



The Church of Scotland

REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE

Do this in remembrance of me
Luke 22:19

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND 2023

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023

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ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the proposed Order of Business set out in the Order of Proceedings.
3. Appoint Rev Colin Renwick to be Precentor until May 2025.
4. Appoint Mr Roy Pinkerton to index the verbatim record.
5. Invite Commissioners to submit to the Procedure Committee via email: pcoffice@churchofscotland.org.uk by Monday 22 May at 12pm, nominations for consideration to serve on the Selection Committee.
6. Note the expenses levels for those attending at least 13 of the 17 General Assembly sessions in person.
7. Approve the sale of the Moderator's Residence at 2 Rothesay Terrace and the investment of the proceeds.
8. Approve the acquisition of a replacement residence, preferably by the repurposing of a property already owned by the Church.
9. Note the work undertaken to date by the Presbytery Development Group in implementation of sections 12, 13 and 14 of the Committee's deliverance at the General Assembly of 2022 and instruct the Assembly Business Committee to bring a further report to the General Assembly of 2024.
10. Instruct Presbyteries to work with the Assembly Business Committee and others to formulate and implement terms and conditions of employment for all Presbytery staff to ensure coherent terms and conditions across the Presbyteries in Scotland; such terms and conditions to be compatible with Church and civil law.
11. Approve the recommendations contained in section 9.5 of the Report in regard to the role of the Moderator of the General Assembly.
12. Pass Regulations amending the Nomination of the Moderator of the General Assembly Regulations (Regs I 2013) (as amended by Regs I 2020) as set out in Appendix D.
13. Pass Regulations amending the Office of the Moderator of the General Assembly Regulations (Regs II 2013) as set out in Appendix E.
14. Commend the Scottish Bible Society's global outreach to the generosity of congregations and members, and support the Society in its desire to work in partnership with congregations to encourage confidence in the gospel and in sharing the Bible.

Report

1. RT REV DR IAIN GREENSHIELDS

1.1 Continuing the recent trend of extraordinary times to serve as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Rt Rev Dr Iain Greenshields has responded with grace and with presence.

1.2 There have been several royal occasions on which to represent the Church, beginning in June with a National Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral to celebrate Her Late Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. In September, Iain had the sad honour of preaching at St Giles' during a Service of Reflection and Thanksgiving for the life of Her Late Majesty; he then led a prayer at Her Late Majesty's State Funeral Service in Westminster Abbey. In October, Iain welcomed His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort to the City Status Ceremony in Dunfermline City Chambers, at which he delivered a blessing; he looks forward to attending the Coronation in May.

1.3 Over the course of the moderatorial year, Iain has had opportunities to bring the Church into the political realms of both the Scottish and the British Governments, meeting with the Leaders of each Political Party, with the First Minister, and with the Prime Minister.

1.4 Ecumenical and Interfaith relationships have featured largely during the last twelve months. In November, visits were organised to a Buddhist Monastery, a Hindu Temple, an Islamic Mosque, a Jewish Synagogue and a Sikh Gurdwara to mark Interfaith Week, and there was an opportunity to engage with the Chief Rabbi whilst in London. A significant moment was the signing of the St Margaret Declaration, the culmination of years of ecumenical relationship building between the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church. Then in February, together with Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Iain embarked on an historic ecumenical peace pilgrimage to South Sudan.

1.5 Personal highlights included preaching in many Priority Area congregations, celebrating milestones with local churches, and visiting Glasgow and Clyde Presbyteries. Time with CrossReach showcased their excellent work, and during visits to Services Iain saw in particular, the inspirational work being done to support those dealing with addictions in journeying to full recovery.

1.6 The Church is grateful to Iain for his hard work, gracious demeanour and faithful witness. As he returns to Parish life in Dunfermline: St Margaret's, we wish him and his wife Linda, who has been his companion and narrator, every blessing for their future ministry.

2. THE PRECENTOR

2.1 The Committee is grateful to Rev Colin Renwick for his willingness to continue as Precentor, and invite the Assembly to endorse the appointment until the General Assembly of 2025.

3. PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATION

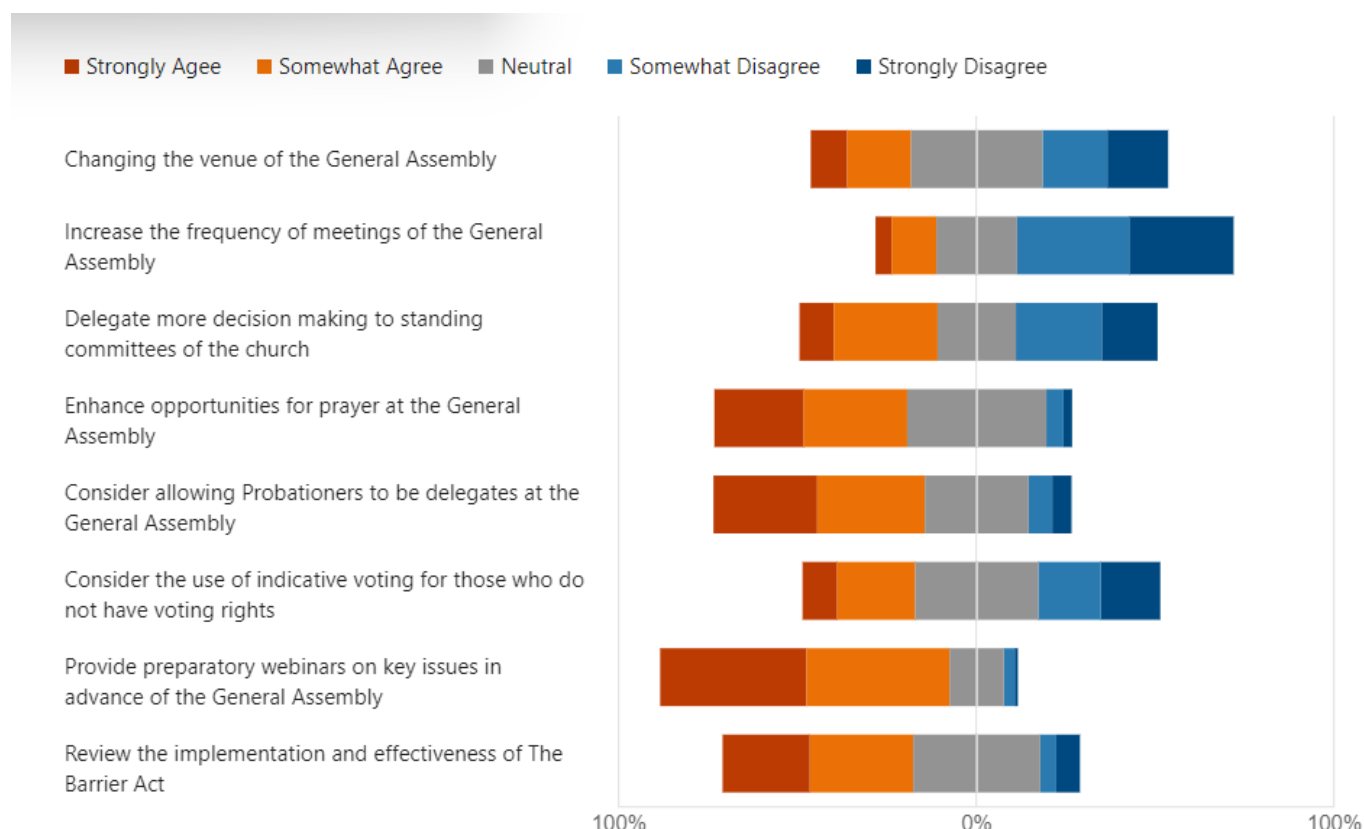
3.1 The Presbytery returns show that there are in all 994 charges, whether vacant or not, and 170 other ministers (excluding retired ones) who are members of Presbyteries. Representation is calculated for each Presbytery in accordance with Act III 2000 and the total number of Commissioners is currently made up as follows: 246 ministers, 246 elders and 15 Deacons.

4. AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

4.1 Suggested changes to Standing Orders are set out in Appendix B and C.

5. GENERAL ASSEMBLY REFORM

5.1 Last year, the Committee presented some outline ideas for reform of the General Assembly, and there was a request to bring proposals to this year's Assembly. The post-Assembly feedback from Commissioners and other participants showing agreement or disagreement with suggestions about various areas of potential concern, has provided helpful data to inform this work.



5.2 Unsurprisingly, there is always some level of push-back to any proposed change. While the level of agreement or otherwise to a proposal doesn't necessarily include whether it should be adopted or not, we can see in the summary above the 'low hanging fruits' which would be more easily implemented and readily accepted. Although an *ad hoc* group considered 'General Assembly Reform', there is much to review and change in the ongoing remits of the Property, Presbytery Development and Assembly Arrangements Sub Groups of the Committee. Here we report on matters not addressed elsewhere.

5.3 **Enhanced opportunities for prayer** are crucial in seeking and understanding God's will for our General Assembly. To that end, there will be online and in-person opportunities to gather for prayer prior to and during General Assembly 2023, in which all are invited to participate.

5.4 **Participation of probationer ministers** has been considered. Currently, time and budgetary constraints preclude their full participation, but current probation training does include some time spent engaging with the General Assembly online and reflecting thereon; there is also a commitment to meet with probationers soon after the Assembly to listen to the feedback from those in training for the recognised ministries of the Church. The Committee plans to develop its collaboration with those responsible for ministerial formation.

5.5 With all the new **Presbyteries** due to be operational by 2024, there is a continuing need to develop the sense of 'Assembly and its Presbyteries'. The Committee will introduce space in future General Assembly timetables for reports from at least two Presbyteries. Currently, any Presbytery may bring business to General Assembly through the Overture process.

5.6 Good **preparation for the General Assembly** is essential if Commissioners and other participants are able to make the most of their Assembly experience. Preparatory resources including webinars, videos and text-based material have been used previously; in our conversations with Conveners and Secretaries of all reporting bodies we are encouraging them to develop ways to enhance engagement. The Committee has been able to support Presbyteries as they offer online, onsite or hybrid preparation sessions.

5.7 Increasing the **frequency of General Assemblies** is not favoured by many. An online Assembly in the Autumn could alleviate the need to wait as much as a year for General Assembly approval; but a more favourable solution would be to remit business to Standing Committees or Presbyteries with clear **delegated authority** to implement, without first reporting back to a future General Assembly.

5.8 Last year, following debate about continuing with a **hybrid format**, assurance was given that the Committee would keep hybrid practice under review. In fulfilment of the instruction to the Assembly Business Committee and the Legal Questions Committee to jointly determine appropriate arrangements for meeting in 2023, we affirm that as far as possible we would like all participants to have a broadly similar experience, and have advised Presbyteries that there should be no constraints on the ratio of Commissioners engaging onsite or online. Behind the scenes the technical teams have streamlined the Audio Visual, Assembly Hub and Zoom streaming arrangements, and have been able to increase the internet capacity of the building tenfold. More detail can be found within the Assembly Arrangements section of the Report; this is a significant part of reshaping how we transact Assembly business.

5.9 The Legal Questions Committee has a section in its Report on the **Barrier Act**, in the context of Presbytery Reform.

5.10 Recent years have necessitated changes to some of the **ceremonial and entertaining** aspects of General Assembly week. The Principal Clerk is in conversation with Holyrood Palace about the former and, indeed, some changes necessary due to Covid-19 have been carried over into our 'new normal'. Similarly, all Assembly Receptions are under constant review; for example, holding the Moderator's Reception and the Reception for Ecumenical and Overseas Delegates at Edinburgh: St Cuthbert's on the same evening has resulted in significant savings; the outcomes of this review are being carried forward.

5.11 The General Assembly is changing. Not as much as some might like. Too much for others. Above all, the General Assembly will reform, as together we respond to future possibilities, seek God's will and guidance, remain curious, ask the 'What if?' questions, take the best from past practice, and introduce new things that we believe God is calling us to do.

6. PROPERTY

6.1 Moderator's Residence

6.1.1 Between 1973 and 1999, accommodation for the Moderator was leased from the National Trust for Scotland, in Edinburgh at 7 Charlotte Square. In 1998, the General Assembly authorised the Board of Practice and Procedure either to renew the lease or to purchase or rent an alternative property. Following extensive consultation, the Board decided to buy the current flat at 2 Rothesay Terrace, using part of a substantial legacy bequeathed to the Church for general purposes.

6.1.2 The current property has a dual purpose: to provide a high-quality venue for official entertaining on the ground floor, and temporary living accommodation on the upper floor for the Moderator and their family. However, consultation with former Moderators who have lived in the premises during the past few years confirmed that the flat is no longer suitable for the latter purpose, having neither a kitchen nor a study on the upper floor – a level which is also inaccessible for anyone with mobility issues. In addition, the flat is expensive to service and maintain; its repairs and maintenance budget amounting to £10,000 a year. There is also a shared liability for repairs to common areas, such as the chimneys, rainwater goods and roof. Besides which, the use of the flat for official entertaining has markedly decreased since its purchase in 1999, when it was reported that over a thousand people received official hospitality in the former residence in the course of a typical year.

