

REPORT OF THE IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

May 2009

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly

1. Receive the Report and thank the Board.
2. Affirm the commitment of the Iona Community to mutual economic accountability and sharing through its economic discipline and its ongoing work.
3. Commend the involvement of the Iona Community in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme of the World Council of Churches in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).
4. Welcome the renovation of the Community's shop on Iona with additional facilities for welcome and interpretation and thank the Church for its support of the Growing Hope Appeal which has made this possible.
5. Approve the updated description of the relationship of the Iona Community to the Church of Scotland through the Iona Community Board.
6. Note with interest the fact that through the report of the Board the Iona Community is represented by the Church of Scotland to the whole Church.
7. Congratulate Rev Peter Macdonald on his election as Leader of the Iona Community from August 2009; and thank Rev Kathy Galloway for her outstanding contribution as Leader for the past seven years.

REPORT

General

1. The daily Act of Prayer of the Iona Community prays for its members 'gathered and scattered' and this is a constant reminder that it is both a worldwide movement, with members and groups everywhere from Malawi to Michigan, from Cumbria to Cuba and from Perth, Scotland to Perth, Australia, and a movement rooted in local realities. The Community is where the members are, scattered yet gathered by the strength and inspiration of its Rule, its prayer life, its local member and associate groups and its local church and community involvements. The Community was born as a practical response to the needs of a community struggling with the challenges of poverty and unemployment – Govan, during the Depression. Ever since that time in the 1930s, the commitment to economic justice and the inclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable in society have been central to the Community's life and work.

This is expressed first of all through the Community's economic discipline. The commitment to sharing and mutual accountability for money has been a part of the Rule of the Iona Community since it was first formulated in the early 1940s. Members commit themselves to tithing of income, of which 60% is given to the wider work of the church and the common good and 40% to the Iona Community, of which 25% is then given away. Members further account to one another for how they use the other 90% of income. They also account for their energy use. In this, the Community is extending into the personal and individual sphere its belief in the sovereignty of God over all aspects of life, including the economic and what is normally considered to be 'private' in western society.

Stewardship, the faithful management of the household resources, is one of the pillars of the Community's economic discipline. Christians inherit gifts from the past

of language, story, sacrament, knowledge, art, music, the built environment; from the present, of people's time, talents, money, commitment, prayer, goodwill – and the Community has had these in abundance. How these are ordered in the service of Jesus and in solidarity with God's purposes of justice and love is a central concern of Christian faith. The idea that there is any such thing as private money is quite illusory; on a par with the illusion that slavery did not hugely profit our economies at the expense of the enslaved, or that our energy-profligate lifestyle is our own private business. This privatization has simply contrived to avoid responsibility, as the world has so painfully seen of late. Good stewardship in a Christian context should never be about maximising profits, share returns or property holdings. It should always be about ordering the household so that all its members, including the weakest, can grow and flourish. In their mutual accountability, members are practicing the most down-to-earth spiritual discipline possible, testing their priorities with the help of their brothers and sisters who, they trust, will be challenging and yet supportive, assisting them to place all of life under the sovereignty of God.

This commitment to mutual economic accountability has been expressed variously by Community members; through church extension, service in countries of the global south and youth programmes on islands and mainland. More recently, it has found expression through anti-poverty campaigning, working with young offenders, asylum seekers and vulnerable young people at Camas. As Britain, along with the rest of the world, is entering economic recession, it is all the more important to maintain this commitment. The Community is by no means exempt from these challenges and had a difficult year financially. This led to some staffing cutbacks, cuts in the proposed 2009 budget and an appeal to its constituency, magnificently answered. Though the Community does not use credit, its Access Fund, interest from which subsidises the costs of people on low income

staying in its island centres, will be radically reduced in 2009, and will necessitate drawing down capital.

2. The Community's Justice and Peace Commitment commits members to prayer and action for justice, peace and the integrity of creation; members continue to be active both locally and nationally in anti-poverty campaigns, in particular through our association with Christian Aid and with Church Action on Poverty. The Community's two-year engagement with the theme of Place has led to the decision to include mutual accountability for energy and resource use, as well as money, as part of its Rule. Given the long association of Community members in Israel/Palestine, most recently through the Ecumenical Accompaniment programme of the World Council of Churches (EAPPI), much activity has been focussed on the critical situation in Gaza. This has given a timely aspect to the Community's forthcoming two-year programme emphasis on peacemaking at every level.

3. The Community's **Growing Hope Appeal** has continued and has now enabled the Community to proceed with the renovation of its shop with improved welcome and interpretation opportunities. However, the Community recognises that in an economic downturn, fundraising will continue to be an ongoing and essential part of its work, and this is being recognised by the incorporation of fundraising into its governance structures.

4. The Council of the Iona Community, which is the Community's governing body, has been revising and updating its **Memorandum and Articles of Association** to take account of more recent companies legislation as well as changes in the procedures of the Community. The Community incorporated as a Company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital in December 1985. The Council of the Iona Community is the Board of Directors of the Community.

