

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, 24 MAY 2017

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, the 24th day of May 2017 years, at 9.15 am, Session IV.

The General Assembly did again convene and was constituted with prayer.

HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad was invited to address the General Assembly and was thanked by the Moderator.

The minutes of Session II being printed and in the hands of members, were submitted and approved.

COMMITTEE ON ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations which was given in by the Rev Alison McDonald, Convener.

It was moved and seconded-

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. In marking the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, renew its commitment to the vision expressed in *ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda* within the communion of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

3. Commend the 26th General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches to the prayers of the Church.
4. Note that a review of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) is currently being undertaken.
5. Welcome the continued participation of The Border Kirk, Carlisle as a companion in the Declaration of Covenant Partnership within Cumbria.
6. Congratulate the Very Rev Dr Sheilagh Kesting on becoming a Dame of the Order of St Gregory the Great, in recognition of her contribution to the life of the church in Scotland by His Holiness Pope Francis.
7. Approve the delegates to Assemblies, Synods and Conferences of other churches, as detailed in Appendix I.
8. Note the appointment of representatives to ecumenical bodies, as detailed in Appendix II.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of Section 2:

After 'to the vision expressed in ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda' add ', the vision of a Reformed Church always being reformed in accordance with the holy scriptures.'

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Safeguarding Committee which was given in by the Rev Dr Karen Campbell, Convener.

It was moved, seconded and agreed-

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Note the scoping exercise being undertaken by the Committee to identify possible areas for review and development in order that current systems and practice are robust and fit for purpose.
3. Instruct Presbyteries to ensure that all Kirk Sessions within their bounds keep a record of the number of people who have undertaken all types of Safeguarding training and submit an annual return to the Safeguarding Office by January 31 each year indicating numbers who have done so in the preceding calendar year.
4. Affirm the work undertaken by the Committee in the field of dementia and safeguarding, following the National Safeguarding Conference held in October 2016.
5. Commend the Report of the Domestic Abuse Working Group and affirm the Domestic Abuse Policy Statement set out in Appendix 1.
6. Note the Committee's ongoing work in the area of Managing Those Who Pose a Risk of Harm.

Professor June Andrews was invited to address the General Assembly and was thanked by the Moderator.

MINISTRIES COUNCIL

The General Assembly called for the Report and Supplementary Report of the Ministries Council which were given in by the Rev Neil Glover, Convener.

It was moved and seconded-

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and Supplementary Report.
2. Instruct the Council to work with the Council of Assembly and other appropriate bodies to develop a strategic vision and plan for Ministry and report to the General Assembly of 2018.
3. Instruct the Council to work with the Legal Questions Committee to consider how current legislation might allow for Hub-style ministry to be adopted and how that legislation might be extended to allow other Hub-style models to be implemented, making use of learning from previous models which have demonstrated characteristics of Hub-style ministry.
4. Instruct the Council to work with the Theological Forum and the Ecumenical Relations Committee to understand better the increased place of oversight in the Church's ministry and how this fits within Presbyterian ecclesiology.
5. Acknowledge the early signs of enthusiasm for a period of experimentation around Hub-style ministry and instruct the Council to work with a number of Presbyteries to identify key issues and characteristics of what Hub-style ministry could provide.
6. Instruct the Council to work with the Council of Assembly, and particularly its Finance Group, to consider how Ministries and Mission contributions are set for congregations in Guardianship or a long vacancy.

