

Diocese of Brechin: News Bulletin

15th June 2021



Updated guidance on coronavirus

Update: Vestry & Other Church 'In-person Meetings' Permitted to Restart: Revised "Frequently Asked Questions"

The First Minister announced today (Tuesday 15th June) that there will no change in the Covid restrictions levels for Scotland, despite the increasing in Covid levels in most areas of Scotland. Please continue to follow the various restrictions for the local authority area where you live and worship.

In the SEC, the set of 'Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) produced for the Advisory Group for the SEC has been reissued as various areas of government guidance continue to change. The biggest change for church life is the guidance that in-person meetings for church management can re-start, in church buildings, following the physical distancing, face coverings and hand hygiene rules. The Church of Scotland has issued similar guidance and many other charities and other bodies are also resuming in-person meetings at this time. This is not a direction that in-person meetings MUST restart and some vestries and other bodies may wish to continue to meet online. Other types of meetings that could resume in church buildings include job interviews and diocesan governance meetings. Whole congregational meetings may be hard to re-start at this point, as physical distancing constraints may exclude all members who might wish to attend a meeting.

If individual members of e.g. vestries are not comfortable with the resumption of in-person meetings, please endeavour to include them in the meetings, whether with audio or a 'blended' online and in-person approach.

The FAQs also present the current status of congregational singing (permitted, with face coverings, in levels 0 and 1) and guidance for the resumption of social and recreational use of church halls and other

buildings is also addressed, along with various other minor changes.

The FAQs are at <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/coronavirus-updates/>. This update brings the guidance up-to-date with the current changing state of levels and government guidance.

Further news and developments may follow next week as the Scottish Government publish their plans for 'post level 0' life in Scotland, along with review work on potential changes to physical distancing rules that may apply later this summer.

News from SEC General Synod 2021

The SEC General Synod took place on Zoom last week. The business covered a wide range of areas in the life of the church, including the approval of various changes to clergy guidance on 'employment' matters, which will have an impact on the life of all out church communities. These changes included:

Clergy time off: Two Days Off Per Week

The guidance for clergy has been amended to suggest two days off per week should be the norm rather than the present one day off. Clergy do not have contracts with e.g. entitlements or allowances of time off, but there is a need to set an expectation of the recreation and rest that a cleric should take for healthy living and wellbeing. This is a major change to this long-standing convention.

It is up to each to cleric to decide for themselves when their time off should be, but it is helpful to discuss possibilities with others in the church in the process of putting this change into practice. The cleric, vestry and also the bishop may be involved. The bishop will be calling a 'clergy drop-in' in the next couple of weeks. If you want a one-one-one with the bishop in the meantime, please contact Elliott to arrange a suitable time.

Stipend level: Increased in the future to CPI

From 2023, a motion to annually increase the clergy standard stipend by a greater amount than the Church of England increase (the 'pegging' we have used since 2006). In the 15 years since the stipend level has fallen behind the level it would be at had it been pegged to the consumer price index (CPI). The approved increases will take place each year until

the 'CPI-pegged' level has been reached. This is a careful increase, done at a rate intended to be one that churches will be able to cope with.

Bullying and Harassment Policy and Complaints Procedure Approved

A policy was approved, outlining the SEC understanding of bullying and harassment and making it absolutely clear that any such behaviour from anyone in our church is not acceptable. This was reported here: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/new-personnel-policies-approved-after-debate/>

An accompanying Complaints Procedure was also approved, which was effectively a summary of how complaints on any matter can be dealt with in the church. These will shortly be published on the provincial website.

Installation service for Canon Elizabeth Thomson, the new Provost for St Paul's Cathedral, Dundee: This Saturday, 19th June at 3pm



Elizabeth Thomson, Provost-designate of St Paul's Cathedral Dundee

Reminder: Canon Dr Elizabeth Thomson will be instituted as Rector and installed as Provost of St Paul's Cathedral, Dundee on Saturday 19th June at 3pm.

The service of installation is taking place with the current limitations on numbers and worship from the pandemic. Attending 'in-person' is only possible for those already invited and/or confirmed by the cathedral admin. To allow all to share in the celebrations, a livestream of the service will be accessible on the cathedral Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/stpaulsdundee>

Please do join in with this celebration at Elizabeth arrives and is welcomed into her new role in the Scottish Episcopal Church. There will be many op-

portunities for meeting her in person over the next years of ministry as we move on (God willing) from the present constraints of the pandemic.

And of course, please keep Elizabeth and all in the cathedral community in your prayers as they prepare for this next season in their mission and ministry.

Date for Your Diary: Licensing of Martin Allwood as Priest in Charge of Carnoustie and Monifieth

Bishop Andrew can confirm that the services of licensing for the Rev Martin Allwood as priest in charge of Holy Rood Carnoustie and Holy Trinity Monifieth will take place on Saturday 10th July. The detailed planning is still underway, but there will be 'in-person' services at both churches that day. The intention is to livestream these services to let a wider congregation than the number-limited services take part in the celebrations. 'In-person' attendance will only be possible for those invited by the vestries.

Please keep Martin, his wife Colleen, and all those in the congregations and communities of these Angus towns in your prayers.

Worship in the Pandemic

In-person worship has resumed in the majority of SEC churches, with limitations, and some churches livestream this worship. In addition, the Scottish Episcopal Church continues to offer 'national' worship online. A Sunday service, each led by one of the College of Bishops, will continue in the form of a Eucharist broadcast at 11am each Sunday.

This service has an option to hear the worship by telephone for those without internet access. There are more details and downloads of previous weeks' services at:

<https://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship/>

News to share? Please send...

If you have any events, ideas with worship or anything else to report, please send copy to Elliott at office@brechin.anglican.org.