

# **DIOCESE of MORAY, ROSS & CAITHNESS ANNUAL LAY REPRESENTATIVES MEETING**

held on Saturday, 18th MAY, 2019 in Kenneth St Hall.



## **MINUTES**

The Eucharist was celebrated in St Andrew's Cathedral by the Provost at 10.00 a.m. with Lay Representatives taking part in the readings and as chalice bearer, before proceeding to Kenneth St Hall.

The Diocesan Secretary, Gail Sanderson, welcomed all the Lay Reps to the Meeting and emphasised, that the meeting was to discuss issues pertaining to Lay Reps, was an opportunity for her to meet directly with Lay Reps and for Lay Reps to meet with each other.

## **AGENDA:**

### **1 DIOCESAN SYNOD FOLLOW-UP**

(i) **Feedback Forms** were introduced 3 years ago by suggestion. Gail was disappointed that the response on 2nd March, 2019 was only 22, as it is a way of assessing improvements/amendments to the way the Synod is arranged. Negative & positive points are forwarded to the Standing Committee for consideration.

The main negative point cited was the problem with the presentations, which were using technology - including audibility & viewing the screen. Gail clarified, that the problem was with the Kingsmills equipment not with the presenters. When Gail voiced the above post-Synod, the management of Kingsmills have frozen the prices for Diocesan Synod 2020, as recompense and the equipment will be checked out the day before.

Suggestions from Lay Reps included the following:

- a) the Presenter "should say at the time", that there is a problem to mitigate the situation.
- b) They supported the idea of a 'dress rehearsal' the day before/ equipment changes are ongoing.

## **(ii) Canons**

Canon 35 is the practical Canon for all Vestries - of Churches' Structures, Furniture & Monuments. The proposed alteration was to include 'the curtilage'. That 'painted glass' remain along with stained glass, as many Highland churches have painted glass.

The Synod had been 100% in favour of the proposal.

Canon 52 relates to 'Dissolving the Information & Communication Board. Many spoke against the proposal at the Synod, including several Lay Reps - primarily because there had been no statement regarding the future plans. Today, Hugh Morison/St Donnan's, Nostie, added, that with 24/7 news, which at times requires an immediate reaction from the SEC Press Office, it also requires oversight and review of what has been said. On the following Monday after the Diocesan Synod, Gail, as Diocesan Secretary, forwarded to the Provincial Office a summary of the comments with the results, that all agreed, with 2 abstentions, against the proposal. At the Provincial Synod in June, the above will be part of the debate before the vote. The decision requires 2/3 majority in each House to pass.

As an outcome of the discussion regarding procedures on voting, Julie Gamble/St Andrew's, Fortrose expressed her personal difficulty with the written definition of the role of Lay Rep "to represent her congregation's views", which she thought paramount and the direction, that one should inform one's vote on issues which are heard during debate in both Diocesan & Provincial Synods, vote accordingly, which may involve a voting change.

John Black/St Margret's, Lossiemouth & Holy Trinity, Elgin suggested it came down to the difference between a delegate & a representative. Gail to forward extra information on the role to Lay/Alt Reps.

## **(iii) Protection Officer's Report**

At the Diocesan Synod, Dr Denise MacFarlane had emphasised how important it is, for members of churches, when visiting a vulnerable people, to have two persons in attendance...."for our own protection". The discussion today included aspects & concerns from then, but also recognised the wisdom behind Dr Denise's advice.

Jen Abbot/St Columba's, Nairn expressed that the Presentation had been an eye opening experience and that there was a real need to follow the Report. Simple precautions could/should be implemented.

Jane McDowell/St Columba's, Grantown-on-Spey spoke of her experience hosting an Open Church by herself and has now been advised, that it would be a wise precaution to avoid this situation.

On her own initiative, Jane has written approval from the family of one of her elderly congregation to visit alone. She also emails pre-visit.

John Black/St Margret's, Lossiemouth & Holy Trinity, Elgin suggested that it was very important to have in place a 'Risk Assessment' rather than no visiting. Later he also suggested that provisions need to be 'traceable' within Church documentation.

Some very small congregations would visit a sick member as a friend rather than as a formal pastoral visit.

Helen Robinson/St Regulus, Cromarty, as an experienced GP, set out how NHS Highland set guidelines for GPs for 'lone working' with vulnerable groups and the sensitivities of patient - Dr confidentiality.

Lay Reps present acknowledged the problem of carrying out this well-intentioned advice from the Protection Officer due to small congregations & limited numbers of volunteers.

Suggestion: to report back points to the Protection Officer.

#### (iv) **Regional Synods**

Gail emphasised the importance & reasons why these were established in this predominantly rural Diocese:

To widen discussion, dispense decisions from Management & to compile own Agenda.

