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The Importance of Working Together

The Church in Society Committee's aims are to promote the mission of the Church in relation to social, economic and environmental issues.

The Church in Society Committee is fortunate to be able to meet many of its objectives by working with other organisations, churches and local initiatives. In this way we are able to contribute to achievements which are far beyond what we could do on our own. We know from conversations with other sponsors, especially those of a more secular nature, that the funds we have given while frequently more modest than we might have wished have been the key to opening a door to more substantial funding.

An established feature of the Church in Society's annual calendar is its gathering of representatives of all the bodies that it supports and with whom it collaborates. Each year we end the gathering conscious of the range of challenges we face as Church in today's society. However, we are always impressed with what is being done to alleviate real issues and encouraged by the contribution of those with whom we work and who we have been able to assist.

This face-to-face meeting approach allows us to cover the range of issues dealt with by groups run by individual churches, to initiatives dealing with major issues such as climate change, to the provision of direct help to those trying to change the ways in which we function as a society such as how society deals with finance.

We have been so impressed and invigorated with what we have heard that we wanted to share it with you.

We hope that you will find the range of partners and their work which have been detailed in this booklet of interest and as affirming as we have.

If you require more copies of the booklet please contact the General Synod Office.

David Atkinson

Convenor Church in Society

Credit Unions



The Church in Society Committee is keen to encourage members of the Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) to join a local Credit Union and it is working towards raising the awareness of Credit Unions by SEC members. One development which the Church in Society Committee has undertaken is to provide funding to assist in the setting up and early development of the Churches' Mutual Credit Union (CMCU)

The CMCU arose out of a consultation among Church of England clergy on pensions and retirement housing and it was noted that the credit union model was an ideal solution. Its development coincided with the financial crisis which gave it added urgency and led to it becoming an ecumenical project as churches sought to work together to model an alternative form of personal finance.

The CMCU has started as employee credit union building up a core membership of people transacting with the credit union by payroll deduction (with its reduced transaction costs) before extending their common bond to 'live and work' in particular localities. Membership will be initially restricted to clergy and ministers, licensed lay ministers, and trustees and employees of churches and church charities many of whom will be able to transact by payroll deduction. In due course, membership will extend to other Christian denominations and eventually to all active church members.

Savings and Loan accounts with CMCU Ltd are available to individuals who hold a recognised position within the Anglican Churches of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland and The Methodist Church of Great Britain in either a paid or voluntary capacity. This includes a wide variety of associations including lay or ordained ministers, church council members, office staff and trustees of church charities. The CMCU is also able to offer accounts to household members of people who qualify and to retired ministers. If you are not certain if you are eligible please check with the CMCU via the contact page on the Website.

The CMCU is currently a credit union for: The Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Church in Wales, the Methodist Church of Great Britain and the Scottish Episcopal Church. CMCU Ltd. is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority, regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority and is a member of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme

Eco-Congregation Scotland

Eco-Congregation Scotland (ECS), is supported by the Church in Society Committee with funding for the post of Environmental Chaplain and by publicising ECS events and materials. ECS is a growing ecumenical organisation with a vision for a Scotland that cares for God's creation, now and forever.



Photo: The Green Group at St Michael and All Angels, Helensburgh, receive their ECS Award from Environmental Chaplain, Trevor Jamison

Over 350 churches are registered eco-congregations, including more than forty SEC congregations.

They are supported in spiritual, practical and global living, with over 100 congregations receiving Eco-Congregations Awards. ECS support includes ecumenically written material for worship leaders and preachers for Creation Time in September each year. Also, Eco-Congregation's Environmental Chaplain is available to preach or speak, and has done so at several SEC congregations.

Twenty networks of eco-congregations in Scotland run programmes. In 2015 the Most Rev David Chillingworth was one of the church leaders addressing the well-attended Edinburgh Network meeting, *Love God: Love Creation*.



The Eco-Baton at St Drostan's SEC, Inch

Throughout 2015 ECS was raising congregational awareness of and encouraging Scottish political leaders to work for a positive outcome at the COP21 climate change conference. A wooden "eco-baton", inscribed with *Time for Climate Justice* travelled around Scotland, visiting churches (including eight SEC congregations and the General Synod), schools and a host of other groups, before reaching Paris for the COP21 conference in November 2015.

More recently, in April 2016, as part of a year-long emphasis on the bio-diversity of God's creation, our Annual Gathering of supporters, meeting at St Ninian's Cathedral in Perth, celebrated *A Place for Nature in Your Church*.

Faith in Older People

Spiritual well-being matters. Faith in Older People (FiOP) is very active in developing networks across faith communities to develop activities which enhance the well-being of older people and the understanding of the issues which face us as we grow older. We organise lectures and seminars; do research; develop projects and consult.



