

WPCS news for you

5th Anniversary Edition, 2015

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Charity number SC041857



In the beginning

Our Chairman Sir Iain McMillan describes WPCS as a “real success story,” and here gives an insight into the formation of the charity and what went before.

“I was Chairman of the former Industrial Mission Trust (IMT) from 2007 until the Trust was wound up, as was the Scottish Churches Industrial Mission (SCIM). I’d been an IMT trustee since 2000. The former IMT was principally a fundraising body while SCIM ran the chaplaincy work.

“The new WPCS was put in place as the two charities’ successor body as the churches decided to raise the professionalism of their work in chaplaincy and invest more money than in the past. IMT and SCIM were wound up and their roles vested in the new WPCS;

“Iain McFadzean was brought in as Director and then made Chief Executive Officer. Other area organisers were employed and new chaplains brought on board;

“WPCS has grown incredibly over the past five years and is a real success story. The churches’ ambitions for the work and reach of WPCS have been fully met to date and our work, increasingly professional, extends its reach into the future.”



Beacons of light

Some 60 volunteers and staff attended our Fifth Anniversary Dinner in Huntingtower Hotel, near Perth, on October 29 (pictured above).

Welcoming everyone, Trustee Rev Jan Adamson, founding Chair of WPCS and a former member of the Scottish Churches Industrial Mission (SCIM), spoke warmly of the work which had gone into establishing WPCS.

She said when she reflected on the past, she was mindful of the work of SCIM, the forerunner to WPCS, which had as its primary aim to support the work of Industrial Mission in Scotland.

“SCIM did some really good work using some very professional and experienced chaplains, chiefly within the retail sector,” she explained. “However, work life and employment was changing in Scotland and across all sectors. If the chaplaincy function was to have any meaning, the provision had to change, the provision had to begin to be seen as a

credible, professionally organised and sound missional function of the wider church.

“And so, with the support and encouragement from several of our various Christian denominations in Scotland, SCIM was wound up and Work Place Chaplaincy Scotland was created.

“As we give thanks for the first five years of WPCS we reflect on the journey so far, believing in our respective calls to mission in developing a ministry that serves the people of Scotland through their work environments. “As a support and witnessing organisation, it is through our ability to listen and come alongside people that we have become a ministry in demand.

“Some members of the Board have journeyed from the beginning, others have accepted the call to join the journey en route.

“Work happens behind the scene ensuring that sound procedures, appropriate legislative requirements, finance and

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Dundee Airport volunteer Rev Allan Webster (pictured) was also: 'in at the beginning' of WPCS and worked for our predecessor, Scottish Churches Industrial Mission (SCIM).

Formerly SCIM's Tayside and North Fife Area Organiser then WPCS's first East of Scotland Organiser, Allan, who retired in 2013, continues his chaplaincy in his retirement, by volunteering at Dundee Airport.

"I started with SCIM in 2008. At that time I inherited being chaplain to Dundee City Council, but other than that there wasn't any other chaplaincy in place. There had been in the past, in Dundee. Erik Cramb had been National Organiser as well as East Area Organiser and been a 'hands-on', chaplain. Lewis Rose then took over as National Organiser and was in post when I started in August 2008.

"In Fife I had made efforts to start things in St Andrews. I was going into Morrison's supermarket there every few weeks, making chaplaincy visits myself until I could hand over to a volunteer. There were people interested though it was slow to get off the ground. Now there is a volunteer working in the store, an arrangement which seems to be going well.

While SCIM had had several volunteers, Allan recalls, sadly many had fallen away. "SCIM was very much about chaplaincy to heavy industry and you could say that as heavy industry declined, SCIM declined with it," he explained. "The first time I attended a team meeting I was welcomed to 'the team' and my reaction inwardly was: 'what team?!' The organisation's decline had not quite halted.

"At that time, I recruited Robert Matthew as chaplain to Tesco in Arbroath, Gaynor Scott as Angus Council chaplain, Joan Hainsworth for Morrison's in Arbroath, Jim McCluskey and David Logan in Forfar, and Geoff Findlay - who is now our full time chaplain in Dundee - as a volunteer in National Express. The Board was keen to restructure SCIM and it has been a real privilege to be part of that -



No longer 'shovelling smoke'

to be in an organisation that really seemed to be in decline and to see its complete turnaround. It's obviously a work of God the way the whole thing has expanded.

