleman said Barrhead URC is looking at the future, recognising the process as being part of an IC programme; Myra Rose sought a real effort to engage with the three sister Barrhead churches.

Elinor McCulloch saw IC giving more direction, to find out where we are just now.

Paul reported that Helensburgh URC were helped to recognise identity through the local Saltire Society.

David M Taylor saw the "CRCW" meetings as part of the IC process identifying need.

Barclay Bannister saw building re-ordering as a component of IC.

Maureen Stewart saw IC change as ongoing, not waiting till a new Minister arrives at Giffnock URC.

John Humphreys responded to what he had heard thus far;

IC is not a programme that churches had been undertaking for months, but describes a process that is harder than that - "what sort of church do we feel called to be?"

"what is God like?"

"therefore what are we to be like?"

Silence ensued for a time.

Patrick thought that the silence was indicative of where many churches and individuals were at in the IC process.

Barclay felt we should use such times of silence, breath them in, and in our own (or God's) time, come to realise answers to such challenges.

Helen felt it was too easy to identify the negatives, that we should take strength and encouragement from what is already in place, and that these were not easy questions in modern times.

The Moderator announced the imminent publication of the IC Bulletin #6!

d) New Synod Field Officer for Local Mission & Development

Patrick reported that **Rev Jan Adamson** had been appointed by the Synod as its new Field Officer. She would commence her duties in July. Council will wish to co-operate with her on the question of Church Visitation.

25.8 CORRESPONDENCE

- 25.8.1 The Secretary circulated the Correspondence folder, for members to request copies.
- 25.8.2 He intimated that a service of thanksgiving for the life of the late Rev Hamish Smith was to be held at Morningside United Church, Edinburgh, on 25 May; the committal had been private.
- 25.8.3 He also mentioned a possible source of grant - Faithworks 2006.

25.9 LOCAL CHURCH NOMINATIONS TO AREA COUNCIL

a) (24.9.1) Area Youth Secretary

Patrick reported that no new names were forthcoming; it was **agreed** that Patrick would continue to act temporarily.

25.10 AREA NOMINATIONS TO SYNOD COMMITTEES

a) Church and Society 2006/09

Patrick reported that **Rev Ian Baillie** was eligible for one more three-year term and that Ian was willing to continue, if Council could find no-one else. Council **agreed** to nominate Ian, on the motion of Revs Paul Jupp & David Pattie. Rev John Humphreys stated that Ian was a great asset in C&S.

Also **agreed**, that **John Sanderson** would be invited to continue to attend the Synod Pastoral Committee, as Council's representative, when he could. Patrick was a PPS Co-Opt appointment (until 2006 - 9 September meeting).

25.11 TREASURER'S REPORT

- 25.11.1 (24.11.3) Rev Paul Jupp reported that he had yet to approach churches for their contribution to the fundraising effort of £500 agreed by Council previously.

25.12 REPORTS (written copies attached to the principal copy of these Minutes)

a) Moderator

Helen asked Rev John Humphreys to initiate a conversation on URC policy concerning Lay Presidency (LP) at Holy Communion.

John commenced by advising that there were 24 pages on LP which were downloadable from the URC website (*The Manual, Section F - "Presidency at the Sacraments").

The URC is a union of three traditions at present, this is not a compromise - rather the URC seeks to affirm the insights of all three. Pre-1972, the Congregationalists had an open attitude to LP, the Presbyterians a closed one, and the Churches of Christ came somewhere in between - here, Rev Peter Arthur (ex-CofC) stated that the C of C used Ordained Elders to Preside, as well as Ministers.

There varied Ecclesiology/Theology and Ecumenical issues, as many URCs are in LEPs.

The URC affirms a wider pattern of LP that many of its ecumenical partners, who often do not accept this wide interpretation, for historical and ecclesiological reasons.

We devised a new way within Equipping the Saints, now all patterns accepted by URC.

A bottom - line balance is now held, whereby the ordinance is taken seriously and carried out properly. Our episcopate is for the Area Council to necessarily have the responsibility to authorise LP and permit individuals to preside, in certain specific ways.

Area Councils are now accustomed to deciding whether a Local Church can call a Minister, permitting LP is no different.

LP, called from the Church Meeting as a desire for LP at Communion; note here the confusion whereby our Elders are actually Ordained, e.g. at Mosspark M/URC.

Lay People given

- one congregation

- a period of time.

At the request of Church Meeting or Elders, Area Council are responsible.

The norm; keep an annual review of those given LP authority, reviewed in the light of comments made during the year.

There have been talks about trans-Area recognition.

"Pastoral necessity" has to be interpreted responsibly, not as a way to plan holidays. AC/Elders decide policy on this; important they take LP seriously, that good order is maintained, and that the Area Council takes care to express episcopate carefully, albeit it will vary locally.

