

## **FORMAT OF PRESBYTERY MEETINGS - REVIEW SEPTEMBER 2015**

### **BACKGROUND**

In February 2014 the following observations were made about Presbytery. These were:

- A lack of fellowship and the intimidating nature of business meetings
- The time meetings would begin in the evening and the tiredness of Presbyters
- lack of discussion and debate at meetings
- difficulty in recruiting new Presbytery elders.
- Presbytery profile is seen to be too remote and irrelevant to many church members in local congregation

Presbyters were reminded of the three key functions of Presbytery:

- Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through worship, witness, nurture, and service;
- Encouraging, strengthening and supporting the people of God;
- Supervision of the work of the Church within its bounds including appropriate oversight of congregations and ministries.

### **WHAT WOULD WE LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN**

In February 2014, it was suggested that Presbytery should review the format of its business meetings. The desired outcomes of the changes should enable Presbyters:

- to enjoy and celebrate their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ during meetings
- to engage more effectively with the business of presbytery and encourage others (from congregations) to attend meetings
- to work together to plan outreach events for a particular area and to be supported and affirmed by Presbytery
- to employ the talents and gifts of Readers and Presbytery Worship Leaders at times of worship and to experience the breadth of Christian worship.
- to hear about 'Fresh Expressions' of church across the Presbytery
- to learn and share together in workshop activities
- to encourage, strengthen and support congregations across the Presbytery.

In June 2014, it was agreed to pilot a new format of meeting for one year at the end of which, Presbyters would be balloted on whether this would continue.

### **REVIEW**

Throughout the year, every Presbyter (who attended Presbytery) has been given the opportunity to provide feedback (September - 47, December - 23 and March - 30). A copy of all the responses is now available on the Presbytery website. The overall feeling is very positive and the new format has been welcomed by many people. The March Presbytery meeting was received positively because it was felt to be practical and relevant. However at times, Presbyters considered that the time allocated for discussion was too short and there was an insufficient number of comfort breaks. It was also stated that a Saturday meeting two weeks before Christmas wasn't helpful. Furthermore some Presbyters have also expressed their resentment at spending a Saturday at a Presbytery meeting, but have been willing to try it for one year as a pilot study. Presbyters have been positive about how the business session has been handled. While there is little doubt that this new format enables people to feel more relaxed and meet with people from other congregations, there are still questions to be asked over the level of engagement with the wider church. A handful of people attend meetings who are not Presbyters. It is also unclear whether this new format attracts and enables busy people to become involved in the work of Presbytery. Despite this, the new format provides opportunities for congregations to learn and share with one another at workshops and through the use of speakers. The business of Presbytery and worship has also become much more integrated.

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. What have you enjoyed and/or found helpful about this new format of Presbytery meeting?
2. What have you not enjoyed and/or found disappointing about this new format of Presbytery meeting?
3. What changes could be made to make the situation better?
4. Do you think this format of Presbytery should continue?

### **PROPOSED DELIVERENCES:**

#### **Presbytery:**

1. Receives the report
2. accepts the outcome of the ballot, which is in the following terms.

**The Church of Scotland  
Presbytery of Perth**

**VOTING PAPER: 13<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**Please read before voting:**

If you are *in* favour of continuing with a new format of Presbytery meeting (in its present or amended form) put a cross (x) on the upper right-hand space.

If you are *not* in favour of continuing with a new format of Presbytery meeting and would like to return to a status quo (business meetings in the evening), put a cross (x) in the lower right-hand space.

Mark your voting-paper in this way with a cross (x), and put no other mark on your voting-paper or your vote may not be counted.

<b>FOR</b> continuing with a new format of Presbytery meeting	
<b>AGAINST</b> continuing with a new format of Presbytery meeting and returning to the status quo	