"A huge amount of credit for that has to go to WPCS Chief Executive, Iain McFadzean, who has managed the turnaround of the whole organisation. It's been good to be part of that and to see how things have taken off, with volunteers doing things I was able to pioneer. Needless to say there were places where it didn't come off and at times it could feel like we were battling against the current, but it has been great to see the positive changes taking place."

Following on from his chaplaincy to Dundee City Council, Allan began chaplaincy in the city's Overgate shopping centre. "I was the first chaplain in the Overgate, then handed over to another volunteer. I sought to

pioneer chaplaincy in places and to hand them over to a volunteer. In the early days, when you were trying to promote chaplaincy to people it felt like you were shovelling smoke a lot of the time.

"Once chaplaincy was established in one or two places, it gave it more credibility when you were suggesting it to other organisations. Rather than shovelling smoke and being aspirational, you were actually seen to be doing things."

As he continued to establish chaplaincy in Dundee, Allan attended monthly meetings of Dundee Trades Council as an observer.

"I was made very welcome. There was often an opportunity to venture an opinion on things and I was invited to the pub for a pint or two afterwards which was good too!"

As chaplain to Dundee Airport, Allan has been involved in the annual Emergency incident training exercises there. At the time of writing he led a team from WPCS in another such exercise. "The role has developed there and WPCS involvement is growing," he explained.

"In Dundee City Council one thing that helped in getting to know people, in an organisation with thousands of employees, was my monthly Chaplain's letter: 'Workplace Word,' which was also published on the WPCS website. That was really well received. Sometimes I'd go into an office and it'd be pinned up on the notice board or people responded by email saying they'd passed it on to friends or family.

"It's very encouraging to see the way things have developed - something that I helped pioneer - and see the way WPCS is going. Chaplaincy in the workplace - being there as a listening ear for people of all faiths and none - is being appreciated more and more. Iain McFadzean is right when he describes workplace chaplaincy as an expanding part of the church's ministry, reaching so many people who would not go to a church and I feel privileged to be a part of that."

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Keeping it all together

The one person every new volunteer and member of staff is sure to be in touch with is Cat Parkinson (pictured) our Administrative Co-Ordinator who has helped shape WPCS into the organisation it now is.



We asked her to give us her perspective on her job and WPCS.

How did you get involved with WPCS?

"I worked part-time at 121 George Street (Church of Scotland Headquarters) where I met Iain, who used a desk next to me once a week. His board of Trustees had tasked him to look for someone to do some admin for him. I started with eight hours (working from home) whilst continuing my other job. The WPCS work increased to a 20-hour post and so I left 121, and the rest is history."

What was it like in the beginning?

"It was exciting and challenging. I loved working from home, free from the many distractions of office life. The job was brand new and so I had freedom to 'create' it to suit my way of working. I was trusted and respected, and this brought the best

out of me in managing challenges I had not realised I was capable of."

When did you see things starting to pick up momentum?

"Within my first year, full independence from the Church of Scotland was required of us several years earlier than had been originally planned. This meant myriad challenges, head-spinning stuff! It was an intense pace, with high stakes but we got through it."

What (or who) caused that do you think?

"The independence situation caused it, although steady growth would always have been in the plan. CEO, Iain McFadzean - together with an amazing staff team - enabled it through expert leadership, resulting in WPCS achieving status as a fully independent charity within the narrow

deadline, whilst at the same time overseeing an incredible expansion of chaplaincy provision across Scotland. Perhaps God planned it that way !!..."

What is it like for you now?

"Being within WPCS continues to amaze and inspire. The wider 'story' of continued growth and recognition maintains momentum, whilst individual stories of God's hand on people's lives encourage me and remind me what it's all about! The staff and volunteer team is much larger than when I started and I love it when I 'get out of the house' and get together with folk who I have 'met' through email.

"The recent 5th year anniversary celebration was very, very special in that regard. It has been such a joyful pleasure to see the three Interns (from the Church of Scotland training partnership) begin their journey under the guidance of our Training & Vocation Director, Andy Gregg. They already seem like a wonderfully close-knit 'family', with the Holy Spirit so clearly at work in their journeys. This might sound 'cheesy' but there is a real 'sparkle' in that group, they make me smile!"

Beacons of light

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other various resources are in place to support you, our chaplains.

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I congratulate you all for your hard work and may WPCS continue from strength to strength, witnessing where we're called, being beacons of light in sometimes dark places and trusting as we journey in the guidance of God."



