

# Appendix to Minute of Session Meeting 23rd October 2019 BEARSDEN CROSS PARISH CHURCH

## CHURCH OF SCOTLAND “ RADICAL ACTION PLAN”

### REPORT TO PRESBYTERY BASED ON SESSION / CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

#### Introduction :

Bearnsden Cross Parish Church held a joint Session and congregational meeting on Wednesday 23 October 2019 to learn about and discuss aspects of the national church's Radical Action Plan. A total of 30 members of Session and 12 members of the congregation, 4 of whom are under 25, took part. Members of the congregation had received a brief summary highlighting key points of the Plan at the church service the previous Sunday. The meeting commenced with presentations on the Plan and the current structure and role of Presbytery. Thereafter discussion focussed on three deliverances within the Plan.

The relevant deliverances are:

1. To create a single, easy and accessible platform of faith and nurture resources (Del 3.4.6)

2. To co-ordinate flexible education, training and support programmes for all, this will include work around leadership and discipleship within the Church. (Del 3.4.7)

3. To develop a deliberate focus on engaging with/supporting those aged 40 and under. (Del. 3.4.8)

Attendees were split into eight groups and asked to reflect on the above deliverances by responding to the specific questions listed below.

1. What do you think a “single, easy and accessible platform of faith and nurture resources” might look like?
2. Do you think you are likely to use this platform and, if so, what particular strands of this would you feel most drawn to?
3. Local presbyteries will have an increased role in supporting education, training and support programmes for congregations. What programmes of support might they offer to enhance the content of this platform at a local / regional level?
4. How might the church nationally, and the Presbytery at a local / regional level, engage and support those 40 and under – and what form(s) might this take?

The report below is in two parts:

#### A. Summary of responses

- a. Questions 1 to 3
- b. Question 4

#### B. Appendices

- a. List of all responses to questions 1 to 3
- b. List of all responses to question 4
- c. Bearnsden Cross specific responses and comments. This appendix will be deleted from the Presbytery report.

## **A. Summary of Responses :**

### **a. Questions 1 to 3 (Faith, Nurture and Resources Platform)**

- we need to start by taking stock and publicising more effectively the resources already available
- general consensus that an on-line platform to support ministers, trainee worship leaders and congregations would be the correct way forward
- such a resource is not an end in itself. It must be faith based, have clear aims and objectives and be structured in such a way that it could be easily interrogated with multiple search options to meet the needs of different users. It should not be an unstructured resource of ‘everything we have’
- there was strong support for an on-line resource being used to clarify the CoS stand on a variety of moral issues, e.g. nuclear arms and Faslane, same sex marriages, environmental issues, and others as they arise in the future
- an on-line resource might provide examples of worship styles, prayers, sermons, readings, alternative praise, craft activities,
- an online resource might offer support to elders on parish visiting, grief counselling, prayer, faith building
- the resource should be interactive and facilitate “chat rooms”
- the resource might also have a facility for people to upload their own resources, stories of successful activities
- God’s message is simple : “Love God and Love Your Neighbour”. This should come through clearly throughout the resource
  
- concerns were expressed about too much emphasis being placed on this type of resource as in some rural areas where support might be need most, broadband signals and IT expertise might be weak. Hard copy options for some resources would remain essential
- a key aspect of christian life is the fellowship people enjoy and benefit from. A number of people felt on line resources do not provide the same opportunities. Social media contacts are not the same.

### **b. Question 4 (Under 40s)**

- the Under 40’s are not a discrete and homogeneous group. Many “young people” are two generations away from regular church contacts
- whatever medium is used to attract these groups to church life needs to be accessible. attractive and offer ‘something different’
- any programme expecting to increase involvement must have clear aims and objectives and work to these. The message must be faith based and this should not be lost in trying to widen attraction by being too secular
- expecting a significant time commitment from this group is not realistic
- larger presbyteries have the potential to bring young people together in regional faith communities and provide opportunities to discuss moral and environmental concerns ,i.e. the things which concern young people who are looking for “answers” and ways to deal with what life means for them.
- lifestyles are now increasingly complex and are not organised around a five day working week, with fixed hours and free weekends. Churches need to think about catering for weekend workers, shift workers, different family groupings. Sunday worship is often not the most accessible way to reach out to these groups

- the future of the the church is bound up with engaging with young people where they are e.g. on-line. social media, in the community, and not exclusively about getting them to come to Sunday worship
- churches should offer more services for specific groups, e.g. single parents, fathers, commuters, carers
- more inter-church and inter-faith activities
- perceptions of church among non attenders needs to be changed

