



**Church of Scotland
Presbytery of Edinburgh & West Lothian**

Steering Group (SG)

**Newhaven Church (NC)
North Leith Parish Church (NLPC)
South Leith Parish Church (SLPC)**

***Notes / minutes of Meeting No 9
Held on 30 October 2022 @ NLPC***

Agenda	Item	Notes
1	Welcome	The Chair welcomed those Steering Group (SG) Members present
2	Opening Prayer	The meeting was constituted by prayer – Chair
3	In attendance	K McKay (Chair), P. Bluett, I May, A Lamont, J Robertson, S Lowe, G Booth, C MacNeill, Sheena Glen, Keith Martin
	Apologies In attendance - scribe	T Bell, M Doig, J Hodge, A Rutherford S Robb
4	Approval of Minutes of meeting held on 25 September 2022	These had been previously circulated. They were approved, subject to an agreement that there be a slight modification to paragraph 7 to reflect more accurately what had been done in advance of the joint congregational meeting on 16 October. The Chair would circulate an amended version of the minutes.

Agenda	Item	Notes
5	Basis of Union – Template (BoUT)	<p data-bbox="824 252 2175 400">It was noted at the outset that the BoUT that had been issued to members was based on an old-style template. There had been several enquiries made as to whether a more up-to-date version would be made available. So far the answer had been no, but a further enquiry would be made, on the basis this was now being asked for by members of the SG.</p> <p data-bbox="824 456 1305 488">The BoUT as it currently stands</p> <p data-bbox="824 501 2175 791">It was noted that there were several sections of the BoUT that could remain as they stand – including those on Kirk Session, Congregational Management and Manse. But the section on the Minister would need to change, to ensure equal status of both Ministers involved – both will be entitled to a “living”; neither will be an employee. Every tenure will be on a renewable basis. One Minister will be a moderator of the Kirk Session, while the other will not. Further, an overarching point to bear in mind is that the template document which has been circulated is dealing with two churches coming together in union; we are concerned here with bringing three churches together in a new entity.</p> <p data-bbox="824 804 1420 836">What the BoUT does – and does not do</p> <p data-bbox="824 849 2175 1326">Iain noted that the BoUT formed a point of focus, reducing the risk that discussion in the SG would otherwise drift. There was also a legal requirement ultimately to have the document in place. However, the group agreed that in some respects focus on it, certainly at present, was a red herring. An important consideration would be the work that would go under that to form the meat on the bones; things we would likely not put into the document, but would form a key part of how the coming together of the three churches would operate in practice. It was clear from conversations with people within the three congregations, and in the wider community, that concerns people had were around what the changes would mean for where they worshipped on a Sunday morning (if indeed they chose to continue to do so), what would happen to the foodbank given the designation of NLPC buildings as category B, etc. Whatever we came up with as a Basis of Union document wouldn't address local concerns. There had been a sense at the most recent joint congregational meeting of a perception that there were a number of key questions for which there were as yet no answers, including overall vision for the future.</p> <p data-bbox="824 1339 1570 1370">Worship and mission – short-life working groups</p>

The group agreed that this was the appropriate time to begin to put meat on the bones of how the future might look, starting with the topics of worship and mission. Two short-life working groups would be set up, one focussed on each of these topics.

Worship

The focus here should be on what is working well at present, and what was working less well and could be done differently. It would be important to retain elements of approach to worship that are currently proving successful, perhaps with tweaks as needed, rather than risk “throwing the baby out with the bath water”. It may be appropriate, too, to look at what was being done elsewhere— there are resources bringing information about this together in one place that might be useful. The website “Fresh Expressions of Church” may be a good starting point. A key thing to look at would be how we could create an environment where people without an existing church connection could come to services and relate them in some way to themselves and their own lives. This could start with practical elements, such as readings being done from phones rather than from a physical copy of the Bible.

Mission

It was envisaged we would look at how we do mission at the moment. And how it needs to work in future, fitting it into the Five Marks of Mission. It would be important to focus on how to get people to engage with the Church of Scotland, in the context of declining numbers while some other churches outside C of S have high levels of attendance.

