



Church and Society Enews May 2017

Speak Out Tackling Injustice, Living Hope

Church and Society at the General Assembly 2017



On Tuesday 23 May the Church and Society Council presented its report to the General Assembly. The Assembly voted to support the Church and Society's Speak Out implementation plan, intended to guide the Council's work as it strives to resource and celebrate the work of local congregations to make Scotland and the world fairer, more equal and more just, more like God intends it.

A joint report with the World Mission Council titled 'Embracing Peace and Working for Justice - A joint report on the centenary of the Balfour Declaration' was agreed, with the Assembly urging the Scottish and UK governments to ensure that any public commemorations of the Balfour centenary should be done sensitively, recognising the costs involved for the Palestinian people.

Following the attack in Manchester the night before, the Assembly passed an amendment to the Church and Society report calling on the church to:

Express profound sadness at the attack at Manchester Arena and the tragic and pointless loss of life; affirm the courage and grace with which Manchester is already responding; call on the Church to continue to foster deep relationships across communities; and commit us to pray for all affected.

A report on surveillance and social justice was also accepted, alongside deliverances on pilgrimage as a tool for encounter, and the continued work of the church on asylum and refugees.

Find out more about what happened at the General Assembly 2017 and [download the Blue Book report](#).

Speak Out: Doing Politics Differently



General Election Resources

The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office (SCPO) have great election resources online – guidance for hustings in advance of the General Election 2017 is available at www.scpo.scot/ge-2017

They are also promoting the resource, [Faith in Politics: General Election 2017](#) from the Joint Public Issues Team that looks at issues facing voters through the lens of a shared Christian faith.

Scottish Churches Guide

SCPO have updated their Scottish Churches Guide which gives details about all the churches that they work with – this is now available on the [SCPO website](#).

Participatory Budgeting: What You Need to Know - A General Assembly Fringe Event

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is democratic form of decision making that empowers local communities to take financial decisions. Over the last four months, as part of a Scottish Government scheme, the Church and Society Council has supported four congregations to set up and deliver PB events in their local communities.

You can find out more about the project in [this short film](#) of the PB event that took place in Cranhill, Glasgow.

On Tuesday 23 May the Church and Society Council hosted a fringe event at the General Assembly for Commissioners to meet representatives from congregations who have been part of the project:

- Carrick Knowe Church, Edinburgh
- Cranhill Parish Church, Glasgow
- Old Kirk Muirhouse, Edinburgh
- St Andrew's Church, Arbroath

The event explored the opportunities and challenges that PB offers to being a church at the heart of community transformation. The title "Your Voice, Your Choice" was chosen for project and this phrase

was used to advertise the local events – the community decided which projects would be good for their areas. Speakers emphasised that everyone who bid for funding got something out of the event – even those projects which were not funded. Some projects were offered resources or volunteers from other projects and many people found out about something new in their area.

Rev Stephen Ashley-Emery from Old Kirk Muirhouse summed up the experience of hosting a PB event saying it was a "challenge to the way in which we are a church in the community".



Speak Out: Building Global Friendships

Shoulder to Shoulder: interfaith pilgrimage Refugee Festival Scotland, Sunday 2 July

Christian Aid Scotland and Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees are pleased to present Shoulder to Shoulder, a pilgrimage walk for all people regardless of their religion or belief.

Walking the well-worn paths of the ancient and spiritual mountain of Ben Ledi, near Callander, this 10km walk will take in sights including Rock of Embers and a panoramic view of the Highlands, and will be themed around sanctuary and refugees.

Register via [Eventbrite](#)

Refugees Welcome Pledge

Refugee Action, Refugee Council and Scottish Refugee Council have launched the 'Refugees Welcome Pledge', which they are asking prospective parliamentary candidates to sign. The pledge is being promoted on social media via the hashtag #RefugeePledge. Find out more on the [Refugee Action website](#) and ask your candidates to sign the pledge.

Widening the Welcome – survey of local groups

Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) is the national body supporting best practice in community development. They have been asked by the Scottish Government to support and share best practice among those working to receive people arriving in Scotland through Vulnerable Person Relocation Schemes, through carrying out a survey to map and better understand community development activity across Scotland which supports refugee integration. If you work to support new arrivals and refugee integration across Scotland then please complete the [Widening the Welcome survey](#) by 29 May.



Speak Out: Investing in Young People



School chaplains handbook launched

An updated Church of Scotland school chaplains handbook has been launched, full of good advice and practical tools for school chaplains.

There are sections on resources, frequently asked questions and of course examples of how some chaplains play their part in their school community and building bridges between church and school.

To obtain copies please contact Agnes Mullen amullen@churchofscotland.org.uk

Events

Go For It Free Learning Events

13 June - Place For Hope, The Art of Peacebuilding, Edinburgh
20 June - Fit for Funding, Glasgow

To book email: scalderhead@churchofscotland.org.uk

Columbafest

9-11 June - Glasgow www.wildgoose.scot

A seasonal celebration of faith, culture politics and creativity. A weekend festival at the anniversary of St Columba's death. Workshops and other events will explore themes from Columba's life

(incarnation, learning, mission, exile, prayer, spirituality & political engagement) through issues present in the contemporary context and culture of Scotland, and further afield.

Reclaiming Gospel Non-Violence: The centrality of non-violence in Christianity

12-14 July, Perth

Book via the [Church of Scotland website](#)

Contact Church and Society

The Church and Society team can be contacted by emailing churchandsociety@churchofscotland.org.uk or by phone on 0131 240 2275.

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Scottish Charity Number SC011353