7. Instruct the Council to report to the General Assembly of 2018 regarding how Priority Areas are resourced within Presbytery Plans.
8. Affirm the commitment of the Priority Areas Committee to developing strong partnerships with other Councils.
9. Instruct the Priority Areas Committee to establish opportunities for Priority Areas congregations to access information through occasional surgeries with key bodies within the Church, e.g., General Trustees; Stewardship and Finance.
10. Instruct the Council to work with the Council of Assembly to explore the possibility of having payment relief with respect to congregations' contributions and to report to the General Assembly of 2018.
11. Note the report on the work of the Priority Areas Committee from 2010-2017 and instruct the Council to implement the Priorities Areas Plan for 2017-2022.
12. Instruct the Council to further develop the plans for supervision, coaching, and spiritual accompaniment for Ministers and to report to General Assembly 2018.
13. Pass an Act amending the Auxiliary Ministry Act (Act XIII, 2003) (as amended) as set out in Appendix 2.
14. Pass an Act amending the Deacons Act (Act VIII, 2010) (as amended) as set out in Appendix 3.
15. Pass an Act amending the Ordained Local Ministry Act (Act IX, 2011) (as amended) as set out in Appendix 4.
16. Affirm the Tomorrow's Calling project as part of the Decade for Ministry and instruct the Council to work with the Council of Assembly to promote further understanding about ministry.
17. Instruct the Council to articulate a 2018-2023 recruitment strategy for ministry.
18. Commend to those in the recognised ministries the Ministerial Development Conversation material.
19. Instruct Presbyteries to work with the Ministries Council in developing a planning framework which supports and enables a locally-focused missional approach, taking into account: the statistical trends of availability of Ministers; the viability of congregations over the next 5 years, and acknowledging that further radical downward adjustment is not necessarily the appropriate response.
20. Instruct the Council to increase the Guardianship Allowance to 2 days per week of pastoral cover plus pulpit supply with effect from 1 January 2018.
21. Instruct the Council, in partnership with the Panel on Review and Reform, to initiate an evaluation of the Path of Renewal with a view to making recommendations on the future of this programme and report back to the General Assembly of 2018.
22. Pass Regulations amending the *Go For It* Fund Regulations (Regulations IV 2012) (as amended) as set out in Appendix 7.
23. Pass the Ministry and Deaf Congregations Act as set out in Appendix 8.
24. Pass the Congregations of Deaf People Regulations as set out in Appendix 9.
25. Note the Armed Forces Covenant as summarised in the Report.
26. Instruct the Ministries Council to liaise with the Legal Questions Committee on issues that have arisen in relation to the Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages Act, (Act I, 2015) and report to the General Assembly of 2018 as to whether amending legislation is required.
27. Note the Council's initial discussions with the Mission and Discipleship Council with respect to Youth Ministry and instruct the Council to continue

these discussions with a view to considering the possibility of recognising Youth Ministry as a strand of the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and in due course to consider whether the Ministries Council should take responsibility for the assessment, training and ongoing support of Youth Ministers, bringing a final report to the General Assembly of 2018.

28. Instruct the Council, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee, to develop a Capability Procedure for Parish Ministers and report further to the General Assembly of 2018.
29. Note the completion of the recent round of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups processes for Parish Ministers, Ministries Development Staff, Candidates and Probationers.
30. Instruct the Council to consider the pay structures for salaried ministries and report to the General Assembly of 2018.
31. Instruct the Council, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee, to explore the introduction of a process to permit the extension of parish ministry beyond the age of 75 on a case by case basis, taking into account all relevant factors, including the nature and context of the work of parish ministry, and to bring proposed legislation to the General Assembly of 2018.
32. Pass an Act amending the Ministry Act (Act II 2000) as set out in Appendix 1.
33. Instruct the Council, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee, to bring proposals for a major revision of, or replacement for, the Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003), to the General Assembly of 2018.
34. Pass an Act amending the Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003) as set out in Appendix 2.
35. Pass an Act amending the Appeals Act (Act I 2014) as set out in Appendix 3.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 12.34 pm until 2 pm.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 2 and renumber:

Welcome the efforts of the Council to promote resilience in ministry and invite the Council to cooperate with Presbyteries and other appropriate bodies to facilitate resilience in ministry across the Church.

On a vote being taken For or Against the amendment it carried For.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 3 and renumber:

Instruct the Council to consider what further steps they might take to promote and to ensure the highest standards of preaching in the Church of Scotland.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of Section 3:

After 'characteristics of Hub-style ministry' add 'and taking into account potential ecumenical expressions of Hub-style ministry'.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 7 and renumber:

Instruct the Council, in cooperation with the Council of Assembly and other appropriate bodies, to establish a strategy for supporting ministries in areas of rural deprivation and to consider how this strategy might be resourced within Presbytery Plans.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of the proposed amendment:

Delete 'and to consider how this strategy might be resourced within Presbytery Plans'.

On a vote being taken For or Against the amendment, there voted For 271 and Against 262 and the General Assembly resolved accordingly.

