

Diocese of Brechin: Lockdown News Bulletin

13th October 2020

No Change to Church Rules

The Scottish Government announcement of enhanced restrictions in some areas of Scotland has not changed any aspect of our church worshipping life. In the central belt (which this diocese is NOT part of) there are limitations on travel that some may decide would limit their attendance—but, for the moment, safe, risk-assessed worship can continue.

Diocesan Festivals: Evensongs in Commemoration of Bishop Alexander Penrose Forbes of Brechin

Bishop Alexander Penrose Forbes of Brechin has been well commemorated in 2020 with two services of evening prayer.

Provincial Worship on 8th October

The Provincial Evening Prayer on 8th October, the date of his death, was hosted by St Paul's Cathedral and Rev David Gordon with Bishop Andrew reflecting on Forbes' life and work. Video of the service is available at: [https://](https://www.scotland.anglican.org/evening-prayer-for-the-commemoration-of-bishop-alexander-penrose-forbes/)



Portrait of Bishop Forbes in the Cathedral

www.scotland.anglican.org/evening-prayer-for-the-commemoration-of-bishop-alexander-penrose-forbes/

Brechin Diocesan Forbes Evensong on 11th October

The annual "Forbes Evensong" was held on Sunday 11th October, the nearest Sunday to the date of Bishop Forbes' death in 1875. This year the service was held virtually on 'Zoom' to avoid the pandemic complications of numbers, travel and congregation management. The virtual service did allow the Rt. Rev Alan Scarfe, Bishop of Iowa, to be the guest preacher at the service. Others from the Dioceses of Iowa and Swaziland were able to attend, along with



Some of the 'virtual congregation' at the Zoom Forbes Evensong

local representation from Brechin. Stuart Muir and Rev David Gordon from the cathedral 'hosted' the service and provided liturgy and music. The screen shot shows some of those attending the service.

Elliott Scarfe, the Bishop's PA, hosted the Zoom and recorded the service—follow the link below to watch the recording.

<https://www.facebook.com/Episcopal-Diocese-Of-Brechin>

Annual Meetings Guidance by Bishop Andrew

Most charges are at the end of their financial years and would be planning for their Annual Meeting. In the pandemic this is complicated: while we are allowed by the Scottish Government to gather for worship, we are not allowed to gather for business meetings or other functions in churches.

The holding of an Annual Meeting of the congregation is a constitutional requirement for churches and every church has an individual constitution. The best way to try and hold an Annual Meeting will also vary depending on the numbers in the congregation, their ability to use technology and other details such as the potential need for secret ballots for appointments.

The key business of the Annual Meeting usually includes:

- Election of Lay & Alternate Lay Reps
- Election of new vestry members (incl People's

warden if there is one)

- Appointment of PVG Co-ordinator
- Appointment of Independent Examiner/Auditor
- Receiving (not 'approving' - done by vestry) Annual Report & Accounts and Lay Rep, PVG etc. reports.

The Annual Report and Accounts, once examined/audited, can be submitted to OSCR without the need for an Annual Meeting. Please go ahead and do this, and provide to the diocese too.

For the meeting itself, I would advise the following options in order of preference:

1. Hold the Annual Meeting using a virtual method such as Zoom, Teams, Skype etc. This requires enough of the congregation to be happy to meet this way and may exclude some. Ballot voting for the elections above, if that is what the constitution requires, may be difficult. Holding the meeting this way is what OSCR are presently recommending.
2. Defer the Annual Meeting, maybe indefinitely. Most constitutions have clauses that allow, with the bishop's permission, deferring of the meeting or interpretation of the constitution that would allow this. The key business of the meeting can be carried out by the vestry, as they act for the congregation between Annual Meetings.
3. If neither a virtual or a deferred meeting is possible for any reason, please have a discussion with me about what can be safely, legally and effectively done.

Good communication with the congregation so they are aware of the rationale will be key whichever option you choose. Please keep safe and careful in whatever option you choose!

Abelour Children's Charity Provides Urgent Assistance Fund

Aberlour's Urgent Assistance Fund can provide cash grants to help families with children (aged 21 and under) who are suffering extreme hardship, including the impact of the Coronavirus.

Applications must be endorsed and submitted by a sponsor, acting in their professional capacity. This support is usually via cash grants to assist with a range of needs, such as food, prepay power cards,

clothing, bedding, or other essentials. Due to limited funds and high levels of applications, the average grant we give is usually around £50 per child. For more information please visit the following: <https://www.aberlour.org.uk/service-category/urgent-assistance-fund/>

Scottish Government Social Renewal Advisory Board seeks Community Input

In June, Scottish Government announced the formation a Social Renewal Advisory Board <https://www.gov.scot/groups/social-renewal-advisory-board/>. The board wants to bank the policy and practice shifts seen during COVID-19 and use current practice and knowledge to focus on reducing poverty and inequality.

They are currently calling for ideas on how to change society for the better post-Covid. They have just launched an online space where community groups and organisations can share their ideas for positive change in society (based on the lived experience of organisations who have been working with those who experience poverty and inequality during the pandemic).

The Ideas Form and more information can be found here <https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-people-and-communities-call-for-ideas/> and the news release is here <https://www.gov.scot/news/rebuilding-a-fairer-scotland-after-covid-19/>

The deadline is 23rd October.

Church Life in Lockdown: Online worship

The Scottish Episcopal Church continues to offer 'national' worship online even as some live worship starts to become possible: this will continue indefinitely even as we start to plan for physical gatherings. The two services, which are led by SEC clergy and lay readers from around the Province, are:

- Thursday—'Service of the Word' at 6.30pm
- Sunday—Eucharist at 11am

This coming Sunday, 18th October, the service is hosted by St Mary's Broughty Ferry in Brechin Diocese. There are more details and downloads of previous weeks' services at: <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/broadcast-sunday-worship/>

News to share? Please send to...

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