Operation of the short-life working groups

It would be for the groups to determine their own administrative arrangements – who would organise agreeing dates, etc. The expectation would be that they would report back to each meeting of the SG. And ultimately they should come up with initial drafts of documents setting out proposals as to how they may envisage things working in the area they were looking at, for discussion with the wider SG. It was expected the process of agreeing these would be iterative.

The membership of the groups would be as follows:

Worship:

Iain

Peter
Colin
Gavin
Sheena
Jen

Mission:

Iain
Peter
Stewart
John (if in agreement on return from holiday)
Susan

Future working of the SG and short- life working groups

It was recognised that thought would have to be given as to whether monthly meetings of the SG would be sufficient from the start of the New Year onwards, or whether there was a need to make them more frequent, perhaps once a fortnight. There was brief discussion, too, of whether setting up a WhatsApp group might be an effective way of maintaining communications between meetings. It was, though, recognised that not everyone is comfortable with WhatsApp; and that the effectiveness of face-to-face meetings is not to be underestimated.

The question was raised whether joint services should become twice monthly, rather than just monthly as at present. Whatever decision is reached, it was important that we galvanise the goodwill of the congregations and the general recognition that coming together for worship brought a great deal of positive energy.

Thought would be needed, too, as to how best to involve members of the three congregations, in terms of keeping them up to date and giving them the opportunity to express views. The time after joint services seemed optimum, given that there was generally a good turn out, in comparison to what might be expected at other times. Thought should be given to whether congregational meetings should become monthly, after joint services, as of the beginning of the New Year, though this may depend on level of progress and the extent to which questions could

		<p>be answered. Also, would there be mileage in the SG/short-life working groups asking the congregations for views on particular topics in advance of discussion by the relevant group? Members of the SG/working groups should also give thought to discussing topics with people in their individual congregations, rather than all discussion being as part of the wider group. In all of this there was a need for a balance between seeking views, and adequate direction from the SG.</p> <p>Should congregations be given the opportunity to make suggestions as to the name of the new parish? Ideally this should be a totally different name to the current names of the churches, but relevant to the three areas coming together. Involving congregations in choosing a name might help with identification of where we feel we're going.</p> <p>It was recognised that the presbytery plan would continue to evolve after 31 December 2022.</p> <p>The point was also raised that, for now, three Kirk Sessions remain in existence. The SG could only make suggestions to them. And on the topic of the designation of NLPC buildings as category B, it was agreed that discussion of the future of the buildings by the SG should happen only after this had been discussed by the Kirk Session of North Leith.</p> <p>Communications for those who miss meetings</p> <p>It was agreed that a summary of the statement read out by Karen at the joint congregational meeting re the categorisation of the SLPC, NLPC and NC buildings would be posted on the Towards Our New Parish website.</p>
6	<p>Dates of next meetings</p>	<p>It was agreed that, rather than hold meetings on 20 November and 18 December as originally planned, there would be one meeting for November/December. This would be on Sunday 11th December at 1 pm in NLPC Session House.</p> <p>For 2023, the following dates were agreed, subject to possible change as needed:</p> <p>Sunday 15 January Sunday 19 February Sunday 19 March Sunday 16 April</p>

		Sunday 21 May
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7	Christmas services	<p>The Chair indicated the intention at the moment was to have Watchnight and Christmas Day services at SLPC and NC. These could be a good opportunity to welcome people who would not normally come to church.</p> <p>The December joint service is due to take place on 18 December. The intention is to have a service of lessons and carols, with an opportunity for several members of each of the congregations to become involved. It was noted that the service at NC on that day would usually be an all-age one, with some form of participation by the Sunday School children. Thought would be given to involving the children, in their nativity as part of the lessons and carols. It was recognised, though, that the children would be performing in what would likely be unfamiliar surroundings, and that this may cause some concern for the Sunday School teachers in organising their participation.</p>
8	Close	The Chair closed the meeting with prayer, thanking members for their attendance

Written by: Susan
Vetted by Chair: //2022
Amended: //2022

Date: 31/10/2022
Issued: /2022
Reissued: /2022