6.1.3 Accordingly, a review group was convened to draw up a business case for the disposal of the flat at 2 Rothesay Terrace and the acquisition of a replacement.

6.1.4 The review considered the relative merits of buying a replacement, renting, or re-purposing a property already owned by the Church, and concluded that the third of these options would make most financial sense: it would allow the proceeds from the sale of 2 Rothesay Terrace to generate an annual income from the Investors Trust and avoid incurring rental costs, estimated at about £3000 per month for a suitable replacement.

6.1.5 The review identified the property at 2 Grange Loan Gardens, one of the Church's furlough flats, as meeting the specification for a replacement drawn up in the light of the comments of recent, former Moderators. The World Mission Overseas Staff Trust, which administers the property, has agreed to its being used to accommodate future Moderators after the end of its current lease to another denomination in 2025.

6.1.6 The review also considered the fundamental question of whether it is any longer necessary or appropriate to provide an official residence for the Moderator, bearing in mind that since the recent pandemic people have become used to attending meetings and events using a digital platform. The feasibility of booking temporary accommodation

when the Moderator is required to attend meetings or events in person, such as during the weeks leading up to the General Assembly, was explored; but this, the review concluded, is a step too far – at least at present. Should, however, changes to the Moderator’s role and responsibilities mean that provision of an official residence is no longer required, then the matter could be revisited.

6.2 Assembly Hall

6.2.1 Net expenditure on the Hall decreased in 2022 largely due to the income generated by the return of Assembly Festival during the Summer. Unfortunately, this also resulted in a certain amount of damage to the seating in the Hall, but the cost of repairs was recovered from their deposit; discussions have taken place to improve matters. Nevertheless, the building is prone to damage from water ingress, so ensuring it remains in good order accounts for a large part of the annual property budget. Its long-term future continues to be under review, particularly in view of the need to replace various capital items in the next few years.

7. PRESBYTERY DEVELOPMENT

7.1 The work to significantly reduce the number of Presbyteries by 2024, as proposed in 2019 in the Report of the Special Commission on Structural Reform, is substantially complete: progress is charted in the table below. The Presbytery of Glasgow has expanded to include Cumbernauld but is otherwise unaltered.

New Presbyteries Already Approved	Date of Commencement
Clyde	1 September 2020
Fife	1 January 2021
Edinburgh & West Lothian	1 January 2022
Forth Valley & Clydesdale (<i>with inclusion of Falkirk</i>)	1 June 2022
The South West	30 September 2022
Lothians & Borders	1 January 2023
The North East & the Northern Isles	1 January 2023
Perth	1 January 2023
Presbyteries Currently in Discussion	Proposed Date for Overture to General Assembly and Date of Commencement
Clèir Eilean Ì: Highlands & Hebrides Argyll, Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, Inverness, Abernethy, Lochaber, Lochcarron-Skye, Uist and Lewis	General Assembly 2023 1 January 2024 (TBC)
The Presbytery of England and the Presbytery of the International Charges are discussing what Presbytery Reform means for them in their unique positions.	

7.2 Communication with Presbyteries

7.2.1 Consultation with the Assembly and Presbytery Clerks’ Forum has affirmed the importance of good, regular communication with Presbyteries and the Commissioners they send to the General Assembly. A General Assembly Information Page has been included on the Church website, keeping Commissioners and other participants up to date with the information they require in order to participate fully in the Assembly (www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/general-assembly/information-for-commissioners).

7.3 Presbytery Accountability to the General Assembly

7.3.1 The Principal Clerk has established a pattern of regular meetings with the full-time Clerks of the new Presbyteries as a group together, to share information and develop good working practices as the needs and demands of the new Presbyteries emerge. Consultation with this group, and others, around specific and appropriate processes to ensure the accountability of Presbyteries to the General Assembly, is to be undertaken.

7.4 Remits from General Assembly 2022

7.4.1 The General Assembly of 2022 remitted three pieces of work to the Assembly Business Committee, namely (i) the consideration of proposals to ensure the consistency of terms and conditions of pay and grading which would align the pay and grading of Presbytery staff with the pay and grading of staff employed by the Central Service Committee, (ii) taking steps to ensure that there is appropriate **support** and training in place for Presbytery Clerks and those who line manage Presbytery Clerks, and (iii) the development of a Code of Practice and a capability process for Presbytery Clerks.

7.4.2 The Presbytery Development Group has consulted with the Assembly and Presbytery Clerks’ Forum and found that there is wide divergence in the terms and conditions upon which the current full-time employed Presbytery Clerks have been employed by their Presbyteries. Such a situation is not in the interest of the Presbytery Clerks, their Presbyteries and the national Church, and there is general agreement that work be done to ensure the terms and conditions of employment are regularised to cohere across the Presbyteries, whilst retaining the Presbyteries as the employing agency for all Presbytery staff.

7.4.3 In addition to the consultation with the Assembly and Presbytery Clerks' Forum, the Presbytery Development Group, working with the Human Resources Department in the national offices, instructed a notional pay and grading exercise to be carried out in respect of the role of Presbytery Clerk. This exercise was based on a job evaluation with basic input; a more advanced pay and grading exercise with detailed input requires to be carried out for not only Presbytery Clerks, but all Presbytery staff.

7.4.4 Progressing this work will require consultation with the Presbyteries themselves, and therefore the Presbytery Development Group seeks more time within which to discharge the remits of the General Assembly of 2022.

8. ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

8.1. Feedback from the General Assembly of 2022

8.1.1 The Committee are grateful to the 350 Commissioners, corresponding members, youth representatives and delegates who took the time to respond to the 2022 post-General Assembly survey. The feedback received enabled the Committee to learn from the first hybrid Assembly, in order to ensure that the General Assembly of 2023 can function as seamlessly as possible.

8.1.2 The Committee were encouraged by the positive experience expressed by those who joined the business of the Assembly remotely, and in future will ensure that the Top Table are connected directly with those attending online. The Committee are also cognisant of the frustrations experienced by delays in proceedings caused by city wide or Zoom network issues, which are unfortunately outwith the control of the Technical Team.

8.1.3 A frequent suggestion in the feedback was to make training mandatory to ensure the capability of those attending the General Assembly remotely or in person. The Committee would strongly encourage attendance at a training session by all attendees, even if they have attended a General Assembly recently.

8.1.4 The Committee also recognise the need to test the voting system prior to its first use, and will ensure that an appropriate time is designated for this on the first day of the Assembly.

8.2 Publications timetable

8.2.1 It has been indicated to the Committee that Commissioners would benefit from receiving the papers and reports at an early stage, in order to facilitate their preparations. Accordingly, the Committee have considered the publications timetable. Reports will begin to be published on the Church of Scotland website from Monday 24 April. All reports will be available from Friday 5 May, which will provide attendees to the General Assembly with at least two weeks to review their contents.

8.3 Risk Assessment

8.3.1 A thorough Risk Assessment has been prepared which sets out in detail the risks associated with gathering in the Assembly Hall and the steps taken to reduce these risks to acceptable levels. Some of these apply every year – for example, around technical preparations; while others are specifically related to recent changes in legislation around security. The Committee will continuously monitor relevant guidance and advice, and will keep the Risk Assessment under regular review in consultation with the Church's Health and Safety Manager. A copy of the Risk Assessment for the Assembly of 2023 can be found on the General Assembly pages of the Church website.

8.4 Commissioner Expenses

8.4.1 **Expense rates for those participating in the Assembly Hall at the General Assembly of 2023 will be a maximum of £75 per night for accommodation and a limit of £15 each day for out-of-pocket expenses. When Commissioners are staying with family or friends, a total allowance of up to £80 may be claimed towards a token gift for hosts. Attendance at 13 of the 17 sessions will be required for any expenses to be authorised.**

8.5 Circulation Breaks

8.5.1 The Committee have arranged for tea and coffee to be available in the Rainy Hall and in the Quadrangle during circulation breaks. In order to serve as many people as possible during these short periods, attendees are requested to have a contactless payment device available as they collect their beverage. Tea and coffee will be available for £2 each. Bottled water will also be available at £1.50.

8.6 Stewards

8.6.1 Following changes to legislation around security at public events, the Committee have reviewed the expectations and role of Stewards at the General Assembly. A Role Description has been created and approved which provides clearer expectations of the duties of a Steward. A copy of this Role Description can be found appended to the Risk Assessment.

8.7 Communion

8.7.1 As directed by Standing Order 21, the Committee has arranged for the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to take place at 9:15am on Monday 22 May. Individual glasses with non-alcoholic wine and gluten-free bread will be dispersed to those gathered in the Assembly Hall. Those participating remotely are warmly encouraged to provide their own elements and to have them ready to participate when directed by the Moderator.

8.8 Improvements to the Assembly Hall infrastructure

8.8.1 Working with colleagues in the IT department, the internet line into the Assembly Hall has been upgraded from 100 Mbps to a maximum of 1 Gbps. A complete overhaul of the equipment in the Hall has also been coordinated, which means there is capacity to ensure all Commissioners can access Wi-Fi without difficulty.

9. REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE MODERATOR

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 The Committee has reviewed the role of the Moderator of the General Assembly. This involved interviewing the majority of former Moderators, undertaking a survey of people within and outwith the Church, and engaging in conversations with those who work closely with the Moderator.

9.1.2 The primary role of the Moderator is to moderate the annual meeting of the General Assembly, but the work undertaken following this meeting has gradually taken on greater significance. The pattern of representing the Church of Scotland during the moderatorial year is long established. Evidence for this can be found in the 1960 Book of Assembly Reports, when the practice of thanking the Moderator for their work during the year in office began. The Committee on General Administration duly thanked the Moderator for undertaking “innumerable engagements in England and Scotland”, visiting Presbyteries and making an overseas trip to Australia for the Queensland Centenary celebrations.

9.1.3 The role of the Moderator has long been viewed as highly significant in the life of the Church. The Moderator acts as a spokesperson in representing the views of the General Assembly to the wider world. They play an important role in state and civic occasions, and engage with politicians across the political spectrum. The Moderator encourages and uplifts the local church by visiting many congregations through their year (often via Presbytery visits) as well as visiting many community projects and supporting the work of CrossReach.

9.1.4 The Moderator’s role and function can often be misunderstood, especially by those outwith the Church. They are described as Moderator of the Church of Scotland or the Head of the Church of Scotland. An assumption is made that the Moderator’s position is the same as that of an Archbishop, and many people will write to the Moderator on the basis that they have executive authority.

9.1.5 The question of the length of service of the Moderator has been raised on many occasions. The argument is made that the impact which the Moderator has is reduced because of the annual changeover. It is suggested that the Church of Scotland does not impact the media and wider society in the same way as an Archbishop in the Catholic Church or the Primus of the Episcopal Church might do so. It is also argued that no sooner has the Moderator begun to settle into the role, it is time to move on. However, the counter argument to this view is to highlight the danger of a Moderator becoming too powerful, perhaps even assuming an executive position, which would go against the Presbyterian understanding of the role and its place within the courts of the Church.

9.1.6 The role of Moderator has had to adapt to the changing structure of the Church. Previously, the Moderator could rely on Conveners of Committees and Councils who were often playing a prominent role in the life of the Church. The streamlining of the central structure of the Church has altered this considerably.

9.1.7 A major change over recent years has been engagement with the media. Moderators will often be interviewed by mainstream journalists, and it is of the utmost importance that those who are nominated can contend with this. It is also the case that Moderators have made excellent use of social media to share the views of the Church; again, those nominated must be able to use this tool effectively.

9.2 Survey of Views on the Role of the Moderator

9.2.1 A survey of different groups on their views of the Moderator revealed that those outwith the Church of Scotland highly valued their interactions with the Moderator, but many felt that the one-year term was too short and that there was insufficient time to build up a relationship with the Moderator, particularly in regards to representatives of other denominations and interfaith.

9.2.2 A second group survey which sought the views of our Communications professionals highlighted that some saw the role as being one of speaking truth to power. One respondent said, “An identified person helps the Church to provide impactful spiritual and moral leadership on the national stage to people of faith and no faith; memorably, wonderfully, at significant unsettled times such as the death of a monarch, and the Clutha and George Square tragedies. An impersonal statement from the Church would not have the same impact”. It was pointed out that the time required for the transition from one Moderator to the next makes “the Moderator’s year seem even shorter”. A number felt that the one-year term was too short, but others pointed out that the highly exhausting and intense activity during the year meant it would be impossible to sustain for a longer period.

9.2.3 Those surveyed from within the Church of Scotland spoke about the important role that the Moderator plays in civic and national life, and that their role in significant events such as the death of Her Late Majesty was much valued. It was agreed that the Moderator is a great encourager and that there is much value in the undertaking of visiting congregations; a visit from the Moderator is seen as significant and uplifting.

9.3 Interviews with Former Moderators

9.3.1 The interviews with 23 former Moderators took place over two years and anonymised transcriptions provided a valuable insight into previous office bearers’ views on their role.

