



INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERS IN 2022

NAME OF STANDING COMMITTEE/AGENCY: Committee on Ecumenical Relations	
CONVENER/CHAIR:	Rev Alexander Horsburgh
VICE-CONVENER(S):	Rev Eileen Miller
SECRETARY:	Rev Dr John L McPake
REMIT: The remit of the Committee is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advise the General Assembly on matters of policy affecting ecumenical relations; • appoint members to accompany the Faith Nurture Forum, the Faith Impact Forum, the Social Care Council and the Theological Forum and ensure that they are appropriately informed and resourced so as to be able to assist these bodies to work ecumenically; • nominate people from across the work of the Church of Scotland to represent the Church in assemblies and synods of other churches, ecumenical consultations and delegations to ecumenical assemblies, etc.; • call for and receive reports from representatives of the Church of Scotland attending assemblies and synods of other churches and those ecumenical conferences and gatherings which are held from time to time; • ensure that appropriate parts of such reports are made available to other relevant bodies within the Church of Scotland; • ensure that information is channelled from and to ecumenical bodies of which the Church of Scotland is a member; • ensure that information is channelled from and to other churches in Scotland and beyond; • provide advice and encouragement to presbyteries and congregations in developing and deepening relationships and co-operation with churches of other denominations in their contexts; • approve guidelines for the setting up and oversight of local ecumenical partnerships. 	
SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE SOUGHT AT THIS TIME: Members of the Committee should be committed to the unity of the Church for which Christ prayed (John 17). In practical terms, this means working to build good relationships with other denominations of the Church, principally in Scotland, but also in the rest of the UK and further afield; working to strengthen existing and emerging ecumenical organisations; and fostering ecumenical working at presbytery, parish and congregation level. An understanding of the history, structures and theology of the Church of Scotland is important but equally, an interest in and some knowledge ore experience of the theology, structures and practices of other denominations is helpful. Some knowledge of ecumenical theology and of the history of ecumenism in Scotland is good too but these can be and are developed through involvement in the ongoing work of the Committee, provided the commitment to unity is there.	



EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBERS:

Members are expected to attend and participate in Committee meetings. Members should also expect to be given other responsibilities such as attendance at and reporting on Assemblies or Synods of other denominations, accompanying other agencies of the Church of Scotland to foster ecumenical thinking and working across the Church; representing the Church of Scotland and Councils or Assemblies or national or international ecumenical bodies, or on their governing structures; or accompanying emerging presbyteries or selected particular local ecumenical projects to encourage and facilitate ecumenical thinking and working.

MEMBERSHIP AND ANTICIPATED VACANCIES:

Include confirmation of the number of vacancies to be filled

NB: a completed Nomination Form must be submitted by all proposed nominees including anyone wishing to be put forward for proposed re-appointment

There will be two vacancies to fill, either for one member and one minister, or for two members (there being currently more ministers than members on the Committee)

A new Convener will need to be appointed, and the Committee has already initiated a process of discernment with a view to bringing a recommendation to the Nominations Committee.

The membership of the Committee is comprised as follows:

Eight members appointed by the General Assembly, four to serve as an ecumenical accompanier to each of the Faith Nurture, Faith Impact, Social Care Council and Theological Forums, and four to work particularly on supporting local ecumenism.

A Convener who will act as a personal support for the Ecumenical Officer and a Vice-Convener, appointed by the General Assembly.

A representative of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland.

A representative of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

One representative from each of three churches drawn on a rotational basis from among the other member churches of Action of Churches Together in Scotland/Scottish Christian Forum and the Baptist Union of Scotland

The General Secretary of the Scottish Christian Forum, if such an appointment is made

The Committee shall co-opt Church of Scotland members elected to the trustee or central bodies of the following ecumenical instruments:

Action of Churches Together in Scotland (currently the Convener or ACTS but it is expected that ACTS will have been replaced by the Scottish Christian Forum by May 2022)

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Conference of European Churches

Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (currently no one is in this position)

World Council of Churches

World Communion of Reformed Churches (the British/Irish member of the WCRC Executive Committee is invited to attend on meeting a year if, as at present, that person is not from the Church of Scotland)



FREQUENCY, TIMING AND VENUE OF MEETINGS:

include mention of any particular day(s) of the week when meetings would fall and whether meetings will be attended online and/or in person

Meetings have normally been held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays. Since February 2020, all have been online, normally on an afternoon. The intention of the Committee would be to return to holding some in-person meetings – perhaps one between September and December and one between January and March (which would normally be in Edinburgh over a morning and afternoon) and some shorter online meetings at other times. Members should expect about five to seven meetings per annum, more if shorter online meetings are the norm, fewer if in-person day meetings become possible

DETAILS OF SUB-COMMITTEES/GROUPS:

include frequency, timings, venue and any particular day(s) of the week when meetings would fall

The Committee does not have standing sub-committees or groups. Small groups of members are occasionally formed for particular pieces of work and the members of those groups would determine meeting times and frequencies.

FURTHER DETAILS:

Include any useful web links

Potential new members would gain a good overview of the work of the Committee by reading the 2018 General Assembly report, which contains the revised Ecumenical Policy of the Church of Scotland, the 2019 Report which outlines the Ecumenical Strategy to which the Committee is working and the 2021 Report which covers important developments such as the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum, the Saint Andrew Declaration with the Scottish Episcopal Church and discussion on local ecumenical Mission Communities.