Some items would continue to be sent from the Diocese, but, she repeated, that this was an opportunity to make our own Agenda, for example, local problems, ministry & more. There was also a need to advertise this aspect of the Agenda and that all members of congregations are invited to attend and contribute to discussions.

Gail to contact the 3 Chairs to forward information of Regional Synods to Lay/Alt Reps and she would send list of Regions/Churches to all.

(included at the end)

## **2 THSR UPDATE**

Diocesan churches have been very much involved in this work and have responded to the many requests. Several Lay Reps gave examples on how they are supporting THSR including by knitting blankets.

Washing clothes was most helpful before donating and many of our members had taken soiled donated clothes home to wash.

FYI: the Black Isle Charge Charity Shop donates surplus clothes/ footwear for both adults & children.

Currently, the THSR has no premises

Gail suggested, that people could drop off items to her at the Diocesan Office, Kenneth Street, where they would be uplifted. Those in the east of the Diocese can donate to Moray Supports Refugees, a sister charity.

Containers continue to be shipped to countries in the Middle East (e.g. Syria, Lebanon, Jordan) and in Europe (e.g. Greece).

### **3 COMMUNICATIONS to Gail**

Email: [mrcsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:mrcsecretary@gmail.com)

Tel: 01463 235 008

### **4 MOTHERS' UNION**

A wide-ranging & enthusiastic report of the Mothers' Union, created in 1876, was made by Deborah Munday, Diocesan President & Lay Rep/ St John's, Rothiemurchas. Initially, the group were asked to offer their thoughts on the image of the MU. Consequently, we heard of attempts to modernise by widening out the membership to those, who are not mothers, fathers now attend & young people - 'Mini MU'.

The modern leaflet on MU, Province of Scotland, decorated in MU tartan, was available to all present with details of current Projects clearly laid out, so they are not minuted.

Also, available online are MU website, Twitter & Facebook.

FYI: There is a Report on MU in the Diocese & neighbouring Dioceses in the Diocesan Synod 2019 Booklet by Deborah (final 2 pages).

FYI: Deborah also mentioned, that the MU had made representation at (Westminster)Parliament regarding a Bill going through on Domestic Abuse.

Separately, in Holyrood, the Domestic Abuse Act, 1 April, 2019 is now in force.

### **5 ELECTION of 2 LAY MEMBERS** to serve for one year

on the Administration Board. The following members were voted:

(1) Richard Stanley/St John's, Wick

(2) Ian Foyers/St Mary's, Culloden

There was a request, that a copy of the remit for the post would be most helpful pre-Meeting.

Gail took that on board for the future and gave a brief resume at the meeting.

— — — — **LUNCH** — — — *several Representatives had to leave at this point.*

## **6 FEEDBACK** from Diocesan, Regional & General Synods

Gail was interested to know how feedback was achieved and were there any issues? Those, now present, went into groups, discussed & reported back. Summarised below:

- (i) Summary published in Church Newsletter or Pews Sheet.
- (ii) Small congregation - report given/discussed after church during tea/coffee time.
- (iii) Some congregations with few Scottish Episcopalians or none, are not very interested in hearing about SEC governance.
- (iv) Need for in-Church guidance what the congregation should expect from Lay Rep/duties.

Gail to forward information on role of Lay Rep. She indicated, that at Vestry meetings, there should always be a slot for Lay Reps, if requested. Holding Congregational Meetings vary in the Churches, which is another opportunity for Lay Reps to disseminate any information/engage with congregations.

## **7 AUB**

General discussion on the format of the day/times/ of Lay Reps meetings. Due to travelling time from the far reaches of the Diocese, some Lay Reps thought the start time of the Eucharist was too early. Gail explained why, as a 'one of' this year's meeting had to start half an hour earlier than in the past.

Suggestion was made to have Evensong instead - Gail would investigate the possibility.

She would forward Regional Synod groupings, Chair & Administrator. (while Gail has already circulated at time of compiling the Minutes, they are attached again for easy access)

The meeting closed with the Grace at 2.30 pm.

The Minutes were taken by Julie Gamble and approved by Gail Sanderson, Diocesan Secretary.

**REGIONAL SYNODS:**

**Sts. Gilbert and Boniface R.S.**

Thurso, Wick, Brora, Dornoch, Tain, Lairg, Ardgay, Crask Inn, Invergordon, Dingwall, Stathpeffer, N/W Charge – Ullapool, Lochinver, Tongue, Kinochbervie, Achiltibuie .

**St Columba R.S.**

Black Isle Churches, Inverness Churches, Glenurquhart, Strathnairn.  
Rothiemurchus, Grantown on Spey, Nairn, Poolewe, Kishorn, Nostie, Poolewe

**St Drostan R.S.**

Forres, Elgin. Lossiemouth, Fochabers, Keith, Huntly, Aberchirder, Aberlour, Dufftown