9.3.2 The majority of former Moderators suggested that extending the length of service would be unwise. There was a recognition of the fact that Moderators do not become as well-known as an Archbishop and that they may just be fully establishing themselves in the role when it becomes time to stand down. However, there was a strong sense that extending the term could give someone too much power; that the Moderator might acquire an executive function and that the intense nature of the role’s activities would have to be scaled back if continued over two or three years. One person said: “The role of the Moderator is that you are not a bishop. You are not there to form or shape people’s opinions or policy. You are there to reflect, and you are there to represent”.

9.3.3 Almost all former Moderators were sceptical of the present system of nomination. There was a strong sense that reviving Presbytery representation in the selection process was necessary.

9.3.4 Regarding the period of being Moderator Designate, some former Moderators spoke about the fact that they did not feel adequately prepared for the role, whilst others advised that the support they received was outstanding.

9.3.5 The former Moderators interviewed spoke favourably about many memorable experiences. One said, "I've never had a busier year in my life. I've never had more fun. It was nonstop. If I wasn't talking, I was writing, if I wasn't writing I was travelling. We would be entertaining; I think we entertained 1600 people. But if you asked me what the actual outcome of all of that was, what would go down as having made a lasting impact on the Church, I'm not sure how highly I would score". However, another commented on "the complete turmoil from day one to day 365; everything was happening all the time and there was no reflection time available".

9.3.6 There was a very strong sense from all the former Moderators interviewed of an exhilarating, fulfilling and unique experience. The engagement that they had with the Church and civic society, the many interesting people that they met, the fact that they felt they were making a difference – all led to a sense that it was a remarkable opportunity. All spoke positively about Presbytery visits, although there was a sense from a few that some Presbyteries struggled to fill the required ten days. However, negative aspects were also highlighted, such as not being given adequate preparation prior to certain meetings and events, inheriting a diary they had little control over and running on adrenaline towards the end. A number spoke about not being clear on the Moderator's budget.

9.3.7 The spouses of former Moderators all played a significant and invaluable role. Many found it exhausting, but also liberating. It was felt by some that a framework or template should be produced to highlight what the role could involve.

9.3.8 One former Moderator said that they could not have survived their year without the support of the Chaplains. The Chaplains play a significant role during the week of the Assembly and Moderators greatly appreciate their pastoral care. However, many Chaplains tend to have a much more limited role during the moderatorial year.

9.3.9 In relation to life after the moderatorial year, comments from former Moderators included: "No one has asked me ... no one ever asked me how I was; no one has contacted me since I finished. So that's why this conversation is actually enormously therapeutic because it's the first time I've talked about my year, since my year as Moderator". Also: "The only message we got was that we should move out early, back to the manse – so it was this sort of shambolic backdrop, going back to a house that had been sitting empty for a year. I'll be honest with you, I think I went into a kind of shock. I mean – it was horrible".

9.3.10 A further comment points to a sense that former Moderators have not been appropriately engaged by the Church. One said, "There wasn't a way in which we could debrief the Church – apart from what we said in front of the General Assembly. I got an overview of the Church; the good and the bad (some of it was extraordinarily good, some of it was shockingly bad) in the year – and nobody was interested. Nobody wanted to know or to hear from us. That was so upsetting".

9.3.11 Most Moderators said that the process of debriefing was either non-existent or very limited. They also spoke about the fact that despite the wealth of experience gained during their moderatorial year, there was a lack of interest from the wider Church in what they have to offer.

9.3.12 The overwhelming conclusion of the interview with former Moderators was simply what a superb experience it had been on so many levels. However, it is also clear that work needs to be undertaken in regards to preparation, ongoing support and debriefing.

9.4 Key Questions

9.4.1 The Committee considered a number of questions:

- Is the Moderator's role following each General Assembly still fit for purpose today?
- Is the pattern of activity throughout the year too heavy, and are expectations placed on the Moderator too high?
- Could the role become part-time?
- Should the Moderator serve for a longer period than one year?
- Is the Moderator sufficiently supported, both pastorally and practically?
- Is there a system in place which adequately prepares the Moderator Designate and properly debriefs the recently retired Moderator?
- Is the fairly recently introduced system for selecting Moderators working well?
- Should the role change in light of the new larger Presbyteries and the fact that the new structure means there are no longer Conveners of a wide range of Councils?
- Is there an adequate set-up in place for elder Moderators – especially for those who are working and would require to leave their job for a year?
- If the Moderator has a spouse, what are the expectations for their role, if any?

9.4.2 The Committee believes that the role of the Moderator during their year is still fit for purpose, but that some adjustments should be made. The pattern of activity is indeed too heavy and more time should be given to allow the Moderator preparation, prayer and rest. Visits to Presbyteries should be adjusted, and it should not be a requirement that they must last for ten days. The Committee are also of the view that overseas visits should take place when it can be demonstrated that such a visit will be of benefit to the Church.

9.4.3 The Committee do not believe that the role should become part-time, because the expectations of the Church, and indeed of some outwith it, are very high, and seeking to fulfil these expectations on a part-time basis would not be practical. We are also of the view that the length of service should remain at one year. Extending this to two or even three years could radically alter the role, and such a development would not be in tune with Presbyterian polity.

9.4.4 The Chaplains play a very useful role in supporting the Moderator pastorally, however their role remains undefined and would benefit from a Job Description. The practical support to the Moderator provided by the Principal Clerk and the Moderator's PA is excellent. The option of creating a small team or 'Council of Reference' to support the Moderator should be considered.

9.4.5 The Communications Department undertake an outstanding job in preparing the Moderator and supporting them during the year. However, there should be more engagement by Forums and other Committees of the Church in preparing the Moderator Designate. There has been a failure on the part of the Church in offering adequate support for departing Moderators and ensuring that they are properly debriefed. Many find the re-adjustment to their previous roles very challenging and some have experienced depression as a result. It is vital that a full debrief is arranged and that outgoing Moderators are properly pastorally supported when they stand down.

9.4.6 The Committee believe that the system of nominating Moderators would benefit from Presbytery representation, especially in light of the fact that the number of Presbyteries has been substantially reduced. A revision to the Regulations for the Nomination of the Moderator will take this into account. We also believe that there is an opportunity for the Moderator to work more closely with Presbytery Moderators, perhaps arranging to meet all of them once or twice a year.

9.4.7 There is a need to create a system which offers better support to elder Moderators. A Moderator who is an elder will not have the same experience as a minister in the conduct of worship and this should be recognised. There is no system in place to account for the potential loss of income for an elder Moderator and guidelines should be produced to respond to this.

9.4.8 If the Moderator has a spouse, they can play an important and very supportive role during the year. However, while a template could be drawn up to outline what the role might be, there should be no mandatory expectations. The Church appoints a Moderator, but not their spouse, and therefore the person concerned should be entirely free to decide how much time they can devote to supporting their wife or husband.

9.4.9 The Moderator played an important role in bringing different groupings together to debate Scottish Independence in 2014. The Committee believe that there is scope to continue this practice in other areas, and that a Moderator's Annual Conference could be created.

9.5 Summary of Recommendations

- The Moderator should continue to serve for one year only.
- The number of days devoted to visiting a Presbytery should be flexible.
- Opportunities which arise for an Overseas Visit should be fully considered to determine if a demonstrable and timely benefit is evident.
- A small 'Council of Reference' could be appointed to advise and support the Moderator through their year.
- There must be a proper debriefing of the recently retired Moderator, and adequate support should be put in place to ensure that the outgoing Moderator can contend with the transition of returning to their previous life.
- The Moderator should seek to build up stronger relations with Presbytery Moderators.
- Greater 'down-time' must be introduced, in order to allow the Moderator more time to rest, reflect and pray.
- A Job Description should be produced for the role of the Moderator's Chaplain.
- A template for the potential role of the Moderator's spouse should be created, whilst acknowledging that the amount of engagement to which a spouse can commit varies for each person.
- Consideration should be given to the Moderator hosting conferences which bring together key people in Scottish society to focus on significant and topical issues of the day.

9.5.1 The Committee will continue to keep the role of the Moderator under review, given the changing nature of society as well as developments within the Church.

9.5.2 The Church of Scotland is fortunate to have been served by Moderators who have all devoted themselves tirelessly to the work of representing the Church in its highest office. The Committee believe that the Church owes a debt of gratitude to them all.

9.6 Acknowledgements

9.6.1 The Committee especially thanks Mrs Susan Pym, former Vice Convener of the Assembly Business Committee, for the extensive work which she undertook in conducting interviews with former Moderators and then transcribing them; the Rev Fiona Tweedie for statistical analysis of the survey; as well as Rev Doug Gay, Very Rev Professor David Fergusson and the former Moderators for providing insights into the role.

10. REVISION OF REGULATIONS

10.1 Revised Regulations for the Office of the Moderator of the General Assembly and Nomination thereof are at Appendix D and E.

11. THE PROCURATOR

11.1 Laura Dunlop KC will step down from her position as Procurator after this Assembly, on 31 May 2023, after serving 18 years in the role. Laura has provided invaluable legal advice to the General Assembly, has superbly represented Church interests in the civil courts and has wisely advised the Legal Questions Committee and its various task groups on many complex legal matters.

11.2 As she continues in her role as President of the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland, we wish her every future success and record our grateful appreciation of her outstanding service to the Church.

11.3 The Committee is taking steps to identify a suitably qualified person to be Procurator and hopes to bring a nomination to the opening session of the Assembly.

In the name of the Committee

DONALD G B McCORKINDALE, *Convener*
MICHAEL J MAIR *Vice-Convener*
FIONA E SMITH, *Secretary*

Addendum**Rev Donald G B McCorkindale**

Donald McCorkindale was appointed as Convener of the Assembly Business Committee by the General Assembly of 2020, having held the role of Vice Convener since 2018, and having served on the Committee since 2014. Donald has consistently encouraged the Committee to be open to doing business in new ways. He steered the Assembly through the challenges which arose from Covid-19, and has been the Committee's most passionate advocate for hybrid and online attendance at the General Assembly. His enthusiasm for collaboration and remote working has regularly seen the Committee participating in cooperative arrangements, and he has pushed to see the General Assembly reformed. To this task he has brought a vast experience of ministry within the Church of Scotland, alongside being Clerk to the former Presbytery of Lochaber. The Committee hope that the end of his term as Convener brings more time to spend with his family, alongside time to minister to the large area of Scotland which is now his Parish. We are all grateful to Donald for everything he has done in service to the Church.

MICHAEL J MAIR *Vice-Convener*
FIONA E SMITH, *Secretary*

Appendix A**REPORT OF THE SCOTTISH BIBLE SOCIETY**

'Jesus taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables, such as this one: "Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed. As he scattered it...'

'The farmer plants seed by taking God's word to others.'

(Mark 4:2, 3, 14)

A full-sized, red, replica telephone box featured in our exhibition stand at a Christian Convention last Summer. We were inviting people to leave a message on the phone, sharing their story of how Jesus has impacted their life. Those who left a message went away with a copy of 'Light and Life', our magazine version of John's Gospel, with the encouragement to share it with someone who has not yet encountered Jesus.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a story worth sharing. It is found in the Bible. This makes the Bible a book worth sharing. 'Share the Bible' is the phrase we have chosen, to clarify what we do and why we do it. Sharing the Bible is what we have always done, in partnership with individuals and congregations for over 200 years. Along with a new visual identity and website, 'Share the Bible' is now our explicit call to action for ourselves and for those who partner with us. Our prayer is that many will join us in this great venture here in Scotland, and as we support others in sharing the Bible around the world.

We have been humbled and inspired by the resilience of our colleagues in the Bible Society in Ukraine as they have lived through more than a year of war. They are working hard to keep up with the demand for Bibles. They continue to work with churches and Army Chaplains to bring practical aid alongside spiritual support to those in need. Supplies, even of Bibles, run out too soon.

Across the United Bible Society Fellowship, we continue to coordinate supplies of Ukrainian Bibles to surrounding countries, to meet the needs of refugees. The generosity of individuals and congregations across Scotland has enabled us to play a full part in this effort.

We also pray for the Bible Society in Russia, as their situation is complex.

The Bible Societies in Turkey and Syria are responding to the huge needs of those affected by the major earthquakes earlier this year. Often, these devastating events mean the local Bible Societies have to find new ways to support people who need so much, both practically and spiritually. Partnerships with local churches are crucial in these situations in order to bring direct help where it is needed most.

In each of these situations, *Bible-based Trauma Healing* is a longer-term need. Before the war in Ukraine began, there were 400 church volunteers trained as facilitators of this programme. Some of them have left the country and are able to support others who are displaced. In Turkey, training of volunteers from local churches will begin soon, to help those affected by the earthquakes.

Bible-based Trauma Healing continues to be of great assistance to many across Scotland. Since we started this programme in 2018, 200 church volunteer facilitators have been trained and 70 Healing Groups have been held with around 600 participants. What is offered is not counselling, but rather an opportunity to gather with others who are experiencing pain and hurt for different reasons, to support one another in the healing process with an approach that is holistic and Bible-based.

Translating the Bible into people's heart language is vital in helping people connect with God. We continue to support Bible translation work across the world, where 1.5 billion people are still waiting for a full Bible in their language. There are almost 4,000 languages that do not have any Scripture at all.