Barclay questioned ACs right to say "no" to LP at house communions; John queried how we look at this, how personality may "intrude" - not straightforward. The "Body of Christ" decides. David Pattie spoke employing a reserved sacrament; John not sure we have this understanding.

John Humphreys highlighted the Equipping the Saints questions of 1995;

- a) A Minister of Word and Sacraments should preside when available; *Manual F 5.1.5a.**
- b) Pastoral necessity, only when Area Council decides that no Minister is available, the Area Council, Area Council must make provision for LP, Elders considered first; *Manual F 5.1.5b.**
- c) Authority to preside should not be granted for a period longer than a year; *Manual 5.1.5c.**

Paul Jupp said we should be aware to love and care, and not devalue people.

Mary Buchanan thought that LEPs should also consider their interpretations of "pastoral necessity"; Seija Wallace, quoted the new Mossspark UC Constitution; she said it goes along with URC practice.

John H said we must discuss our meaning of "pastoral necessity"; this is an awesome privilege, not assent. He re-iterated that the Church Meeting was the basic council - to authorise LP

He recommended everyone read "Noughts and Crosses", by Malorie Blackman.

b) Area Pastoral Committee

The written report from Rev John Sanderson, Acting Area Pastoral Convenor, which had been distributed previously, was tabled.

Maureen Stewart, Pastoral Secretary, asked Council to agree with the Committee's recommendation that it approves the Sabbatical of Rev David Coleman as presented - **Council agreed.**

Council noted the Committee's action in seeking to appoint a three-person Review group, to look at all the provisions of the Priesthill - Shawlands URCs Joint Pastorate by its fifth anniversary.

Council members were encouraged to attend Barrhead URC on Sunday 21 May at the Ordination of new Elders (**Post-Meeting Note; 28 May**).

Rev Mary Barr praised the quiet work behind the scenes of **Lyndsay Weir**, who acts for Council, per its Pastoral Committee, in its care for Retired Ministers and their spouses and widows.

Helen said that **Rev David Pattie** will mark twenty years in stipendiary Ministry in 2007.

- c) **Area Ecumenical Contact/ACTS RAG**
Kathryn Price stated there was no report.
- d) **Synod PPS**
Patrick had distributed a written report, this was tabled without further comment.
- e) **Synod Church & Society/Churches' Action**
No report.
- f) **Synod Mission & Ecumenical**
Elinor McCulloch stated there was no report.
- g) **Synod Finance & Property**
Helen welcomed **William Pook**, who would report to the next Council meeting.
- h) **Synod Education**
Kathryn stated there was no report.
Rev Jack Dyce intimated the upcoming retreat at Giffnock URC, on theme of the Hymns of Isaac Watts, and asked for confirmations of attendance by 15 May.
- i) **Synod Pastoral**
In the event, Rev John Sanderson had previously distributed a written report, which Patrick commended.

25.13 AOCB; AS NOTIFIED FROM ITEM 5

- 25.13.1 Helen reported that she had discussed the work of the organisation, Scottish Marriage Care, with Maureen Stewart; she intimated an Information Evening was to take place in the Relationship Centre, 72 Waterloo Street, Glasgow, at 6.30pm on 25 May. Patrick would add information to the next Correspondence folder.
- 25.13.2 Iris Gillan reported that a firm decision, to undertake the major building development plan for Morison Memorial URC, may take up to eighteen months. The project will happen only with the full support of the local authorities, including Scottish Enterprise. West Dunbartonshire had introduced her to potential funders including those from the European Union; while John Sanderson (from the completed Rutherglen URC development) had introduced her to donor Trusts. Council congratulated Simon Peters for organising an event, with his school-friends, which raised £500 for the project. Rev Kathryn Price praised Morison Memorial URC for gaining a Community Award recently from the denominational magazine "Reform".
Helen asked Iris to, without Agenda prompting, bring further significant news to future Council meetings; but particularly when expenditure was required for any work beyond Detailed Planning Stage (which had already been sanctioned).
- 25.13.3 Rev Mary Barr intimated the Flower Festival at Shawlands URC for 20-21 May.
- 25.13.4 Rev Paul Jupp warned that access to Pollokshields URC and neighbouring places of worship will be virtually impossible on the Sunday morning later this year when the 10k Run takes place. Better negotiation will be needed well in advance for the 2007 event.
- 25.13.5 Rev David Coleman offered some seats on the Barrhead bus to other churches, to travel to "Seeds of Hope" in Perth on 17 June.

25.14 NEXT MEETING

- 25.14.1 Wednesday 16 August 2006, Barrhead URC, 7.30pm.
- 25.14.2 Rev Kathryn Price's offer to lead devotions was accepted with thanks.
- 25.14.3 **Stephen Smyth**, GCT Secretary, would be a guest speaker at November Council.

25.15 BENEDICTION

- 25.15.1 Helen closed the meeting.
- 25.15.2 She also thanked Giffnock Church for its hospitality.