In 1991, a Special Resolution was passed by the Annual General meeting of the Iona Community concerning the ecclesiastical relationship of the Community to the Church of Scotland. As the membership of the Community has become increasingly ecumenical and Church of Scotland membership of the Community currently stands at around 40%, the Special Resolution is somewhat anomalous. This was recognised at the time of the Church of Scotland's structural reorganisation in 2005, which at the 2006 General Assembly constituted the Iona Community Board as an advisory body with designated ecumenical representation. The Iona Community Board now seeks the approval of the Assembly for new wording describing this special relationship to be incorporated into the Memorandum and Articles of the Iona Community in place of the Special Resolution.

5. The Leader of the Iona Community, Rev Kathy Galloway, completes her seven-year term of office at the end of July 2009. The Board is pleased to announce the election of Rev Peter Macdonald, currently minister of St George's West Church, Edinburgh, as the new Leader from August 2009.

Islands Work

6. The usual busy season on **Iona** was greatly enabled by a strong and committed staff team, who coped with the usual challenges of illness, staff changeover and shortages with characteristic grace and competence. This was helped by a greater emphasis on flexible team working. Occupancy rates were 90% in the Abbey and 70% in the MacLeod Centre, which was encouraging given a 13% drop in visitors to the island overall. The very early date of Easter meant that bookings were quiet at the beginning of the season. However, the introduction of two winter quiet weeks during Advent has been a great success, and both were full with waiting lists. Because guests overwhelmingly state the importance to them of community-building with people of many backgrounds, nationalities and religious traditions,

the new programme has an emphasis on this. The common life is still a vision and aspiration for many in a dangerously fragmented world. The Community's international Volunteer Programme reinforces the value of what George MacLeod called the 'demanding common task' which alone builds community. The Community is grateful to its volunteers and staff. Its MacLeod Centre Deputy Warden, Rowena Aberdeen, finished her contract and has returned to Australia. Rev Jamie Schmeling, a minister of the Reformed Church of America who has been working with the Wild Goose Resource Group for several years has been appointed as new Deputy Warden. Upkeep and maintenance of the Community's properties on Iona is an ongoing challenge, given the extremes of damp and wind, the difficulty of getting appropriately skilled people to carry out work and the lack of continuity in maintenance personnel. A coherent and coordinated maintenance plan for the buildings on Iona has now been drawn up following an extensive survey .

7. Plans for the renovation of **the Community's shop** on Iona finally received all the necessary permissions and work began in December 2008, finishing in time for the beginning of the 2009 season in late March. This work will greatly improve the space and layout in the shop itself, give improved and additional office space and incorporate a welcome and reception area which will allow for better interpretation of the Community's life and work beyond Iona. The Abbey Front Office will be given over to Historic Scotland.

8. **Camas** is the Community's outdoor education centre on Mull, with an emphasis on environmental sustainability, community-building and adventure activity. It serves primarily though not exclusively a youth constituency, especially appropriate for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. With an excellent team of staff and volunteers, the various youth weeks were very successful and the garden flourished. In order to make the resources of Camas more widely available, four adult

weeks, with environmental and creative (storytelling and traditional music) themes were introduced at the start and end of the season and this is being further developed in 2009, including a week for people interested in learning about what it means to live *Off Grid, Off Oil*.

Mainland Work

9. The **Council** of the Iona Community has been reviewing its governance structures and as part of this has incorporated its Publishing Committee into a new committee with the wider remit of Communications and Fundraising. It has also revised and updated its Memorandum and Articles.

10. Youth Development The Jacob Project, which offers young offenders and ex-offenders positive alternatives to re-offending, has had its first full year, including a very successful briefing event at the Scottish Parliament. All the young men on it have done well and none has re-offended. We are grateful to the Church of Scotland Parish Development Fund which has supported Jacob; however, this kind of work is costly and it is facing major funding difficulties. Schools work in both non-denominational and Catholic schools continues, including an innovative graffiti project at Bellahouston Academy which was reported in Glasgow newspapers and significant work has been done with the Community's Youth Associates which has resulted in several of them applying for full membership of the Community.

Communications and Outreach

11. Wild Goose Publications, www.ionabooks.com have published the following new titles: *We Walk His Way: Shorter Songs for Worship* (book and CD) by John L Bell, *Thinking Out Loud: Collected Scripts from Thought for the Day* by John L Bell, *Christ of the Celts* by Philip Newell, *Bare Feet and Buttercups: resources for ordinary time* by Ruth Burgess, *Between High and Low Water: Sojourner Songs* by Jan Sutch Pickard, *The Tenderness of Conscience* by Allan Boesak, *Going Home Another Way: Daily readings and resources for*

Christmastide by Neil Paynter and new editions of *Living a Countersign* by Ian M Fraser and *Bridging the Gap: Has the Church failed the poor?* by John Harvey. There has been growing interest in *Living the Questions* for which Wild Goose Publications is the UK distributor. Web sales, and overseas editions and distribution have held up well, and the website has been updated. The major and innovative project of digitisation is continuing surely but slowly, partly because there is no standard format as yet for e-books.