The Gaelic-speaking community have been rejoicing with us recently as the first audio New Testament in modern Gaelic was published. We are so grateful for the generosity of Faith Comes by Hearing (an American mission agency) and over 50 volunteers in Scotland who helped with the recording. Our prayer is that many will find this helpful in worship and to share with others; also that the Lumo Gospel films with the Gaelic script will be of use in schools.

Our most recent publication aims to help churches grow their small groups. '*Love, Death and Resurrection*' is the New Testament in regular book format (single column, no verse numbers). We are encouraging congregations to read through the New Testament in 40 days and get together in small groups (Book Groups) to discuss what has impacted them or bothered them each week. Then we suggest the small groups split and invite others to join them in a Bible Book Group, thus sharing the Bible with those who are not used to reading it.

We are grateful to every individual and congregation who stands with us in prayer and financial support. We look forward to ways we can partner together in sharing the Bible in the year ahead.

Appendix B

CHANGES TO STANDING ORDERS

Redrafted SOs 15 and 17:

15. **Order of Business.** The Assembly shall appoint a Procedure Committee, the Convener and Vice-Convener thereof normally to be the Convener and Vice-Convener respectively of the Assembly Business Committee. The Assembly Business Committee shall prepare and circulate electronically before the commencement of the Assembly, a proposed Order of Business for the Assembly. **The proposed Order of Business shall be put to the Assembly for approval on the opening day.**

17. **Remit.** The Procedure Committee shall be wholly responsible **for any re-ordering of the business of the General Assembly.**

Redrafted SO 26:

26. **Acts of Assembly.** The Committee on Commission (SO5) shall arrange for the text of the Acts of Assembly to be finalised and shall **arrange for a list of the proposed Acts of Assembly to be circulated in advance in the Assembly Paper**, which shall be considered on the last day of the Assembly.

Redrafted SO 56:

56. **Proposals with Budgetary Implications.** Prior to making any proposal, Commissioners should give due consideration as to whether this will incur the use of additional resources or affect the incoming resources for the Church's work, i.e. whether the proposal has budgetary implications. Advice on any proposal can be sought from the General Treasurer. A proposal with budgetary implications must be in the hands of Commissioners in proper form **providing due notice** (for example, as a Proposed Deliverance, Notice of Motion, or Crave of a Petition). Specifically, to ensure appropriate budget controls:

(a) Any proposal which involves **potential** new or additional expenditure whether of a one-off or recurring nature, must be accompanied by a statement specifying where funding will be found, whether by a reduction of existing **expenditure**; funding external to the Church or **from additional funding provided** by congregations.

(b) Any proposal which results in a potential reduction in income, including a reduction in the **funding provided** by congregations, must be accompanied by a statement of where replacement funding will be found or expenditure reduced to compensate for the reduction in the income.

The Assembly Trustees **and/or the General Trustees, as applicable**, shall have the right to comment upon any proposal in category (a) or (b) before any decision is taken.

Appendix C

AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS FOR THE HYBRID GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023

The Standing Orders in their current form shall apply save for amendments as follows which shall, where there is any conflict with an existing Standing Order, apply in preference:

Generally: references to “laid on the table” shall include “circulated electronically in advance”.

New Standing Order 8 – Assembly Hub for online attendees: All Commissioners, Members *ex officio*, Corresponding Members, Delegates, Visitors (if any) and Youth Representatives attending the General Assembly online shall require to use the Assembly Hub software application (the “Assembly Hub”) to participate in the General Assembly as set out below. All such persons shall be supplied in advance with login details to the Assembly Hub and training on its use shall be made available. In particular, the Assembly Hub shall be used by online attendees throughout the General Assembly to do the following:

- to follow the business of the General Assembly, read sections of deliverance and vote on them;
- to submit notices of motion (to amend an existing section of deliverance, to propose a counter-motion to an existing section of deliverance, or to propose a new motion);
- to second a notice of motion; and
- to indicate a request to speak (ask a question, make a comment or raise a point of order).

New Standing Order 8A – In Person/Online Participation: Commissioners, Delegates, Corresponding Members and Youth Representatives may participate in person or online at the General Assembly. A person shall be designated in advance by the commissioning Presbytery as either an in-person or an online attendee for the entire duration of the Assembly. No change to a person’s status as an in-person or online attendee shall be possible after 28 March, save only in the following circumstances: if an in-person attendee becomes ill and unable to attend the Assembly in person, they shall advise the Office of the General Assembly as soon as possible by emailing pcoffice@churchofscotland.org.uk. When doing so they may request to change to being an online attendee and the Office of the General Assembly shall enable this if possible.

Additional wording: Standing Orders 45 – Questions on Reports & 46 – Questions requiring Notice

[If attending in person]: If such a person has a device enabling them to do so, they may use the Assembly Hub as in the subsequent paragraph. Alternatively, an in-person attendee may use one of the stations placed in the Hall to enter a “request to speak” against the relevant section(s) of deliverance.

[If attending online]: Commissioners, Delegates, Youth Representatives and Corresponding Members who wish to ask a question or to make a comment on a Report should use the Assembly Hub to enter a “request to speak” against the relevant section(s) of deliverance.

Additional wording: Standing Order 89 – Notice of Motion

[If attending in person]: If such a person has a device enabling them to do so, they may use the Assembly Hub as in the subsequent paragraph. Alternatively an in person attendee may email a duly completed notice of motion form to the Clerks of Assembly using pcoffice@churchofscotland.org.uk or may complete and return to the Clerks at the top table or to the Assembly Office, a paper notice of motion form.

[If attending online]: Commissioners, Members and Youth Representatives should use the Assembly Hub to register a notice of motion in advance in respect of the relevant section(s) of deliverance.

[For all attendees]: All persons entitled to do so are asked to register a notice of motion before the start of the relevant Standing Committee’s business slot, i.e. before debate on the relevant Report starts.

Additional wording: Standing Order 105 – Taking the Vote

[For all attendees] Quick approval of business: The Moderator shall have discretion to gauge approval, without need formally to vote, of any section of deliverance by combining the following indications and forming a view: having taken into account any “requests to speak” which have been registered, they may ask in-person Commissioners to stamp their feet or stand and at the same time may ask online Commissioners to “raise a hand” on Zoom to indicate approval of a section of deliverance. If following use of this procedure any Commissioner requests a formal vote, then the Moderator shall call for an electronic vote to take place.

Where an electronic vote is used, it shall proceed as follows:

[If attending in person]: An in-person attendee shall vote using a Bluetooth handset supplied to them at the start of the Assembly. Voting for such persons via the Assembly Hub will be disabled.

[If attending online]: An online attendee shall use the Assembly Hub to vote. In the event of a failure in the technology operating the Assembly Hub, online attendees shall vote using Zoom Polls or shall use such other voting mechanism as may be prescribed at the time by the Procedure Committee.

[For all attendees]: The votes from both from in-person attendance and the Assembly Hub shall be added together and the result shall be announced by the Moderator. The voting figures shall be minuted where the Moderator, in his or her discretion, specifically requests this, or where the Clerks of Assembly decide that it would be appropriate to do so. In no circumstances shall a second vote be taken on a matter which has already been the subject of a vote by electronic voting.

Additional wording: Standing Orders 106 – 110 – Dissents

[If attending in person]: If such a person has a device enabling them to do so, they may email their dissent as in the subsequent paragraph. Alternatively, an in-person attendee may sign the list provided by the Assembly Office.

[If attending online]: A dissent shall be entered or adhered to by sending an email to: pcoffice@churchofscotland.org.uk with the subject line stating “Dissent Against...[insert name of Standing Committee and number of relevant section of deliverance]”. To be recorded in the minute, any such email must be received by the Clerks by the close of the last session of the Assembly.

Appendix D

[] REGULATIONS AMENDING THE NOMINATION OF THE MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGULATIONS (REGULATIONS I 2013)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Nomination of the Moderator of the General Assembly Regulations (Regulations I 2013), shall be amended as follows:

1. *Delete section 2 and substitute:*

“The Moderator of the General Assembly shall be nominated by a Committee of twelve persons comprising eleven ministers and elders nominated by Presbyteries plus one deacon selected at random by the Clerks of Assembly. The ministers and elders on the Committee shall be selected as follows: each Scottish Presbytery shall nominate one minister and one elder to populate the Committee^[1]; the Presbyteries of England and of International Charges shall nominate one minister or elder for the Committee in each alternate year, the first nomination being made in 2024 by the Presbytery of England. Nominations shall be sent to the Nomination Committee by 31 December. Upon receipt of all the nominations, the Nomination Committee shall select for appointment one or other of the nominees from each Scottish Presbytery, and shall appoint the nominee from the Presbytery of England or International Charges, with a view to creating overall a Committee which is diverse in office and gender and which is representative of the diversity of the whole Church.”

2. *Delete section 5 and substitute:*

“In the event of the death, resignation or supervening incapacity of persons on the Committee such that the number of persons on the Committee drops below nine, steps shall be taken to bring the number of persons back up to at least nine by seeking further recommendations of suitable appointees from the Nomination Committee.”

^[1] *Note: This drafting assumes that an Overture is to be received from the Presbytery of Clèir Eilean Ì: (Highlands & Hebrides) at the General Assembly of 2023, but if that is not received, the first part of this sentence should instead, for the following year only, read:

(a) Each Scottish Presbytery other than those expected to form the Presbytery of Clèir Eilean Ì: (Highlands & Hebrides) shall nominate one minister or deacon and one elder to populate the Committee and those Presbyteries expected to form the Presbytery of Clèir Eilean Ì: Highlands & Hebrides shall together nominate one minister or deacon and one elder to populate the Committee;

Appendix E

[] REGULATIONS AMENDING THE OFFICE OF THE MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGULATIONS (REGULATIONS II 2013)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Office of the Moderator of the General Assembly Regulations (Regulations II 2013), shall be amended as follows:

1. *Throughout the Regulations, for “Council or Committee” or “Councils, Committees” substitute “Standing Committee” or “Standing Committees” as the case may be.*

2. *Add a new paragraph 1(2) instead of the existing paragraph 1(3) and re-number thereafter:*

(2) perform such duties as may be directed by the General Assembly, and represent the Church of Scotland on historic and national occasions, as they may arise; such duties shall include extensive engagement in preaching and in the leading of worship;

3. *In the existing paragraph 1(2) delete “shall normally undertake visitation overseas” and substitute “shall undertake overseas visitation only if circumstances require it”.*

4. *In paragraph 1(5):*

(a) *delete “on such occasions as the Moderator” and substitute “when he or she”;*

(b) *delete “he or she shall” on the third line; and*

(c) *delete the last sentence.*

5. *In paragraph 1(6):*

(a) *add “Presbyteries” after “Councils, Committees” in the first and sixth lines;*

- (b) *in the last line delete "15 November of the preceding year" and substitute "31 January of the moderatorial year".*
6. *In paragraph 1(7):*
- (a) *delete the first sentence and the words "The Moderator may" at the start of the second sentence.*
- (b) *after "Councils and Committees" add "Presbyteries".*
7. *In paragraph 1(8) after "Councils, Committees" add "Presbyteries".*
8. *Delete paragraph 1(9) and re-number thereafter.*
9. *Delete the existing paragraph 1(12) and substitute:*
"normally be expected to work in the Official Residence and in an area for the Moderator's use within the Office of the General Assembly."
10. *Add a new paragraph 1(13):*
"be offered a debriefing exercise at an appropriate time following his or her moderatorial year, organised by the Principal Clerk."

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE ETHICS OF INVESTMENT PRACTICE MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Agree the recommendations in section 11.
3. Establish as a Standing Committee of the General Assembly an Ethical Oversight Committee ('EOC') made up of nine people, each of whom would serve no more than two 3-year terms, to be populated as follows: (i) three persons would be trustees of the Investors Trust, (ii) one person from the General Trustees, and (iii) five appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination process; of these five, three will have a social justice and/or world church background; one will be a parish minister; and one will be 30 years of age or under at first appointment.
4. Agree the following remit for the EOC:
The Ethical Oversight Committee (EOC) is an advisory group that will help the Church of Scotland Investors Trust (COSIT) to focus on the theological and ethical background of what the Church should be investing in, consider the complexities of the investment options, and be a space for intelligent conversations that can support the COSIT to provide the investment managers with very specific briefs, in line with the Church's values.
5. Thank and discharge the Committee.

Report**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In Luke's gospel (3:1-6), John the Baptist preaches about repentance – but this is not merely spiritual repentance. Although he calls the people 'vipers' and warns them that 'any tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down', he also makes it clear what needs to change. The repentance that John speaks of is active, requiring more than just asking for forgiveness. It calls for acts of love in action. The crowds ask John, 'what shall we do?' His answer is very clear: "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same." The message, amplified later by Christ's life-changing words and actions, is that we must care for those who have less than we have.

1.2 Note however, that when it comes to the tax collectors and soldiers, John goes beyond inviting them to simply share with those who are less privileged than them. He asks them to change the root causes of injustice; to practice justice. To the same question, 'What should we do', John replies, 'Don't collect any more than you are required to... Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay (3:12-14 NIV).