A highlight of each year is our Annual Malcolm Goldsmith Lecture which was given this year by Professor Sir Harry Burns on *The causes of wellness throughout life*

At a Parliamentary Reception in June 2015 FiOP brought together MSPs and other representatives to celebrate the important role of faith communities in providing support to older people and the work undertaken by older people themselves.

During the past year FiOP has run seminars around Scotland on topics such as *Spiritual Well-being; Outside World; The Value of Music; Listening; Death and Dying* and contributed to conferences and events of many organisations. At the 6th International Conference on Ageing and Spirituality held in Los Angeles, FiOP presented a workshop and acted as advisors for its organisation. We work closely with the NHS Chaplaincy and are currently undertaking a collaborative research project in NHS Continuing Care units.



From L-R Richard Baker MSP, Maureen O'Neill, FiOP Director, Sandra White, MSP and the Rt Rev Bruce Cameron, FiOP Chairperson

As FiOP is a very small organisation the work we do is on a collaborative basis thus enabling us to benefit enormously from a range of expertise and experience. This is of great value in our current major project on *Dementia Friendly Faith Communities* which is being developed on an ecumenical and inter-faith basis.

The focus of much of our work is in care homes to encourage them to be active in taking account of spiritual needs of those with and without a faith connection.

Contributing to the Scottish Episcopal Institute Summer School in 2016 is of great significance to FiOP.

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund (FiSCAF) works with local faith groups, building hope by providing grants and support in Scotland's most deprived urban and rural communities. Over the last year we have awarded grants to many varied and diverse groups, who all share one thing in common: the use of faith as a basis to tackle some of the most challenging aspects in society. FiSCAF recognises that by supporting faith based groups in this, they can help communities flourish and see a real difference in individuals, families and communities.

Over the last year FiSCAF has had a particular emphasis on supporting work with children and families through a partnership with the STV Appeal which has resulted in making a huge difference in terms of building confidence, responding to need and building on the powerful assets of local communities.

In November 2015 FiSCAF awarded a small grant of £2,000 to SiMY Youth Project in Glasgow who work with young people who live in the most deprived 15% areas in Scotland. Many of them struggle with poor physical and mental health, have low self-confidence and resilience. Through FiSCAF funding, SiMY hope to see young people get involved in the decisions which affect their lives.



In 2015 FiSCAF provided a grant to the GK Experience who provide both bespoke outdoor residential opportunities and supports local youth work with young people and their leaders in churches, congregations and communities in Scotland's very poorest neighbourhoods. The residentials are designed to build confidence, self-belief, resilience, community and life skills, giving young people new challenges and a chance to reflect on these experiences drawing out the benefits and changes they promote.

The grant by FiSCAF enabled them to develop an apprenticeship scheme for young people 16+ from Scotland's most disadvantaged communities. It aims to holistically develop skills for future employment - in turn the apprentice delivers activities to disadvantaged young people living in the local community.

FiSCAF continues to be encouraged at the increasing numbers of projects seeking funding and wanting to make a real difference in the lives of people in their community.

Joint Public Issues Team

In 2006 the staff teams working on areas relating to church and society / public issues in the national offices of the Methodist Church in Britain, the Baptist Union of Great Britain and the United Reformed Church started working together in a formal relationship – a Joint Public Issues Team.

The Joint Public Issues Team is built around ecumenical collaboration, and actively seeks ways to work formally and informally with other Churches.

In 2015 the Scottish Episcopal Church supported the publication of *Enough: Our responsibility to meet families' needs*, a report on welfare reform and child poverty which was co-ordinated by the Joint Public Issues Team.

enough
Our responsibility to meet families' needs



Also in 2015, following several years of informal partnership, and in light of the Scottish independence referendum result, the Church of Scotland joined the Joint Public Issues Team, allowing it to be better represented at the Westminster political level, and for the Team to expand both its personnel and potential reach. Providing a Scottish insight and experience has also helped the Joint Public Issues Team to understand better the context in Scotland – particularly as the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church are genuinely cross-border Churches (the Baptist Union of Great Britain has a very small number of projects north of the border; the Baptist Union of Scotland is a separate organisation).

Respecting both the Scottish Episcopal Church, United Reformed Church Synod of Scotland and the Methodist Church in Scotland Partnership (EMU) and the good relations between the Scottish Episcopal Church and Church of Scotland on Church and Society matters (for example, through the work of the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office), the Joint Public Issues Team, and particularly the Church of Scotland members of the Team, have been keen to keep the other Scottish denominations (the Methodist District, URC Synod, the SEC through Church in Society and the Baptist Union of Scotland) informed of developments and opportunities for joint action.

It is hoped that good relationships and shared priorities in areas of peace, justice and the integrity of creation will allow for greater working together in the future.