Dundee Chaplain Geoff Findlay - seen here with Black Watch service personnel - carrying a torch in the Dundee Christmas Festival torchlight procession. Geoff delivered this year's Christmas message to around 25,000 people gathered to watch the city's Lord Provost switch on the Christmas lights. (Picture courtesy of Courier newspaper and photographer Steve MacDougall.)

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Sutherland chaplain sees quiet optimism in communities



WPCS volunteer Stewart Goudie's patch in Tongue, on the far north coast of Scotland, presents a very different setting for his workplace chaplaincy to that of the majority of our volunteers.

As a local minister, he is known by most of the 600 people in his parish, including the fire crew. WPCS is the official chaplaincy service to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and nationally, as well as locally, enjoys good relationships with the emergency service.

In Tongue, the fire station is literally next door to the church and only yards from his manse, so Stewart is ideally placed to provide workplace chaplaincy to the local crews and support staff.

A Church of Scotland Minister at Melness and Tongue, on the north coast of Sutherland, he is currently also overseeing the Sutherland parish of Lairg and Rogart until a new minister is appointed. The geographical spread and the remoteness of the area can prove challenging.

However as he explains: "Many people have chosen to come here to live, either to find a job opportunity here, or to retire and you can see some evidence of that in the most recent Census figures.

"One in four people in this parish come from outside Scotland, compared with 8% across the rest of the country. Many other folk who live here have come from other parts of Scotland.

"Tongue has two hotels, a bank, a couple of car repair garages, two shops and a primary school.

"Elsewhere in the parish there are two more shops and two more hotels. Tourism is an important industry in the area and we have two camp sites and a number of other small

businesses. Most people have a strong positive feeling towards local firms and support them when they can.

"Some people rarely leave the local area, so they rely on the services they can access locally. Also, a significant number of people work away in Inverness 90 miles away, or even further afield, and travel back, perhaps not every day, but regularly. Others commute daily to work in Thurso, our nearest town, 45 miles eastwards along the coast. There are also quite a number of people who work from home."

As regards incentives for young local people to stay in the area rather than move away for education or job opportunities, Stewart is seeing: "some return" of young people to live locally and choosing not to go to university but to find work. Others manage to access university or college opportunities without having to move away or are able to attend further education colleges in Thurso. The local community transport service: 'Transport for Tongue,' runs a twice-daily bus service to Thurso to enable college students to get there in time for their first class of the day and to stay until the last class of the day.

While there are some challenges with public transport, the road system is, says Stewart, considerably better than it was 30 years ago, something which is also beginning to attract people into the area.

"The closure of Dounreay has had a major impact on employment, despite the people involved in the clearance and restoration of the site. Wind-farms, wave-power and tidal energy systems are growing in number but do not yet provide a replacement. Nonetheless, there is quiet optimism and determination that communities in the area will prosper and grow into the future."

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New beginning for Kim

I have listened, walked, stood, laughed, eaten food, drunk coffee, and bought clothes! Attended funerals, taken people for lunch, alleviated boredom, helped people clarify their goals and dreams, and given them courage to follow them, writes Kim Messieh (pictured).

I've been accepted, thought of as too young, asked if I was a New Zealander, kept at arms length, welcomed in unreservedly, and asked if I was leaving because of the Australia v Scotland Rugby game!

I've watched atheists and sceptics soften, doors close when managers change, been drawn into one way 'discussions' about the plight of Scotland, and learnt (and forgotten) too many names to count.

Sometimes I'm confident and can boldly stroll up to new people.



Other occasions it takes all I have to approach and not feel anxious.

Chaplaincy has stretched and challenged my skills, laid bare my shortcomings and thrust me into the centre of working life in Glasgow.

Whilst often wondering if I'm the right person, I look back and know I would do it all - again and again.

God has been more than faithful going ahead preparing people, especially myself, for each encounter. How true are the words: "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness."
(2 Cor 12.9)

With sadness I finished up as a Chaplain with WPCS in October. My husband and I feel drawn back to the sunny climes of Melbourne and our families.

But more than this, we believe after seven years God is calling us back to Australia to continue our journey. Thank you.

What an honour to work with colleagues who have supported me and shared insights along the way. I will miss you! To all the people I've encountered in their place of work, thank you for allowing me the privilege of journeying beside you.

Blessings,

Kim.