1.3 As a Church we are generous, such that a spirit of generosity could be considered a hallmark of our congregations and communities; and something of which we can be rightly proud. Ethical investment of the Church's money is a more difficult concept – in part because of the often contrary views of what "ethical" means in today's world. Investing ethically through the stock market often seems to mean making less-bad choices, rather than pro-active good choices.

1.4 The Church of Scotland ("the Church") has long had negative exclusions in place which ensure that there are no investments in companies that derive more than 15% of their total revenues from alcohol, gambling, tobacco, pornography, armaments and the extraction of thermal coal or tar sands – activities which are deemed to harm society more than they benefit it.

1.5 In the last thirty or so years, global finance has changed out of all recognition, to the point that the systems set up to regulate companies and their operations are generally acknowledged to be inadequate. In part, this is because the systems were not designed to police the huge multinational companies that operate across jurisdictions and are able to exploit different regional approaches to human rights, climate change, tax laws and governance requirements.

1.6 The Church has never shied away from engaging in difficult economic and social matters. And, unsurprisingly perhaps, there have always been different opinions on the Assembly floor as what should be done. Apartheid in South Africa is a good example of the church struggling to know what was right to do – the arguments to disinvest from that regime were countered for many years by a desire to stay invested and thus be able to influence. When a number of emerging countries were plunged into unsustainable debt and forced to liberalise their economies as part of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund Structural Adjustment Programmes, the Church not only was at the forefront of getting Fairtrade products into mainstream markets, but also lobbied actively for trade justice. At the turn of the millennium, the Church called on Governments to cancel the unpayable debt of many of the world's poorest countries. On-going close engagement with partners in Israel and Palestine has ensured that the Church is not invested in any company that profits from the Israeli Occupation of Palestine, although we own institutions there which means that we do have interests in the broader economy. More recently the Church has added its voice to the global calls for climate justice, recognising that extreme weather events are wreaking havoc across the globe, destroying homes and livelihoods, threatening food security, and pushing millions into poverty. However, when it came to addressing this issue, the old debate of disinvest or engage resurfaced again.

1.7 What this committee has attempted to examine is how the Church's investments sit alongside this desire for social justice.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIAL COMMITTEE (“THE COMMITTEE”)

2.1 The contentious issue around fossil fuels has come twice to the floor of the General Assembly, which heard the crippling effect that climate change was having on people around the world. However, when it came to discussing investments in fossil fuel companies that were contributing to the problem, there were differing views on what approach to take. In both 2018 and 2019 there was a deliverance proposed from the floor to disinvest from oil and gas companies. The will of the assembly in 2018 was to remain engaged and use the Church’s voice to influence the behaviour of companies, a task that was given to the then Church and Society Council, even though they had limited, if any ability to do this. In 2019 when the issue came again, the chair of the Church of Scotland Investors Trust (COSIT) spoke during the debate and asked the assembly to “resist the urging to disinvest from oil and gas companies because we (Investors Trust) believe it is the wrong way to influence change.” In 2019, like in 2018, the countermotion calling for disinvestment fell.

2.2 The investment managers of the COSIT Growth Fund subsequently sold all the shares held in fossil fuel companies based on the view of its investment managers that there were better returns to be had in other sectors. The COSIT also accepted that there would be no new investment in fossil fuel companies without the prior agreement of the Faith Impact Forum.

2.3 Clearly there is a disconnect. When the fossil fuel companies were performing well, there was a desire by the COSIT to hold them, arguing that the best way to have a voice on climate change was to exercise the Church’s vote, via our Investment Managers, as a shareholder. However, when the companies were performing less well, they were sold solely for financial reasons and without regard to losing that influence; and irrespective of the will of the General Assembly to hold the shares and engage.

2.4 The on-going sparring on the Assembly floor led directly, in 2021, to the creation of a Special Committee (“the Committee”) with the brief to propose a framework from which the Church would be able to consider ethical investments more broadly and embrace alternative viewpoints, without necessarily having each issue come before the full Assembly and without unnecessarily hindering the ability of the COSIT to manage the Church’s money. The formal remit was:

2.5 *Appoint a Special Committee of five persons to consult with the Faith Impact Forum, the Church of Scotland Investors Trust and the Assembly Trustees to consider the best framework for future recommendations about the ethics of investment practice being brought before the General Assembly, and report to the General Assembly in 2023. (The membership is in Appendix 1, and the section of the Faith Impact Forum report is in Appendix 2.)*

2.6 A list of all the individuals and organisations consulted by the Committee is included in Appendix 3.

3. THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND INVESTORS TRUST (COSIT)

3.1 The Church of Scotland Investors Trust was established by the Church of Scotland (Properties and Investments) Order Confirmation Act^[1], in the United Kingdom Parliament in 1994. It is a distinct legal entity whose trustees are bound by fiduciary duty to ensure good returns on the money that they hold. The line between fiduciary duty, which gives a degree of autonomy, and Section 41 of Part 6 of the Schedule to the Act that allows for, “the General Assembly from time to time to make bye-laws and regulations to be observed by the Investors Trust in the discharge of its duties and functions under this Order”, has to be properly understood, when considering a framework for future recommendations.

3.2 The Trust’s powers of investment are set out in Part 5 of the Schedule to the Act, and include wide powers as to investment of the funds held by it, to be exercised as the Trust shall think fit. The Solicitor of the Church informed the committee that it is a fundamental tenet of trust law that trustees may not fetter their discretion, and Section 41 should be interpreted as a reserved power for the General Assembly to make regulations in matters of administration only, and not to seek to interfere with the exercise by the Trust of the discretion given to it by the Act.

3.3 The primary and overarching duty of a charity trustee is to further the purposes of the trust. In terms of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, trustees are required to consider the suitability to the trust of any proposed investments and the need for diversification of investment in so far as is appropriate to the circumstances of the trust.

3.4 Investments are usually made to provide a financial return. In the charity context, investments are charity assets which are used to generate a financial return to allow the charity to deliver its charitable purpose. That is normally achieved by maximising the financial returns on the investments made, but it is not essential that this should happen in every instance. Trustees must ask what financial return is needed from the investments in order to properly support charitable activities, and balance the extent of any conflict with charitable purposes with the risk of financial detriment. A trustee has a legal duty to protect the charity’s resources and to ensure that the charity’s assets are not put at undue risk.

3.5 The Trust offers to congregations, councils and committees of the church, and to bodies within or connected to the church, cost effective and convenient participation in three professionally managed investment funds:

- The Growth Fund, managed by Newton, is expected to provide a growing total return, as a result of both income and capital value increasing over the long term. It is largely invested in global equities.
- The Income Fund, managed by Royal London, is expected to provide consistent high income without taking high risk of default. It is largely invested in UK bonds.
- The Deposit Fund, managed by Thomas Miller, is for short-term low-risk investment and seeks to provide a competitive rate of interest whilst preserving nominal capital value. Money is placed largely with Banks and Building Societies.

At the end of 2021, a total of £519.7 million was invested:

Growth Fund	£330.2 million
Income Fund	£88.7 million
Deposit Fund	£100.8 million

3.6 The COSIT instructs its investment managers to adhere to Ethical, Social and Governance criteria (known as ESG). ESG research is carried out by the investment managers. Investment is sought in companies that demonstrate responsible employment and good corporate governance practices, have regard to environmental performance and human rights, and act with sensitivity to the communities in which they operate. Investment is avoided in any company substantially involved in the excluded sectors described above. "Substantially" is interpreted as resulting in 15% or more of a company's total revenues.

3.7 The COSIT is a member of the Church Investors Group which encourages the formulation of investment principles based on Christian ethical positions. As a shareholder, the COSIT is able to cast its vote at company General Meetings and this is executed on its behalf by the investment managers. The voice of the managers carries increased weight where they also represent other clients which have aligned values with the Church. Neither the Church of Scotland Investors Trust, nor the Faith Impact Forum, has a seat at the table of any company General Meeting.

4. INVESTMENT SPECTRUM

4.1 Recognised ways to invest include:

Traditional	where an investment manager is free to invest in any company that it believes will perform strongly and generate good returns for shareholders (sometimes irrespective of the quality of governance and potential ethical concerns)
Responsible	where negative filters are put in place to ensure that companies which derive more than, say, 15% of their income from excluded sectors are filtered out.
ESG	where Ethical, Social and Governance considerations are carefully researched by the investment managers both before making an investment and during the period that the investment is held.
Impact	where a proactive approach is taken to invest in companies that are seen to be "doing good" – for example by delivering measurable societal and/or environmental improvements.

The Church's investments are currently a mix of traditional and responsible, underpinned and informed by ESG principles.

5. TREASURERS' VIEWS

5.1 The Committee drafted a questionnaire and requested the Church's General Treasurer's office to send it to the treasurers of every congregation that they held an e-mail address for. We appreciate that not every congregation therefore got the opportunity to take part, but operating without a budget we chose to contact those we could ask insight from free of charge. We were delighted to receive 180 responses. Questions included:

How important is it for you that the church funds are invested ethically?

- a) Not at all important – 10
 - b) Fairly important – 61
 - c) I have no views on this issue – 9
 - d) Very important – 71
 - e) Essential – I would never consider investing in Church of Scotland funds unless ethical considerations were paramount – 20
- Answered A & B – 1
 Answered B & E – 1
 Answered D & E – 3
 Not answered – 4

If Church funds were invested with a greater emphasis on companies that are perceived to do good, as opposed to primarily avoiding companies which operate in sectors that are considered inappropriate, what would your reaction be to this?

- a) This is exactly what the church should be doing with its investments – 65
 - b) This is what the church should be doing as long as it doesn't impact adversely on investment performance – 89
 - c) Performance against benchmark is a priority over prioritising companies that are perceived to be doing good. – 12
- Not answered – 14

If, by investing more positively, less reliance could be put on the defined benchmark, what would your response be?

- a) Very likely to recommend the sale of any Church of Scotland funds held and would not invest – 8
- b) Would seriously consider recommending the sale of any Church of Scotland funds held and would be less likely to invest – 41

- c) Would be happy to see investment in more positive areas and divergence from the standard benchmark would not affect my views on the Church of Scotland funds – 113

Not answered – 18

The full questionnaire response is in Appendix 4.

5.2 What the treasurers' responses showed was that they feel their congregations' funds should be invested as ethically as possible, while at the same time providing a satisfactory return. Whilst this is essentially what the COSIT is seeking to achieve, the issue of benchmarking the funds becomes important when it comes to an investment managers ability to make stock selections. From the responses, it would appear that for many, investing ethically trumps measuring performance against benchmark. The Committee recognises that if investing ethically results in moving away from traditional benchmarking, there would still need to be a way of measuring investment performance.

6. ETHICAL INVESTMENT

6.1 A contributor to our deliberations made an important point, paraphrased as: *If, in order to keep your lights on, you need to do things that are actually damaging, and possibly unethical, have you then lost the purpose of being the Church at all? And are these amounts so huge that they would make a difference? If you said to people, in order to get, say, 1% more, it is necessary to do things that may not be ethical – would they say the end justifies the means?*

6.2 The Church's investment managers have a standing instruction from the COSIT that there is to be no direct investment in alcohol, gambling, tobacco, pornography, armaments and the extraction of thermal coal or tar sands. However, these exclusions don't preclude an indirect exposure to one or more of these sectors. For example, and this is purely illustrative, UK supermarkets sell many £billions of alcoholic beverage products. Although this is a small single figure percentage of their total annual revenue, it is exponentially much greater than that of (say) a Scottish Craft Gin company. Paradoxically, the Church can invest in a UK supermarket, but not in the small Scottish company, even where that company's ESG practices and societal contribution may be vastly superior to the supermarket.

6.3 Although negative exclusions help to create awareness of injustices and contradictions, they don't necessarily bar investing in things we don't like. And this is before taking into account the ethical issues associated with global supply chains, including human rights concerns, and carbon emissions.

6.4 The Church was recently a shareholder in Nestle, which was the target of the world's longest boycott over their aggressive marketing of baby foods in breach of international standards and has also been the subject of fresh water disputes in Canada and the US.^[ii] And, despite having no direct exposure to fossil fuels, the Trust holds shares in Barclays Bank which, "financed £4.1 billion for new fossil fuel projects" between January and November 2021.^[iii]

6.5 Electric cars produce significantly less CO₂ than their petrol counterparts. However, there are emerging ethical concerns around the sourcing of the cobalt and lithium metals that are integral parts of their batteries. Amnesty has reported that, "Cobalt production is linked to child labour in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.^[iv] Some Indigenous communities are resisting lithium mining on their land in South America."^[v]

6.6 Some major energy companies are making strident efforts to transition to renewables. Orsted, for example, transitioned from being one of the most coal-intensive companies in Europe to become "the world's largest producer of off-shore wind energy"^[vi] Should it and others like it be encouraged in their transition or shunned as potential investments because of their continuing oil and gas operations.

The above examples are included to emphasise that, although negative exclusions undoubtedly add value when an attempt is made to invest ethically, they do not necessarily achieve the desired objective of doing good, and also to indicate how complex it is to invest ethically.

6.7 As a Church we know that poverty is not an accident; we know that poverty is not only a lack of money, but also a lack of power and opportunity. And as John the Baptist reminded the people of the day, economic issues become spiritual issues, because the decisions that we make have direct repercussions on others. And those 'others' are our sisters and brothers both at home and around the world. So how we invest our financial resources is something that we need to consider very carefully.