On a vote being taken For or Against the amendment as amended, it carried Against.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 8 and renumber:

Instruct the Council to consider how they might support those in parishes which are not designated as priority areas but which have levels of deprivation in the highest 5% according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016, and report back to the General Assembly of 2018.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of Section 12 of the Deliverance:

After 'Ministers' add 'directing the Council to ensure that participation in all such support plans is at the discretion of individual ministers,'.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 13 and renumber:

Instruct the Council to reconsider the age-limit for candidates entering training for full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 16 and renumber:

Instruct the Council, in consultation with other Councils as appropriate, to consider how the Church might mark the 50th anniversary of the passing of the Act anent the Admission of Women to the Ministry and to report to the General Assembly of 2018.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 18 and renumber:

Commend the work of the Volunteering Vocations Scheme and instruct the Council to ensure that the new Recruitment Strategy offers a variety of experiences of ministry which are accessible and relevant to young adults and report to the General Assembly of 2018.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:-

Add a new Section 18 and renumber:

Instruct the Council to ensure that the fullest possible range of learning options are available to candidates (including distance learning) when considering new patterns of training.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 20 and renumber:

Instruct the Council, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee, to reconsider whether all previous Interim Moderators in a vacancy should be barred from applying for that vacancy in the light of so many long-term vacancies and current practice and report to the General Assembly of 2018.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 22 and renumber:

Instruct the Ministries Council, jointly with the Council of Assembly, Panel on Review and Reform, the Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Legal Questions Committee, to review the processes set out in Act VIII 2003 Vacancy Procedure with a view to creating a process which is more appropriate to this time while honouring the unique place which a Call by a congregation has in relation to parish ministry in the Church of Scotland and to propose such amendments as may be necessary to the Vacancy Procedure Act to achieve that aim and to report to the General Assembly of 2019.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of Section 23:

Add at the end:

‘with the following amendments to Appendix 8 (Ministry and Deaf Congregations Act):

- i. *In lines one and two of section 1, delete ‘in ministry with’ and substitute ‘as a minister for’;*
- ii. *In line two of section 2, delete ‘in ministry with’ and substitute ‘as a minister for’.*

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of Section 24:

Add at the end:

‘with the following amendment to Appendix 9 (Congregations of Deaf People Regulations):

Add at the end of the first sentence of section 4:

‘of the minister in terms of the Ministry and Deaf Congregations Act (Act XX 2017)’.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of Section 26:

Delete ‘to liaise with the Legal Questions Committee on issues that have arisen in relation to’ and substitute ‘jointly with the Legal Questions Committee to consider issues that have arisen when implementing’.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of Section 26:

Delete ‘as to whether amending legislation is required’ and substitute ‘with proposed amendments to the legislation which may be considered appropriate’.

On a vote being taken For or Against the amendment it carried Against.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 27:

Instruct the Council to contact the editor and publishers of the Church of Scotland Year Book, requesting that when preparing lists of personnel to remove the titles “Mrs” “Ms” and “Miss” so as to ensure that male and female persons are listed on the same basis.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of the proposed amendment:

After ‘personnel’ add ‘to ascertain whether individuals would wish’, and delete ‘so as to ensure that male and female persons are listed on the same basis.’

On a vote being taken For or Against the amendment to the proposed amendment it carried Against.

On a vote being taken For or Against the amendment, there voted For 215 and Against 240 and the General Assembly resolved accordingly.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 27:

Instruct the Council, when reporting the annual salary and stipend increase to the General Assembly of 2018 to:

- i. state which inflation index has been used in calculating the stipend and salary increases for 2018;
- ii. offer a considered opinion on what is the most appropriate inflation index to use when determining the stipends and salaries of the Church in subsequent years; and
- iii. include a commitment to providing cumulative information on how stipend/salary increases (setting 2017 as the base year) have related to the index identified in (i).

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of Section 30 (Section 5 of the Supplementary Report Deliverance):

Add at the end 'with an explanation of how such calculations are made'.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 31 and renumber:

Instruct the Ministries Council, in consultation with the Council of Assembly, to consider the possibility of paying the visa fees and all fees associated with applying for a long-term right to settle and all UK nationality fees of those who are becoming ministers of the Church of Scotland and who are coming to the UK from outside the European Union and the European Economic Area and report to the General Assembly of 2018.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The General Assembly adjourned at 16.51 pm to meet again in this Hall tomorrow at 9.15 am for business, whereof public intimation having been made, the Sederunt was closed with prayer.

ASSEMBLY HALL
EDINBURGH, 24 May 2017, 16.51 pm