

BASIC INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERS

NAME OF COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE:

Legal Questions Committee

BRIEF SUMMARY OF AREA OF WORK:

- Considering questions of law, both civil law and church law, which arise in the course of the Church's work
- Providing the legislative drafting service for agencies of the General Assembly
- Suggesting reform to church law, at policy level

NB: The practical work is normally done by the Secretary, with the Committee providing expertise in policy-formation and reviewing of work.

NAMES OF CONVENER, VICE-CONVENER AND SECRETARY:

Convener: Rev George Cowie

Vice-Convener: Mrs Barbara Finlayson

Secretary: The Principal Clerk

NUMBER OF MEMBERS:

16 including Assembly Clerks, Procurator and Solicitor as members *ex officii*s

FREQUENCY, TIMING AND VENUE OF MEETINGS:

5 or 6 half-day meetings per year, held in the Church Offices in George Street on a week-day

DETAILS OF SUB-COMMITTEES, TASK GROUPS ETC:

Small groups drawn from the Committee's membership may tackle particular technical issues for a few months within any annual cycle and sometimes these groups will embark upon an extended period of work lasting for more than one calendar year. Currently the Committee has several sub-groups dealing with remits from the General Assemblies of –2016-2018, for example, looking at a new Church Courts Act.

EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBERS:

Normally members will be required to read about 30-40 pages of materials, including discussion-papers, provided one to two weeks before each meeting. They will be expected to contribute to the discussion from their own expertise in either civil law or church law (and normally it is not expected that anyone will have expertise in both, see below).

GENERAL SKILLS/EXPERIENCE SOUGHT:

Most members of the committee are very experienced in the governance of the Church (e.g. as experienced ministers, former senior members of other Assembly agencies, Presbytery Clerks or the like). Many are qualified, practising or retired civilian lawyers. A few belong to both categories.

PARTICULAR SKILLS SOUGHT FROM 2019:

Now and for the foreseeable future the Committee will continue to wrestle with issues of definition around employee/office holder status and questions centred around understanding the discrimination provisions of the Equality Act 2010. Anyone with expertise in these areas would be considered extremely valuable.

The Committee would also appreciate applications from anyone with experience of disciplinary or complaints processes internal to their organisations, especially in the voluntary or professional sectors.