6.8 Given the complexity of the issue, it would be easy to accept the status quo– doing the best with exclusions, accepting that nothing is perfect, and recognising the need to ensure that the returns are sufficient not only to keep the lights on and the roofs watertight, but also to enable the Church to pursue its mission effectively and continue to give generously.

6.9 As Christians, we are rightly called on to be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16), to act justly (Micah 6:8) and to care for creation. It is therefore only right that we dig deeper to see what might be possible in order to ensure that the Church's investments properly reflect the mission and values of Christ. As we were reminded by one of the many people interviewed by the Committee, "we shouldn't let perfect be the enemy of good".

7. ETHICAL CRITERIA

7.1 Many investment managers offer ESG aligned investment portfolios, and the Church's assets are currently invested using ESG principles. The perceived "sin sectors" are excluded and fossil fuels have recently been shunned. However, is this enough?

7.2 The Edinburgh-based Global Ethical Finance Initiative comments, "Asset managers and asset owners alike face very real problems of defining what it means to be a responsible investor."^[vii] Their research into ethical investment provision in Scotland demonstrated the very broad definitions of ESG leading them to conclude that the "consequence of this is the risk of ongoing confusion, 'greenwashing' and funds being wrongly categorised by data providers."^[viii]

7.3 The Committee looked closely at the pros and cons of impact investing – where there is a deliberate decision to invest in companies that are actively working to bring about positive social and/or environmental change, as well as seeking a satisfactory return on investment. Using the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Convention as a framework is a road that some have gone down and is increasingly being used by investment managers. Whilst this may not offer an immediate fix, it does signal an intention of trajectory of travel. Both the Quakers and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation have adopted this approach and have rigorously sourced investment managers aligned with their values and principles.

7.4 The Committee also looked at bespoke investment. An example is Oikocredit, a worldwide cooperative and social investor that promotes sustainable development by providing loans and capital in low income countries. It seeks to create social impact in return for a modest financial return that is fair in terms of the prices charged to partners for the financing.^[ix] Historically it has paid two per cent dividend on the shares, which was reduced to one per cent in order to enable Oikocredit to restructure and become more cost effective. The Church, through the former World Mission Council, invested £200,000 in Oikocredit, and chose to continually reinvest the dividends as a commitment to supporting some of the world's poorest communities. The Church still holds these investments, presently overseen by the Assembly Trustees, not the Investors Trust.

7.5 There are many platforms that enable investors to buy bonds in social projects such as solar panels for schools and community-owned clean energy initiatives. Whilst these investments may be much more ethical than the stock market and may generate as good, if not better, financial returns, they require much more hands-on management than the COSIT could be expected to provide. The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA), has the staff capacity to do a mixture of stock market investing, and investing in bespoke projects, seeing it as an extension of their mission work.

7.6 The Church is a signatory to the [Edinburgh Finance Declaration, alongside the Islamic Finance Council – an initiative brought about by the Global Ethical Finance Initiative](#). The Initiative was directly inspired by the legacy of Rev. Henry Duncan (founder of the Saving Bank movement) and seeks to create a practical ethical finance solution in Scotland that is open to all in society regardless of faith or ethnic background and is built on the shared values between the faith traditions. This is a conversation that could be picked up in the future.

8. TO ENGAGE OR DIVEST?

8.1 Whether the Church should remain invested in fossil fuels and press for change from inside or divest has tended to dominate recent General Assembly investment debates – with strong arguments advanced on both sides. Those advocating engagement have argued that divesting from a company does not mean that company has less money – because the shares sold are bought by someone else.

8.2 The Committee has heard from many voices on this issue and there is a real difference of opinion within the Christian community on what is most effective. Climate change is a global emergency and swift and urgent action is needed. One argument is that divesting sends a strong signal that the Church no longer want to be part of the problem, especially since there is ample evidence that many companies are merely paying lip-service to substantial change.^[x] By staying invested, they say, the Church legitimises greenwashing. Indeed, it is for that reason that Desmond Tutu embraced a call for divesting, comparing the argument to remain invested and push for change, to the policy of 'whitewashing' in apartheid South Africa.^[xi]

8.3 Others argue that divesting is a waste of time because it achieves nothing. Shares are merely sold to other investors who may be less willing to engage. Divesting, they say, does no substantive damage to the company and what is needed to bring about change is aggressive shareholder action.

8.4 The Quakers have chosen to completely disinvest from fossil fuels and have attempted to build a portfolio of investments that are as clean and ethical as possible. This enables them to direct their money proactively to places they want to invest in.

8.5 The PCUSA, with very substantial funds, has a policy of engaging directly with companies to campaign for change. However, if it doesn't see evidence of necessary improvement within two or three years, it then moves to divest. This is something that the Investors Trust, in conversation with us, has indicated that it is in favour of doing going forward- only staying invested for as long as having a voice is evidently having an impact. The amounts that the COSIT is investing on behalf of the Church and its congregations are very small in comparison with the PCUSA which means that its voice and votes carry little weight. Employing investment managers, who invest on behalf of many clients, helps that voice to become louder. The COSIT already liaises with a number of ecumenical bodies in order to share experiences and work together to achieve change and strengthen corporate governance.

9. THE PROPOSED INTRODUCTION OF FAITHINVEST

9.1 [FaithInvest](#) is an international non-profit network of religious groups and faith-based institutional investors. FaithInvest sees faith communities as natural powerhouses for ethical, faith-based and impact investing that can contribute to environmental, social and governance (ESG) or socially responsible investing (SRI). Recognising that the world's religions are responsible for billions of pounds worth of investments, FaithInvest helps groups define their values and beliefs in order to then guide investment choices.

9.2 As investors, faith communities are often good at knowing what they *don't* want to invest in. FaithInvest seeks to support faith communities in clarifying what they *do* want to invest in, motivated by passionate convictions that investing in line with values will achieve a just and sustainable world, through actively using investments for the benefit of people and the planet.

9.3 Having engaged over several months with FaithInvest, including three-way conversations with the Investors Trust, the Committee is persuaded that there would be value in working closely with them to support the Church in defining what its core values and beliefs are and how that can translate into a clear mandate to the investment managers as to how the Church wishes to see its money work. For the last year, FaithInvest have been working with us free of charge and have offered to act as facilitators to this process going forward. The majority of FaithInvest's funding to date has come from [CHR Foundation](#) of the United States, and [Porticus Amsterdam](#), a group coordinating the philanthropic activities for the Brenninkmeijer family. Going forward there will be a small charge for this work.

10. THE FUTURE

10.1 Part of the Committee's remit was to consider what any future structure would look like. Given the legal autonomy of the COSIT, any structure needs to be acceptable to the COSIT, be advisory in nature, and prepared to work with and make suggestions in the knowledge that the COSIT has a fiduciary responsibility for investment decisions.

10.2 The PCUSA has an informed group that oversees its approach to investment with a dedicated staff member who manages the process on a day-to-day basis. The Scottish Episcopal Church and the Methodist Church in Britain have also established ethical investment advisory groups which have proved effective in articulating their values and principles.

10.3 The Committee proposes that, working with FaithInvest, an Ethical Oversight Committee (EOC) is formed, comprising three representatives from the COSIT, three from a social justice / world church background, one who is under 30, one from parish ministry, and one nominated by the General Trustees.

It is envisaged that the involvement of FaithInvest would only be required for a couple of years in order to support the establishment of the EOC and the drafting of a comprehensive values statement that would then be used to brief the investment managers. It needs to be made very clear that the fiduciary duty and legal obligations of the Investors Trust remains unchanged – the COSIT will always have ultimate decision-making power. The EOC's role would be to help the COSIT to focus on the theological and ethical background of what the Church should be investing in, understand the complexities of the investment options, and be a space for intelligent conversations that can be used to support the COSIT to provide the investment managers with a very specific brief. It is envisaged that this would be the space where difficult issues could be discussed. The EOC would not be a voting group, however they could discuss and make recommendations, for example on whether an energy company had adequately switched the majority of its business towards renewables to warrant consideration for investment.

10.4 We are proposing that the EOC should be asked to report back every year to the General Assembly. This does not replace or detract from the report of the Investors Trust, but rather is to ensure that there is a focus on the ethical issues discussed over the previous twelve months. Given the legal authority that the COSIT will always retain, the EOC has to be given some ability to use its voice, and if the EOC and the COSIT are functioning well together, then the reports should be complementary.

10.5 These have not been easy conversations, and we are aware that the proposals in this report may fall short of what some would wish. However, we are keen to ensure that the investments held by the church are as ethical as possible, and believe that the direction we are recommending brings us into line with what other Christian churches around the world are doing, and works to support the COSIT towards continual improvement, rather than to sit in opposition to it. We are happy to say that while the Investors Trust doesn't endorse everything in this report, they are happy with the proposed creation of the EOC and the plan to work alongside FaithInvest. The following proposals, therefore, are being made with the support of both the Investors Trust and the Faith Impact Forum.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee's recommendations, which are supported by the COSIT and the Faith Impact Forum, and which the General Assembly is invited to approve, are:

1. Establish an Ethical Oversight Committee ('EOC') made up of nine people, each of whom would serve no more than two 3-year terms. Three would be trustees of the Investors Trust, and one from the General Trustees. The General Assembly would appoint three from a social justice and/or world church background; one parish minister; and one who was 30 years of age or under at appointment.
2. Encourage COSIT, working with FaithInvest within the EOC, to define and make public the Church's investment values.
3. Encourage the EOC to work with the Investors Trust and encourage them to reduce from 15% to 10% the percentage of a company's total revenues in the excluded sectors that would mean it could not be held as an investment by the Church.
4. Encourage the Investors Trust to work alongside the EOC to develop, and review annually, a detailed investment policy statement to be used to inform and instruct the investment managers.
5. Encourage the Investors Trust to involve the EOC in conversations with the investment managers, highlighting holdings that it believed did not adequately conform with the Church's values.
6. Encourage the Investors Trust to work with the EOC to define a clear policy on what engagement the Church should employ, and how best to co-operate with Christian and other kindred groups in order to increase leverage. It should also set out the parameters for engagement and how to know if it is being successful.

7. Require the EOC to report annually to the General Assembly on the thematic issue areas they have worked on with Investors Trust and to reassure the General Assembly that ethical issues are being considered in investment practice.
8. Noting that the Church already has an investment in Oikocredit and potential commitments to the UK Islamic Finance Council and the Edinburgh Finance Declaration, encourage the areas of the Church for which this kind of investment is pertinent (presently this does not include COSIT) to keep the EOC advised of what they are doing.

In the name of the Special Committee on the Ethics of Investment Practice

VAL BROWN, Convener

Appendix 1

Membership & Meetings

The General Assembly appointed: Val Brown (Convener), Ewan Brown, Hannah Dunlop, Tom Kisitu, and Alasdair Ronald to serve on the Special Committee. Ian Alexander served as staff support.

The Special Committee met on over 35 occasions, mostly electronically, between summer 2021 and early 2023.

Appendix 2

From the Faith Impact Forum Report to the 2021 General Assembly

"For the future, there needs to be a mechanism whereby the ethics of investment practices can be discussed from a broader perspective than the purely financial. The Faith Impact Forum and COSIT have disagreed about oil and gas shareholdings, and so there may be benefit in exploring a fresh approach to agreeing policy on ethical investment. In discussion with the Assembly Trustees, it seems appropriate to seek to appoint a Special Committee of five persons to consult with the Faith Impact Forum, the Church of Scotland Investors Trust, and the Assembly Trustees to consider the best framework for future recommendations about the ethics of investment practice being applied in the church and being brought before the General Assembly. The Special Committee will take account of social and environmental impacts, as well as learning from other Churches and Christian agencies, the Church Investors Group, and bodies with experience of assessing the practical constraints of managing funds on behalf of investors. The Forum believes that this group must combine the expertise of those from a financial background, alongside those with a depth of understanding of the ethical issues which the church should consider when dealing with finance. It should draw from the broad range of church membership, and be inclusive and diverse."