Just Festival

Just Festival is one of Edinburgh's most exciting and diverse festivals. It features over 300 events and performances across Edinburgh each August. *Just Festival* is a semi-curated, participant-led festival that provides a platform for local, national and international participants to share their talent, ideas, opinions and visions by engaging in performing arts shows, conversations, exhibitions, family activities, arts and culture and more.



Just Festival events aim at challenging perceptions, celebrating differences and promoting dialogue. All conversations, talks, exhibitions and performing arts events address different social justice issues, including prejudice against race, ethnicity, class and economic status. These

events allow for exploring the issues from different angles inviting experts and practitioners from respective disciplines as well as socially conscious performing arts groups. All events invite audience members to share their observations in open debates or Q&A sessions.

The 15th Festival was held under the umbrella theme of '15 Years of Light'. We shed light on vital social issues with thought-provoking conversations, talks, films and exhibitions on recent and past events that had shaped the world that we live in; on individuals and communities being denied their basic rights; on countries regions and nations affected by war and natural crisis; on a darker side of society.

Just Festival works closely with community groups and organisations that encourage social inclusion and engagement, tackle injustice as well as promote tolerance and diversity, including BEMIS, ELREC, Active Inquiry.



St. Mary the Virgin, Hamilton Family Support Project

St. Mary the Virgin, Hamilton began a Family Support Project in 2002 after researching the parental problems affecting children's behaviours at a local primary school. It was evident that if parents could be supported well, then chaotic and problematic home life should be avoided and their children attain better results at school.

The Scottish and Edinburgh based charity, Circle Scotland began family support work at St. Mary's, with their professional team of social workers. Since 2004, they have established excellent services in North and South Lanarkshire to help parents and children in a range of environments, especially those affected by parental imprisonment at Corntonvale and Addiewell.

During the same period, with the help of a part-time administrator, volunteers from St. Mary's, other churches and the wider community developed a child contact centre, meeting weekly on a Saturday from 10am until 4pm. An affiliated membership with *Relationships Scotland* helped develop good policies and practice with solicitors and family courts.

Both aspects of work have produced times of celebration for families, as well as frustration and set-backs. For volunteers and workers there can be moments of real satisfaction and also disappointment and occasional sadness. When children find parental support and love renewed, and parents gain confidence in their own abilities then volunteers and workers gain real satisfaction providing an environment, often over many months, which produces vastly improved outcomes for all concerned.

Such work has enabled St. Mary's to develop its vision as a church "for all" no matter what circumstances people find themselves enduring. Offering support to the wider community has produced a church with a better understanding of its faith and worship. The Vestry and congregation began another consultation in 2009 and developed a feasibility study with an architect for the provision of new premises within its 19th century environs. The congregation began a major fundraising scheme for its ambitious plans in 2012 and completed their fabulous new facilities in 2015.



Scottish Churches Housing Action

Scottish Churches
Housing Action



no room for homelessness!

Scottish Churches Housing Action (SCHA) brings the main Christian bodies in Scotland together under the banner *No Room for Homelessness!*

Scottish Churches Housing Action:

- ↳ Develops local volunteering initiatives to help homeless people
- ↳ Encourages the development of affordable housing on land or buildings the church no longer needs
- ↳ Makes sure the churches know the problems of homelessness in our land.

During 2015, we worked with Women's Aid groups in Renfrewshire, Aberdeenshire, Ross-shire and elsewhere. We established projects providing starter packs of household necessities to help women and their children set up a new home after time in a refuge.

AID & ABET



...because I'm more than a number

In Edinburgh and Lothian, we established *Aid & Abet*, a mentoring scheme for people leaving prison. This is run and delivered by people who have themselves been in prison and are in recovery from addiction. They show by example that change is possible.

We have worked with our colleagues Housing Justice to build up observance of Homeless Sunday which is the fourth Sunday in January each year. This is the annual opportunity to connect with homeless people and the projects that support them, praying for them, and demonstrating the church's concern. Find out more at www.homeless-sunday.uk and be ready for 22 January 2017.

During 2016, we will set *Aid & Abet* up as an independent charity in its own right. We will extend starter packs in new areas. We will set up new befriending projects for people as they go through the challenge of homelessness. We will continue to support churches creating opportunities for new affordable homes.

Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office

At the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office we have had a busy year reflecting on the results of the 2015 General Election, meeting new MPs, resourcing Churches to prepare for the 2016 Scottish Election and preparing for the European Union Referendum.

Ahead of the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2016 we produced resources, written by experts within the Church, intended stimulate discussion around current political issues. Subjects covered included everything from the Economy to Education to Refugees and Migration. Guidance was also provided on how to host a Hustings meeting locally. Resources for congregations will also be produced for the EU Referendum.