WPCS Central Regional Organiser Paul Wilson and Stirling Council and City Centre chaplain Ruth Morris were privileged to attend an innovative new 'take' on the traditional 'Kirkin O' the Council' service. In recent years this has become an annual, multi-denominational event and this year's ceremony was a Multi-Faith Service which took place in Stirling Council Chambers on Sunday 11th October. Elected members, religious representatives and residents from across Stirling attended the ceremony, as can be seen in the picture (left) courtesy of the council and from their website:

<http://my.stirling.gov.uk/news/view/30393?theme=MyStirling>

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Incredible journey continues

When I accepted the post of National Director for Work Place Chaplaincy Scotland in 2010, it was not without a great deal of trepidation - but then again maybe, 'trepidation' is just a euphemism for weak faith! writes our Chief Executive Rev Iain McFadzean.

For the previous five years while involved with the building of the Bankfoot Community Church the passage from Jeremiah Chapter 29, Verse 11 came up time and again. Whenever I worried, one way or another, it seemed to appear: 'For I know the plans I have for you', declares the Lord: 'Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you hope and a future.' Four months into this job, feeling overwhelmed and sitting in a prayer meeting in Edinburgh, silently asking God for help, the speaker announced their reading: Jeremiah Ch29 V 11. I laughed and said out loud: "OK I get it," though I am not sure those sitting near me thought I did!

Five years later and God has been as good as his Word. He has put in place a great team of staff and volunteers and spoken into the hearts of individuals from all parts of our society, secular and spiritual. It has been an incredible journey, but one which has been constantly underpinned by the ever-strengthening conviction that God is working His plans out. What is even more exciting is that those plans seem to involve the whole of His creation and a creative, divine compassion that will not be constricted by doctrine, dogma, selfishness, evil or indeed any barrier humanity cares to create.

We are all created: 'in the image of God' and God is speaking to and through his whole creation. Are we listening?

Thank you for all your support and prayer over the past five years, please continue to journey with us: 'Listening and caring in confidence'.

'Fantastic additional resource'

Newest addition to WPCS's Board of Trustees, Vince McKeown, brings a wealth of knowledge and experience of working with the national and international corporate world to the role. Currently Director of Membership & Partnership Services of SCDI (Scottish Council for Development and Industry), you can read more about Vince and our other Trustees, on our website.

Thanks to the long-established relationship between SCDI and WPCS and his friendship with WPCS's CEO Rev Iain McFadzean, Vince has been aware of WPCS for a considerable time. However, since joining the Board, Vince says he has become much more aware of - and impressed by - the sheer energy, breadth and scope of the charity and how it works:

"When I am speaking to stakeholders about WPCS they are impressed when they hear about its reach and the work that it does.

"That is down to Iain McFadzean and the team of staff and volunteers who do such a great job. "My own perception was that WPCS would be all about religious conversations, but that is

absolutely not what it is about. While it is undoubtedly a Christian charity, it's much more to do with Christian compassion and caring in action and there's a real sense of value and integrity in the work that it does.

"Until you have that conversation about the breadth of the work done, people don't realise what it involves.

"I was at a meeting of another well-established organisation recently and was talking about WPCS and people there were impressed when they heard about its values and work.

"I think what brought home to me the fantastic work WPCS is doing was the terrible bin lorry incident in Glasgow last year. Tragic as it undoubtedly was, in another way, such events do highlight what valuable work WPCS does. Those chaplains make such a huge difference to people's lives at a time when they need as much help and support as they can get."

Vince is well aware of how far and how quickly WPCS has come in just five years and he is excited to consider how he can help shape its progress in the coming years:

"To my mind, WPCS is very much a sleeping giant. There is still a job to be done in growing people's awareness of the invaluable work the chaplains do, not only in times of crisis and tragedy, but in the everyday world of work and life. I look forward to helping raise awareness of the very real benefits WPCS brings not only to the workforce through helping improve people's resilience and wellbeing, but also to organisations and indeed the wider economy. An awareness of being valued in the workplace motivates people and there is a really serious side to WPCS in terms of promoting wellbeing in the workplace.

"For businesses - at a time when everyone is so focused on the pound - there is a need for them to be aware of the fantastic, and free, additional resource that is WPCS.

"With staffing, including HR resources, being cut in these tough times, I want to say to employers, rather than waiting until experiencing a very challenging time, make full use now of this great service. The sheer professionalism of WPCS and the experience the chaplains have is remarkable."