Keith H Wright (Session Clerk)

28 October 2019

## **B. Appendices**

### **a) : List of all responses**

#### **Questions 1 to 3**

- highlight hymns beyond CH4
- “how to” guides for practical tasks, e.g. crafts, assembling nativity scenes
- template worship materials, i.e. prayers, sermons, etc
- guidance on worship leadership i.e. service structures.music selection, children’s addresses
- provide new ideas, examples on how church services are run
- platform must be able to be searched in various ways,e.g by theme (e.g type of resources), role (e.g. youth leader, worship leader)
- platform should be interactive allowing users to communicate and provide links to social media
- does on-line platform take away from fellowship?
- how can we get spiritual advice and support on-line?
- need to know what resources we have at present
- can on-line support encourage change from the inside?
- web site required
- bible application
- website for resources for ministers, Sunday School, enable individual bible study. she best practice
- issues of broadband access in rural areas
- PC access
- webinars (not for services)
- single platform would be useful - Sunday School resources , biblical support for life problems
- induction workshops for new elders - faith, prayer, visiting, grief
- central source of resources giving different options - age and different groups, services styles, interactive, special service ideas
- must be easy and attractive to use
- need to have a church “App”
- use social media
- what are priorities
- single platform inappropriate as some prefer hard copy (in churches)
- both hard and on-line resources would be used
- raise awareness of resources / training available if people are to use them
- Christ’s message is simple - don’t overcomplicate it
- new presbytery proposals a cost saving exercise and may give them more power
- we take our faith for granted

- each church needs to develop its own distinctive pathway to renewal depending on their own circumstances

#### **Question 4**

- young people are often two generations away from knowing a regular church connection
- if a strategy is developed for this age group it must have a clear set of success criteria established e.g. church service attendance, engagement with church activities, use of church property, use of church web based / hard copy resources. What are the best measures?
- expecting substantial time commitments is not realistic
- what do we expect of the under 40s?
- must ensure that any attempts to increase involvement are guided by faith and not as a secular or social club
- what are we offering them - mentoring / counselling, communities of faith (similar or different)
- presbytery has potential to bring scattered young people together ( a critical mass)
- presbytery may be able to resource youth activities
- highlight excellent commercial resources suitable for young people e.g. “*Dear Theo*” by Timothy Pain)
- what do under 40s want - ask them
- special services for fathers and their children
- supply materials for training
- difficult to persuade young people / families to come to church (personal family experience)
- regional residential conferences, e.g. NYA
- too wide an age group with very varied life needs and demands
- varied types and timings of services with different target groups
- how do we deal with increasing number of weekend workers
- have churches open at different times for reflection, etc
- too locked in to a Sunday service
- active christianity
- we have to go where young people gather and where we are needed
- it has to engage parents
- outreach

#### **b) Appendix 2 : List of all responses which more specifically referred to practice or potential within Bearsden Cross Parish Church**

- we need to set aims and objectives for attracting non-attending members and non-members to the church
- we must be prepared to work to such aims and objectives
- we need to change perceptions of the church and aim to modernise some of the services
- we face a shortage of young families in our area due to property prices and alternative activities on Sunday and during the week which compete with church organisations
- we need to follow up on Messy Church young people who leave after they reach P7
- can we offer drop in sessions at different times of the day e.g. after school drop off, lunchtimes, times suitable for commuters to drop in
- we need to provide a stimulus within the Sanctuary to make it more stimulating and a place where people can find both spiritual support and information about what goes on in the church - history, organisations, key contacts
- coffee machine for “drop-in” visitors and a team of people on hand to welcome any visitors

- the church needs to become a community hub with community space
- to be successful any development of church life is dependent on there being a willingness 'out there' to find out about / engage with the church
- Associate and Trainee ministers should be able to allow us to make good progress
- B'den Cross web site not fit for purpose - needs improving with resources added
- creating relevance , approachability, mindfulness - drop in sessions, time for silence, info boards, what's going on , our history
- there must be desire to come to church - clear purpose for children to attend
- what can we offer young people which will make them want to come to church
- how do we get young people to re-engage with the church?
- how do we respond to and manage the competition we now face
- need a real sense of purpose to attract young people - change structure of service , make more modern, change perceptions of church

Keith Wright  
(Session Clerk)