Appendix 3

List of individuals and organisations consulted by the Committee

- **Brewin Dolphin**
 - Lynne Lamont, Head of Charity Service
 - Kelly Eva, Sustainability Manager
- **CCLA Investment** (www.ccla.co.uk)
 - Heather Lamont, Director, Client Investments
 - Josephine Carlsson, Sustainability Team
 - James Corah, Head of Sustainability
- **Church Investors Group** <https://churchinvestorsgroup.org.uk>
 - Edward Carter, Chair
 - Stephen Beer, Vice Chair; former Chief Investment Officer and Head of Ethics for the Central Finance Board of the Methodist Church and Epworth Investment Management
- **Christian Aid**
 - Bob Kikuyu, Global Theology Adviser based in Nairobi
 - Chris Hegarty, Finance/Justice
 - Kathy Galloway, Former Head of Christian Aid Scotland
- **Church of Scotland Assembly Trustees**
 - John Chalmers
 - David Harrison
 - Barry Hughes
 - Jean Couper
 - Peter McEnhil
- **Church of Scotland staff**
 - David Kendall, Chief Officer
 - Mary Macleod, Solicitor of the Church
 - Anne Macintosh, General Treasurer

- **Church of Scotland Faith Impact Forum**
 - Susan Brown
 - Alan Miller
 - Richard Baxter
 - Peter Lloyd
 - Forum Meeting
- **Church of Scotland General Trustees**
 - Alan Kennedy, Chair, pro tem.
 - Michael Craig
 - Barri Millar, Chief Executive.
- **Church of Scotland Investors Trust**
 - Robert Burgon, Chair
 - Brian Duffin, past Chair
 - Elaine Crichton, Vice-Chair
- **Church of Scotland Pension Trustees**
 - Graeme Caughey, Chair
 - Ray Martin, Chair of Investment Sub Group
 - Jane McLeod, Pensions Manager & Secretary to the Trustees
- **Edentree IM**
 - David Osfield, Fund Manager
 - Ian Dale
- **Evangelische Kirche von Westfalen (EKvW), Germany**
 - Ulrich Möller, Head of Department for Ecumenism, Mission & Global Responsibility
- **Faith Invest** (www.faithinvest.org)
 - Nana Francois, Director of Investment Solutions
 - Mathew Jensen, Investment Solutions Officer
 - Hasnane Arain.
- **Global Ethical Finance Initiative** (<https://www.globalethicalfinance.org>)
 - Graham Burnside, Co-Founder & Senior Adviser
 - Omar Shaikh, Co-founder and Managing Director
 - Natalie Jackson, Executive Manager
 - Dame Susan Rice, Chair, Global Steering Group
 - GEFI Faith in Finance Conference
- **Newton Investment Management Ltd**
 - David Moylett, Client Director
 - Alan Goodwin, Head of Charities
 - Bhavin Shah, Portfolio Manager
- **Oikocredit** (<https://www.oikocredit.coop/en>)
 - Lydia Tomitova, Manager of Investor Relations Unit
 - Belen Ortiz, Senior Investor Relations Officer
- **Palestine**
 - Professor Mazin Qumsiyeh, Founder: the Palestine Museum of Natural History; advocate/activist for justice and peace.
 - Charlotte Marshall, Sabeel-Kairos Director
- **Presbyterian Church USA**
 - Rob Fohr, Director of Faith Based Investing & Corporate Engagement
- **Quakers**
 - Linda Batten, Trustee and Voluntary Treasurer (Trustee for the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Chair of Investment Committee)
- **Operation Noah**
 - James Buchanan
- **Adrian Shaw**, Former Church of Scotland Climate Change Officer
- **Tilney Smith & Williamson**
 - Keith Burdon, Head of Charities, Scotland & NI
 - Debbie Hair, Senior Investment Manager
 - Kate Capocci, Stewardship and Social Responsibility

- **United Reformed Church, Ministers Pension Fund**
- Bridget Micklem
- **Wespath** (The United Methodist Church, USA Pension Fund)
- Dave Zellner

Appendix 4

Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY – 180 Questionnaires returned

1) Does your church have money invested in the stock market (i.e other than monies on deposit)?

Yes 118

No 56

Not answered 6

2) If yes, how are the monies for your church invested?

a) Church of Scotland Growth Fund – 23

b) Church of Scotland Income Fund – 2

c) Both the Growth Fund and the Income Fund – 64

d) Other – please indicate briefly the method of investment – 11

Answered A & D – 4

Answered B & D – 9

Answered C & D – 12

Not answered – 55

3) How important is it for you that the church funds are invested ethically?

a) Not at all important – 10

b) Fairly important – 61

c) I have no views on this issue – 9

d) Very important – 71

e) Essential – I would never consider investing in Church of Scotland funds unless ethical considerations were paramount – 20

Answered A & B – 1

Answered B & E – 1

Answered D & E – 3

Not answered – 4

4a) At present the funds' performance is assessed against appropriate indices/benchmarks. How important is performance against benchmark to you?

a) I would never consider investing in Church of Scotland funds unless they performed well against the benchmark – 87

b) I am happy to invest in Church of Scotland funds regardless of their performance against the benchmark – 68

c) Not answered – 24

4b) Are you aware of what the benchmark is for both the growth and income funds?

Yes – 50

No – 123

Not answered – 7

5) If Church of Scotland funds were invested with a greater emphasis on companies that are perceived to do good, as opposed to primarily avoiding companies which operate in sectors that are considered inappropriate, what would your reaction be to this?

a) This is exactly what the church should be doing with its investments – 65

b) This is what the church should be doing as long as it doesn't impact adversely on investment performance – 89

c) Performance against benchmark is a priority over prioritising companies that are perceived to be doing good. – 12

d) Not answered – 14

6) If, by investing more positively less reliance could be put on the defined benchmark, what would response be?

a) Very likely to recommend the sale of any Church of Scotland funds held and would not invest – 8

b) Would seriously consider recommending the sale of any Church of Scotland funds held and would be less likely to invest – 41

c) Would be happy to see investment in more positive areas and divergence from the standard benchmark would not affect my views on the Church of Scotland funds – 113

d) Not answered – 18

7) Engagement with companies to try to change some of their practices for the better (such as encouraging oil companies to make greater use of renewable energy) is a key component of ethical or responsible investment and something that the church already does, but could do to a greater extent. Which statement best categorises your feelings about being invested in companies with 'unethical' dimensions (recognising that very few companies are perfect)?

- a) I appreciate that there is no such thing as a truly ethical company, but I expect only to be invested in companies that have social goals that go beyond the maximisation of profits – 55
- b) I understand the complexities of the modern world, and am content to be invested in 'unethical' companies on the basis that we use our voice to try and lobby for changes to be made, however if I saw no change in a company's behaviour over a couple of years I'd want to disinvest. – 51
- c) I understand the complexities of the modern world, and am content to be invested in 'unethical' companies on the basis that we use our voice to try and lobby for changes to be made, and am content that is a slow process.– 58

Not answered – 14

Answered A & B – 1

Answered A & C – 1

References

- [i] <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukla/1994/5/enacted/data.html>
- [ii] [Nestle | Shop Ethical! company profile](#) and [The continuing controversies of Nestlé | Ethical Consumer](#)
- [iii] [Barclays has financed \\$5.6bn in new fossil fuel projects since January | Barclays | The Guardian](#)
- [iv] [Industry giants fail to tackle child labour allegations in cobalt battery supply chains – Amnesty International](#)
- [v] [Communities challenge lithium production in Argentina \(dialogochino.net\)](#)
- [vi] [Ørsted's renewable-energy transformation | McKinsey](#)
- [vii] [Mapping-the-Responsible-Investing-Landscape-in-Scotland-EXEC-SUM.pdf \(ethicalfinancehub.org\)](#) Page 5
- [viii] [Mapping-the-Responsible-Investing-Landscape-in-Scotland-FULL-REPORT.pdf \(ethicalfinancehub.org\)](#) P57
- [ix] [How Oikocredit works – Oikocredit International](#)
- [x] [Protect the Arctic – Reclaim Finance](#)
- [xi] [Don't 'faithwash' fossil-fuel firms \(churchtimes.co.uk\)](#)

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND INVESTORS TRUST MAY 2023**Proposed Deliverance****The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the re-appointments of Mr R Black and Mr G A Young as members of the Investors Trust from 1 June 2023.
3. Receive the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Investors Trust for 2022.

Report

The Church of Scotland Investors Trust, which was established by the Church of Scotland (Properties and Investments) Order Confirmation Act 1994, submits its twenty-eighth Report to the General Assembly.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The function of the Investors Trust is to provide investment services to the Church of Scotland and to bodies and trusts within or connected with the Church. The Investors Trust offers simple and economical facilities for investment in its three Funds: Growth Fund; Income Fund; Deposit Fund. Investors receive the benefits of professional investment management, regular portfolio supervision, diversification of investment risk and economies of scale through the pooling of monies in collective investment vehicles.

1.2 The bulk of the Church of Scotland's investments are held on a long-term basis, for the purpose of generating recurring income and growth in capital to support the work of the Church. An increase or decline in the capital value of investments does not necessarily have a corresponding effect on income receivable.

1.3 The trustees communicate with investors through a range of methods including bulletins which are sent direct to investors and posted on the COSIT section of the Church of Scotland website (which contains comprehensive information for investors, including practical guidance to assist church treasurers). In September 2022 an online webinar was organised which attracted an encouraging number of representatives of congregations and other investors. Presentations were made by the investment managers of the three COSIT funds and the opportunity was given to ask questions. It is planned to repeat this exercise later in 2023.

1.4 Following a review of investment strategy commissioned by the General Trustees (the largest investor in the three COSIT funds), the trustees have begun a process of discussing the outcome of that review with the General Trustees, in conjunction with the COSIT trustees' ongoing review of its investment management arrangements.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 Ethical considerations form an integral part of the investment management process and the Trustees have given instructions in this respect to the investment managers, taking into account views expressed by the General Assembly. At their own meetings, the Trustees regularly review and consider matters arising in respect of ethical investment. Investment is avoided in any company which engages in management practices which are judged by the Trustees to be unacceptable. In particular, investment is avoided in any company substantially involved (generating more than 15% of turnover) in gambling, tobacco products, alcohol, armaments, thermal coal and tar sands. In general, investment is sought in companies that demonstrate responsible employment and good corporate governance practices; have regard to environmental performance (particularly Climate Change); acknowledge the importance of human rights and act with sensitivity to the communities in which they operate. It is recognised that issues relating to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) issues are complex and more work is required in the investment management industry before there is a standard method of assessing and reporting on these matters.

2.2 The Trust is a member of the Church Investors Group (CIG), an ecumenical grouping of investment bodies charged with investing funds for UK churches and church-linked organisations, and with links to a growing number of international church investors. CIG lobbies companies and investment managers to encourage them to pursue policies aligned with our Christian faith, as well as conducting research on companies' behaviour and collating such research from several agencies. Through its co-operation with other ESG organisations and through its own activities, CIG is able to exert significant influence on corporate behaviour. The Investors Trust is represented on the Board of CIG by its past Chairman, Mr Brian Duffin.

2.3 Following the establishment by the 2021 General Assembly of a Special Committee to consider the best framework for future recommendations about the ethics of investment practice, the Chairman and some of the COSIT trustees have continued to interact with the Chair and members of the Special Committee. They have also met representatives of FaithInvest, an organisation with which it is recommended that the Church works on ethical matters. Although unable to endorse the whole commentary section of the report which has been produced by the Special Committee, the COSIT trustees support the recommendations contained in the Special Committee's report.

3. INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE AND OUTLOOK

3.1 In 2022, worldwide investment markets experienced highly unusual conditions which could not have been predicted at the beginning of the year. Although some price inflation was expected after the Covid lockdowns (as consumers began to spend more), the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 led to greater inflation as supplies of certain products became restricted. This also led to the current energy crisis and significant rises in the price of gas and electricity. As inflation rose (to levels not seen since 1982) central banks, including the Bank of England, tried to control inflation by increasing base interest rates. In the UK, the Truss Government's "mini-budget" in September led to further market uncertainty which had a significant impact on bond markets. The combined effects of these events led to negative returns in almost all global markets for 2022, with longer-dated UK Government bonds, in particular, producing returns of around -40%.

3.2 The net total value of funds due to investors decreased from £519.8 million at 31 December 2021 to £474.5 million at 31 December 2022. While capital values fell in the Growth and Income funds due to the very unusual market conditions, both funds were able to increase the level of income distributed to investors.

3.3 Growth Fund (£294.6 million (2021 - £330.2 million))

The Growth fund is mainly invested in UK and overseas company shares (equities) and is managed by Newton Investment Management. In 2022, the Growth Fund delivered a total return of -9.2% against the composite benchmark (adjusted to mirror the ethical guidelines of this fund) of -6.7%. A significant part of this underperformance is explained by the fact that the Fund has no holdings in oil and gas companies (which are a component of the benchmark and which performed strongly in 2022).

3.4 After reductions in income distributed from the Growth Fund (due both to a reduction in dividends paid by companies during the Covid pandemic and a change in the investment strategy of the Fund implemented in February 2021), investors in the Fund will receive a total distribution of 12.00p per unit for 2022 (2021: 11.00p per unit) (a 9% increase).

3.5 Income Fund (£77.4 million (2021 - £88.7 million))

The Income Fund continues to be invested in pooled funds investing in underlying bonds and equities offered by the managers, Royal London Asset Management and in a small direct holding in the Savills Charity Property Fund. In challenging market conditions for fixed-interest investments, the Income Fund's total return for the year was -12.16% (2021: 0.88%) against the composite benchmark return of -17.72% (2021: -3.55%). This outperformance in one year continues a good record by our managers.

3.6 After several years of declining distributions from the Income Fund due to low bond yields, the situation was reversed in 2022 with total income increasing to 48.07p per unit (2021: 40.87p per unit). The total income distribution to investors for 2022 has therefore increased by 18.75% to 47.5p per unit (2021: 40.0p per unit).

