



The Church of Scotland
Presbytery of Perth
(Registered Charity No SC014528)

November 2020

Dear member,

PROTOCOL: AGREEING DRAFT BASIS OF REVIEWABLE CHARGE

At the meeting of Presbytery in March, I reminded everyone of the changing context in which we find ourselves as a church. At the General Assembly 2018, a decision was made that all Presbyteries had to reduce the number of stipendiary ministries by 20%. Within the Presbytery of Perth, that means reducing the number of ministries by between 4 and 5. Clearly, we want to do this in a manner that is fair. The recent pandemic has also changed the landscape in many ways. It has made us think about what the church is for as well as our long-term future. I know that these conversations will continue to go on for several months yet. This is a time therefore when I am asking all congregations to give prayerful thought to their long-term sustainability. As a congregation, where will you be in 5 or even 10 years' time?

It is important that Presbytery and congregations work together to decide the type of ministry that is required and where it should be located. There are now so many different 'types' of ministry and so a group will be looking at the ministry needs within the City of Perth and its conclusions fed back into the process.

Whilst this review is ongoing, it has been agreed that vacant charges can continue to search for their next minister. St Matthew's, therefore, has been given the right to call a minister subject to the congregation agreeing to a change to the presbytery plan - that it calls a minister on the Basis of Reviewable Charge – to be reviewed after 5 years. This would enable the congregation to move forward and allow the presbytery some space to work out what can and should be done in this part of the presbytery. This Draft Basis of Reviewable Charge is at the end of this letter.

Due to COVID, for several months we have found ourselves in a frustrating situation where the vacancy procedure for the congregation could not be progressed. This was because the Draft Basis of Reviewable Charge, while agreed in principle by both the Kirk Session and Presbytery, still requires to be approved by the congregation. We have been unable to hold a congregational meeting to discuss this issue and take a vote on it. In October, however, the Virtual General Assembly agreed new legislation that now makes it possible for a new protocol to be adopted and for the congregation to move forward.

In Summary the protocol is as follows:

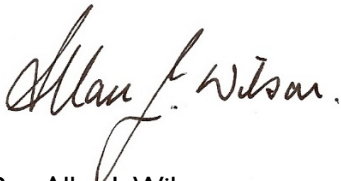
- Members of congregation to be lettered or emailed with a copy of the Draft Basis of Reviewable Charge along with an invitation for members to ask questions about it. Any questions members have should be returned **in writing** to Ms Fiona Bruce, Session Clerk, St. Matthew's Church of Scotland, Tay Street, Perth, PH1 5LQ by **Wednesday 6 January 2021**.
- On receiving the questions, the Presbytery Planning & Development Committee and St Matthew's Kirk Session will write a document which will answer all the questions that have been raised and this will be sent to all members of the congregation along with a ballot paper asking them to either approve or not the Draft Basis of Reviewable Charge. Ballot papers will require to be returned by a certain date as stated on the voting paper.

The result will be communicated to the Kirk Session, the congregation and to Presbytery. I recognise that this is quite a convoluted process, but I would ask that the worshipping congregation of St. Matthews

Church to respond as quickly as they can. I am most grateful to those who are freely giving of their time to administer this process.

If there is anything that you would like clarified please email me (AWilson@churchofscotland.org.uk) or telephone me, 01738 812463, and I will do my best to assist you. Meantime, thank you for your help in this process.

With all good wishes and every blessing.
Yours faithfully,



Rev Allan J. Wilson
Convenor, Planning and Development (Presbytery of Perth)

BASIS OF REVIEWABLE CHARGE
PERTH: ST MATTHEW'S PARISH CHURCH OF SCOTLAND
(Registered Charity No SC016829)

By decision of the Presbytery of Perth (SC014528) permission is granted to the congregation of, to call a minister on a Basis of Reviewable Charge in terms of Act VII 2003, section 12 (2) (a), and that on the following conditions:

- 1) The Presbytery of Perth will form a Task Group that will review current Presbytery Plan and consider the long term ministry needs of the Presbytery in the city and requires the minister, Kirk Session and congregation to engage in this process.
- 2) The Presbytery shall review the appointment five years from the date of induction of the minister.
- 3) At the review the Presbytery shall consider with the Kirk Session:
 - a) whether the life of the congregation exhibits the five purposes of the church, i.e. worship, service, discipleship, fellowship and evangelism and whether these are in a healthy balance;
 - b) the extent to which the congregation has been successful in establishing a community-based church with a sustainable presence for the future;
 - c) the extent to which a leadership core has been established and developed to enable the resourcing of all aspects of church life;
 - d) the extent to which the minister, Kirk Session and congregation have engaged with the Presbytery Task Group; and
 - e) such other matters as may be relevant by that time.
- 4) Following such review, the Presbytery shall take a further decision on the future arrangements for ministry to the congregation and parish of Perth: St Matthew's Church of Scotland, SC016829 recognising that one of the options available to it is the termination of the tenure of the charge on giving the minister six months' notice in writing.

The minister shall be free to seek to demit or to be translated as in the ordinary case of any minister inducted to a charge, provided that, if this Reviewable Charge is his or her first charge, the Presbytery hereby agree that these conditions constitute exceptional circumstances in terms of Section 4 of Act VIII 2003, and will accordingly issue the necessary Certificate if he or she seeks to be translated within five years.