At the other end of the spectrum the SCPO co-ordinated the annual Church Leaders' and Representatives' meeting with the First Minister in November 2015. This meeting is a fantastic opportunity for face to face conversation with the Government. This year the meeting took place the week before the UN Paris Climate Change Conference so we supported Eco-Congregation Scotland by showing the climate change baton to the First Minister and letting her know that she went to the conference with the support of our Churches. Other issues discussed were the refugee crisis, human rights and the Scotland Bill.



The First Minister, Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP, holds the climate change baton during a meeting with Church Leaders and Representatives in the Scottish Parliament

During 2015 the SCPO supported the Scottish Churches Anti-Human Trafficking Group to meet with the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and discuss the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Bill. We also hosted ecumenical roundtable events on land reform and the review of civil partnership.

During 2016 the Office is conducting a review of our work which will include updating the information and resources we provide.

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees



Photo: Laurent Vernet

2015 was not the start of the Refugee Crisis, but it was a year in which many of us realised the magnitude of the situation with a succession of media stories about refugees: hundreds of people perishing at sea or in the back of lorries, the misery of life in the camp in Calais known as the Jungle, and the chaos and terror of people landing on Greek islands, or wearily attempting to make the long journey through Southern Europe.

Europe is now experiencing its greatest refugee catastrophe since the Second World War, but it is not a sudden crisis. For many years, there have been migrant deaths in the Mediterranean and hostility and fear on the part of Western societies that they may have to offer help to others. Churches across the continent have, with a few honourable exceptions, been slow on the uptake, but are now seeking to co-ordinate our energies towards the common good

The UK Government is the second largest aid donor to humanitarian work in the region around Syria. This is welcome, but much more aid is needed. Saying “no” when there is the chance to help condemns many to death. It also denies us all some of the potential and creativity which more diverse communities can bring.

Nevertheless, the response from individuals, communities and congregations has been phenomenal. The prayers, time, money and goods offered by members of the Scottish Episcopal Church are important symbols, and practical means, which say that refugees are welcome here and we care for the well-being of those in other parts of the world. This desire for the Church to engage in a common endeavour led the Church of Scotland to establish a refugee co-ordination project jointly with other Scottish Church and Faith groups. This has led to innovative co-operation demonstrating interfaith and intercultural collaboration as a lived example of what can be offered in the face of terror and xenophobia.



Mural at St John's Church,
Princes Street, Edinburgh

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) a coalition which counts the Scottish Episcopal Church among its diverse membership, continues to work to ensure that Scotland reduces our carbon emissions.

Serious storms and flooding in various parts of the country this winter were a stark reminder that climate change is not a problem for someone else, some other time. The Met Office confirmed that 'all the evidence' shows that recent storms in the UK were in part due to climate change.



Photo©Lairich Rig

As more and more greenhouse gases accumulate in the atmosphere, increasing global temperatures are creating havoc, causing more frequent and severe weather events like droughts, floods, violent storms, desertification, crop failures and more disease.

We each have a moral obligation to reduce carbon emissions, not just to protect our wonderful world for future generations, but also for people in the poorest parts of the world who are already affected by increasing global temperatures.

Many of the world's poorest people, from Bangladesh to Haiti, are dependent on small-scale farming for their food and income. Unpredictable weather patterns, resulting from global warming, present a significant challenge to communities without resources to withstand crop failures. Climate change is now the biggest single threat to winning the fight against hunger.

In December 2015, at the UN climate talks in Paris, world leaders agreed a new global deal to tackle climate change. Just before the talks began, hundreds of thousands of people from across the world took to the streets to call for climate action. At Scotland's Climate March in Edinburgh, organised by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, over 5,000 people from across the country gathered to make their voices heard.



Photo©SCCS/Colin Hattersley

Waverley Care Chaplaincy

My ministry was within Waverley Care, the main Scottish charity working with people affected by HIV or Hepatitis C. The charity is one of the few in the voluntary sector in the UK that has incorporated faith and spiritual care as a clear part of their work.

I am passionate about the issues faced by the people I work with. Stigma and discrimination are still a regular occurrence, often in the form of being gossiped about or treated differently at work or in healthcare settings; the effects of this on an individual can be devastating.

I am involved with work at both a national and a local level. Nationally I am involved in faith community work such as recent interfaith work with Muslim communities where my faith credentials open doors that are closed to health professionals, as people know I am immersed in faith and religion and its impact on all aspects of life.

My pastoral ministry is focussed more locally where I work with a wide range of service users, exploring areas of life such as mortality, sexuality, bereavement and the damage caused by inaccurate portrayals of faith and religion.

I've seen the pastoral support people get from being part of a faith community is often experienced in the settings that we've created.

One such place is the Waverley Care Milestone residential and outreach support centre where I work closely with the residents.

I recently heard one service user tell someone "Milestone is my church".

She was saying that Milestone offers her all that we would hope church offers – unconditional care, friendship, a safe place and reassurance that she is loved by God.



Marion Chatterley

