**PRESBYTERY OF THE NORTH EAST AND THE NORTHERN ISLES**

**PLANNING AND DEPLOYMENT COMMITTEE AND STEWARDSHIP (PROPERTY AND FINANCE) COMMITTEE**

**GUIDANCE ON CLOSURE AND DISPOSAL OF CATEGORY B BUILDINGS UNDER THE PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN**

1. Where a building is to be closed and disposed of as part of an Adjustment Process (eg union or linking), the authorisation for closure and disposal will be contained within the Basis of Adjustment which is voted on first by the Kirk Sessions and then by the congregations. No separate process is required at congregational level in these circumstances.
2. Where there is no Adjustment presently envisaged, but a Kirk Session wishes to proceed with closure and disposal (perhaps to find/fund another worship location or to end the costs associated with a building no longer required for worship or because they have a potential buyer), the following process will be necessary (at least until we see what changes might be brought to the 2024 General Assembly) namely:
3. The Kirk Session must vote on a motion “to close (at a date to be determined or a specific date as appropriate) and dispose of the building at ….”.
4. If the Kirk Session vote in favour, then the Presbytery Clerk should be approached to provide an Edict announcing a congregational vote and the relevant voting paper. **The Edict must be read at morning worship on the two Sundays preceding the congregational vote.**
5. **Voting by secret ballot then takes place on the Sunday following the readings of the Edict** and the results should be communicated to the Presbytery Clerk. Only those members present in person may vote and no abstentions or spoiled papers are counted.
6. The proposed “closure and disposal” will then be put to Presbytery for approval. **If Presbytery approves, an Extract Minute of the approval will be sent to the General Trustees who will assist the Kirk Session with implementing the “closure and disposal”.**

**It must be emphasised that the approval to “close and dispose” does not necessarily mean the immediate locking up/boarding up of the premises – it is simply a first step in the process, usually to end regular Sunday worship in the building while preparations are made for disposal. Attached you will find the Guidelines from the General Trustees about keeping a presence in buildings until disposal takes place.**

Note on Disposal deadline dates in the PMP:

While the PMP had to give a “Dispose by…” date for each Category B building, it is accepted that in some cases, disposal may not be achieved by the date specified in the PMP eg if a buyer cannot be found. The point of the dates is to flag up that action must be taken to progress disposal either by Adjustment (Point A above) or by initiating the disposal process through a congregational vote (Point B above)