12. The Community's magazine **Coracle** has maintained a high standard of editorial and content from across the Community's life and work, and beyond. An exciting new development is the introduction of a monthly **e-coracle**, which will allow much more interactivity and immediacy.

13. The Wild Goose Resource Group. In addition to the monthly Holy City workshop and worship evening in Glasgow, the Community's team of worship and reflection resource workers has offered weekend programmes for those interested in holding their own Holy City event in their own city, and, in conjunction with Strathclyde University Chaplaincy, for those running or interested in *Living the Questions* (faith explorations for progressive Christians). Holy City continues to offer this course in Glasgow. John Bell continues to be in great demand for music and worship consultancy across the world.

14. At Greenbelt, the Christian Arts Festival, a successful new venture in partnership saw the Iona Community Wild Goose Resource Group and youth team, along with Members, join forces with Church Action on Poverty and Fischy Music in a larger venue under the title of Northern Lights, to offer a full programme of hospitality, sales, workshops, worship, talks and music.

Membership

15. Seven new members were hallowed into full membership at Community Week in August, including a second Dutch member, and there are 22 people on the

current New Members Programme. Their denominational affiliation is: Church of Scotland/United Reformed/ Dutch Reformed, Anglican/Scottish Episcopalian, Methodist, Salvation Army, Baptist and Independent.

Full membership currently stands at 270, Associate membership at around 1800. In addition to at least 30 Associate/Iona groups in the UK, there are also now groups in Ireland, the Netherlands (5), Switzerland, Germany (5), Sweden (3), Cuba, the United States and Canada, and a group is in the process of forming in Malawi. The Community retains strong links with Wellspring, its sister community in Australia. The Community also mourned, with the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland, the death of its former Leader, Rev John Morrow, a member of the Iona Community (1958-71).

16. Plenary meetings in Glasgow and Iona and 5 regional plenaries began to engage with the new focus on Peace, and in particular with *Glory to God and Peace on Earth*, the thematic areas for the forthcoming WCC International Ecumenical Peace Convocation to be held in Kingston, Jamaica in 2011. A member of the Community, Professor Alison Phipps, is on the Spiritual Life Committee for this event. Both the summer and

autumn Community Weeks were lively events. Rev Mitchell Bunting (URC) represents Ecumenical Renewal Agencies on the WCC Continuation Committee of Ecumenism in the 21st Century. The Community also mourned the deaths of five members: Jim Hughes, a distinguished Scottish businessman and academic; Donald Rennie, whose accomplishments in faithful ministry in Scotland and in music were much valued; Keith Dowding, a former Moderator of the Uniting Church in Western Australia; Tom Graham, who, at the time of his death was Librarian of Newcastle University and Richard Baxter, former missionary in Malawi and Warden of Scottish Churches House. Every 31st day of its monthly prayer cycle, the Community remembers those members who have died since its formation in 1938 and prays 'tell them we love them and miss them.' In the communion of saints, an ever-present reality for the Iona Community, we are not divided. We give great thanks.

In the name of the Board

MAXWELL CRAIG, *Convener*
KATHY GALLOWAY, *Leader, The Iona Community*

APPENDIX

Company Number : 96243

EXTRACT OF SPECIAL RESOLUTIONS OF IONA COMMUNITY

At the Annual General Meeting of The Iona Community held at the Pearce Institute, Govan, Glasgow on the First day of June Nineteen hundred and ninety one the following Special Resolutions were passed amending the Memorandum and Articles of Association as follows:-

The Memorandum of Association shall be altered by the addition of an additional clause to be added at the end of the Memorandum to read as follows:-

1. Nothing in this Memorandum is to be construed in a manner inconsistent with the fact that the Community is for all ecclesiastical purposes subject to the jurisdiction of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

The Articles of Association shall be altered as follows:-

At the end of Clause 3 thereof there shall be added the following wording:

For the avoidance of doubt it is declared that all members are required to adhere to the corporate loyalty of the Community to the presbyterian government of the Church of Scotland and the corporate acceptance by the Community of the fundamental doctrines of the Church of Scotland, and the Council may admit to membership persons who are not members of the Church of Scotland provided that they agree that, as members of the Community, they will do nothing prejudicial to the said corporate loyalty and corporate acceptance, and provided also that they

accept membership on such other terms and conditions and with such rights as may be determined by the Council and approved by the Community in Plenary meeting.

At the end of the Articles of Association the following additional Clause shall be added to read as follows:-

52. Nothing in these Articles shall be construed as removing the Community from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland as exercised through the Iona Community Board appointed by the General Assembly or as conferring any right on the Community in Plenary meeting or on the Council to act in a manner inconsistent with the said jurisdiction or contrary to the relevant provisions of the General Assembly of 1951.

Proposed new wording to replace the above:

The Iona Community originated within the Church of Scotland. Members of the Iona Community who are also members of the Church of Scotland remain subject to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, as do all other members of the Iona Community remain subject to their respective denominations. In recognition of these historic links and in furtherance of the ecumenical objectives of the Community, the Church of Scotland has constituted the Iona Community Board as an advisory body to the Community and as the means whereby the Community reports to the General Assembly and to the British churches. The Iona Community Board remains subject to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.