3.7 Deposit Fund (£ 102.5 million (2021 - £100.9 million))

The Fund is invested in short-term deposits with Banks and Building Societies. Deposits are generally placed for periods of up to 12 months at the rates prevailing at the time the deposit is made. Interest rates rose as the year progressed (after a prolonged period when rates were close to zero) and the Fund managers, Thomas Miller, were able to invest at higher rates which will be reflected in the rate of interest which the Fund will be able to pay during 2023.

3.8 The average annual rate of interest paid for 2022 was 1.16% (2021: 0.08%).

3.9 As the year ended, uncertainty remained about how much further interest rates were likely to rise, although there was a further increase in the Bank of England base rate in February 2023.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 In accordance with the terms of the Constitution, the following members are due to retire by rotation at 31 May 2023: Mr R Black and Mr G A Young.

4.2 Mr Black and Mr Young have indicated that they wish to seek re-election. It is recommended to the General Assembly that Mr Black and Mr Young should be reappointed as from 1 June 2023.

4.3 Following several years of service, Mr D D Campbell has indicated his wish to retire. Mr Campbell has made a significant contribution to the work of COSIT and his wise counsel will be missed.

5. ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR 2022

5.1 Copies of the 2022 Annual Review and the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year to 31 December 2022 are available to download from The Church of Scotland website or can be obtained from the Secretary.

In the name and by the authority of The Church of Scotland Investors Trust

R D BURGON, *Chairman*
E CRICHTON, *Vice-Chairman*
J LEE, *Executive Officer*

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Affirm the ecumenical imperative embedded within the *Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland* (Section 1).
3. Note the ecumenical implications of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) and the “Presbytery Mission Plan Act: Guidance and Code of Practice” (Section 2).
4. Pass an Act amending the Sacraments Act (Act V 2000) as set out in Appendix 2 (Section 3).
5. Instruct the Ecumenical Relations Committee, in consultation with the Theological Forum, to explore the ecumenical implications of a theology of friendship, and report to a future General Assembly (Section 4.1).
6. Welcome the Signing of the *Saint Margaret Declaration* between the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland on 16th November 2022 in Dunfermline Abbey (Section 4.2-4).
7. Commend the *Saint Margaret Declaration* Liturgy, as set out in Appendix 3, and encourage its use within the parish as an expression of that which the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland hold in common (Section 4.6).
8. Approve the terms of the revised Remit of the Ecumenical Relations Committee, as detailed in Appendix 5 (Section 13.2).
9. Approve the delegates to Assemblies, Synods and Conferences of other Churches, and the appointment of representatives to Ecumenical Bodies as detailed in Appendix 6.

Report**Executive Summary:**

The Report of the Ecumenical Relations Committee affirms the ecumenical imperative embedded within the Constitution of the Church of Scotland and highlights its significance at this particular time in the life of the Church. In particular, the Committee highlights the ecumenical implications of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) and the process associated with it. The Report proposes the updating of the Sacraments Act (Act V 2000) to take account of recent ecumenical developments and welcomes the signing of the *Saint Margaret Declaration* with the Catholic Church in Scotland and offers a Liturgy for use in the parishes of the Church. The Report summarises ongoing bi-lateral relationships with ecumenical partners and notes the ongoing work of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and the Ecumenical Officers' Forum alongside continuing discussions on the creation of a Scottish Christian Forum. The General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Karlsruhe, Germany in August/September 2022 is highlighted as is the forthcoming General Assembly of the Conference of European Churches in Tallinn, Estonia, in June 2023. In relation to the future work of the Committee, a revised Remit is proposed for the approval of the General Assembly.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The work of the Ecumenical Relations Committee relates to the life of the Church of Scotland as a whole and is primarily grounded in the *Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland*, in particular Article VII:

The Church of Scotland, believing it to be the will of Christ that His disciples should be all one in the Father and in Him, that the world may believe that the Father has sent Him, recognises the obligation to seek and promote union with other Churches in which it finds the Word to be purely preached, the sacraments administered according to Christ's ordinance, and discipline rightly exercised; and it has the right to unite with any such Church without loss of its identity on terms which this Church finds to be consistent with these Articles.^[i]

1.2 The *Articles Declaratory* are incorporated into the Church of Scotland Act 1921 and are the constitutional touchstone of the Church. The *Articles* set out the fundamental basis of the faith of the Church in Article I and the present relationship of the Church to its subordinate confessional basis and affirm that its 'government is Presbyterian', and that its 'system and principles of worship, orders, and discipline' are in accordance with its historic basis. (I, II, VIII)

1.3 Thereafter, the *Articles* affirm that the 'Church is in historical continuity with the Church of Scotland which was reformed in 1560...[and that the]...continuity and identity of the Church of Scotland are not prejudiced by the adoption of these Articles'. The Church of Scotland is to be understood as, and understands itself to be, 'a national Church' with a 'distinctive call and duty to bring the ordinances of religion to the people in every parish of Scotland through a territorial ministry'. (III)

1.4 The spiritual independence of the Church is derived from the Lord Jesus Christ as King and Head of the Church and receives from him power with respect to 'all matters of doctrine, worship, government, and discipline in the Church'. Related to this, the independent spiritual jurisdiction of the Church within its particular 'sphere' is acknowledged by the civil authority. In like fashion, the Church acknowledges the role of the civil authority within its particular sphere and the mutual duties that the Church and State owe to each other. (IV, V, VI)

1.5 In relation to the *Articles Declaratory*, the Church of Scotland Act 1921 sets out the 'effect' of the *Articles* in terms of their establishing the continuity of the Church of Scotland and the 'liberty, rights and powers in matters spiritual' of the Church. That is, the purpose of the *Articles Declaratory*, in the first instance, is to affirm the nature

and identity of the Church of Scotland in the terms described above. Indeed, if the *Articles Declaratory* contained only *Articles* I-VI and VIII and IX, we might say that this is the sole purpose of the *Articles* and that they are intended to describe what would be, in effect, a closed and essentially non-permeable ecclesiastical system.

1.6 However, *Article VII* is an integral part of the *Articles Declaratory* and we may deduce from this that the *Articles* are intended to describe that which the Church of Scotland is and has historically been whilst, at the same time, pointing to a future in which the Church lives out its response to the prayer of Jesus ‘that they may all be one...that the world may believe’. (John 17: 21) and is reshaped by the ongoing call to renewal. Indeed, we note that the explicit purpose of the *Articles Declaratory* is described by the Church of Scotland Act 1921 as being to ‘facilitate the union of other Churches with the Church of Scotland’.^[ii]

1.7 Equally, we note that the Church of Scotland Act 1921, having set out the ‘effect’ of the *Articles Declaratory*, immediately thereafter affirms that:

Nothing contained in this Act or in any other Act affecting the Church of Scotland shall prejudice the recognition of any other Church in Scotland as a Christian Church protected by law in the exercise of its spiritual functions.

Therefore, the Church of Scotland may be said to have its ‘liberty, rights and powers in matters spiritual’ acknowledged, but not in such a way as to prejudice ‘the recognition of any other Church in Scotland as a Christian Church’. That is, the Act recognises the plurality of the life of the Church in Scotland and does not seek to privilege one Church over another.^[iii]

1.8 Our contemporary reading of the *Articles Declaratory* takes place within our own particular sphere. We need hardly be reminded that it does not take place within a vacuum. The contemporary sphere of the civic authority is now shaped by a range of concerns that were not present in 1921 and these include, *inter alia*, the implications of the Human Rights Act 1998^[iv] and the Equality Act 2010.^[v] In like fashion, the plurality within the life of the Christian church in Scotland, recognised as it was in 1921, is now manifest in the ever-growing diversity of the contemporary Church.

1.9 In the ever-changing landscape we inhabit, the vocation of the Church of Scotland requires to be constantly renewed. That renewal does not, of course, take place within a closed and non-permeable ecclesiastical system. Rather, it takes place in the context of a society shaped by very different values and concerns from those which shaped the landscape in 1921. Equally, the Church in Scotland as a whole is in a very different place within that landscape. Recognising this to be so, we do well to ask ourselves: What are the implications for the renewal of the vocation of the Church of Scotland presented by the contemporary situation of the Church in Scotland?

1.10 The task of the Ecumenical Relations Committee is to continually raise these questions and we do so on the basis of that which is grounded in the *Articles Declaratory* and that we might together live out our response to the prayer of Jesus ‘that they may all be one...that the world may believe’. The ecumenical imperative embedded within the *Articles Declaratory* asks of us no less than that we endeavour, with God’s strength, to live out that response today.

2. ENGAGEMENT WITH PRESBYTERIES: PRESBYTERY MISSION PLANNING

2.1 The Committee is conscious of the particular challenges faced by the Church of Scotland at parish and presbytery level and, through the Ecumenical Officer, has engaged with a number of presbyteries in relation to the place of single congregation Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) within their respective Presbytery Mission Plans.

2.2 The Committee will continue to engage in this process and recalls that the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) states that:

A Mission Plan shall describe how the Church of Scotland’s engagement with Christ’s Mission is to be shaped and resourced in the following five years and to that end shall demonstrate how the Presbytery will...sustain the commitment to a territorial ministry as described in the Third of the *Articles Declaratory* appended to the Church of Scotland Act 1921 and affirmed in Declaratory Act V 2010 *including its commitment to ecumenical working*.^[vi]

2.3 Declaratory Act (Act V 2010) states that:

The Church of Scotland remains committed to the ecumenical vision set out in the seventh *Article Declaratory* and, in pursuit of that vision, stands eager to share with other churches in Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland.^[vii]

As the Report of the Committee to the General Assembly of 2021 noted in relation to Declaratory Act (Act V 2010), the implication is that:

[T]he future shape of ministry and mission in Scotland ought to be undertaken on the basis of cooperative partnership as a response to the challenges facing the church.

That is, the implication of Declaratory Act (Act V 2010) is that the primary basis of the ‘shape of ministry and mission in Scotland’ is one of ‘cooperative partnership’.

2.4 Within the “Presbytery Mission Plan Act: Guidance and Code of Practice”, the Code affirms:

Ecumenism:...If a particular community is well served by another denomination, there may be no need for the Presbytery to duplicate that. Where a community is equally well served by the Church of Scotland and another denomination the Presbytery should explore what local possibilities there might be for recognising each other’s ministry so that resources can be used elsewhere. The General Assembly of 2021 instructed the Forum, when developing principles for Presbytery Mission Planning, to include a principle of ecumenical working, bearing in

mind the Lund Principle, affirming that churches should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately. That same deliverance also encouraged the forming of Local Mission Communities and regional Covenant Partnerships as outlined in the report of the Ecumenical Relations Committee.^[viii]

2.5 As noted, a number of presbyteries have engaged with the Committee in relation to the place of LEPs within their respective Presbytery Mission Plans. The Committee has also engaged with certain presbyteries in relation to the potential development of new ecumenical initiatives within their Plans, and the Committee would like to highlight a number of examples from the Presbytery of Fife. (Appendix 1) The examples do not conform to a single template and each reflects the particular initiatives taken in the local context which enabled the development of the partnerships described. The Committee encourages the exploration of potential opportunities for creative and collaborative ecumenical initiatives, which may take different expressions as shaped by their local context.

2.6 The Committee would encourage congregations and presbyteries to draw upon the ecumenical implications of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act and the "Presbytery Mission Plan Act: Guidance and Code of Practice" when considering the ongoing review and implementation of the Plan in their area.

3. SACRAMENTS ACT (ACT V 2000)

3.1 The question of whether, or not, ordained ministers within different traditions of the Church can celebrate the Sacraments within the Church of Scotland on an occasional basis is addressed in the Sacraments Act (Act V 2000), in particular Section 1.^[ix]

3.2 The Committee is of the view that the terms of the Act require to be updated to take account, for example, of recent developments such as the signing of the *Columba Declaration* with the Church of England (2016) and the signing of the *Saint Andrew Declaration* with the Scottish Episcopal Church (2021). Alongside this, the Act in its present form (1. (3)) describes what is, in effect, the constituent membership of certain ecumenical bodies in which the Church of Scotland participates without specifically identifying those bodies. The Committee is of the view that such identification would be conducive to greater clarity.

3.3 Further, the Committee has sought to establish whether part of the provisions made in the present Sacraments Act (1.4) have effectively fallen into desuetude. Subject to correction, we have found no indication of the recent use of the provisions in 1.4.

3.4 The Committee proposes that the Sacraments Act (Act V 2000), Section 1 be amended in the terms set out in Appendix 2. The effect will be to update the Act to take account of recent ecumenical agreements and to give greater clarity as to the ecumenical bodies covered by the provisions of the Act. In all cases, the proposed amended provisions of the Act establish only a provisional eligibility to celebrate the Sacraments which is subject to the jurisdiction and final decision of the Presbytery.

4. BILATERAL RELATIONS: CATHOLIC CHURCH IN SCOTLAND – SAINT MARGARET DECLARATION

4.1 The General Assembly of 2022 approved the terms of the *Saint Margaret Declaration* between the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland, the original title "*A Declaration of Friendship*" having been amended by the General Assembly with the concurrence of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland.^[x] Notwithstanding this, the theme and theology of friendship that underlie the *Declaration* have resonated in a variety of different contexts and the Committee is minded to explore this matter further.

4.2 The *Saint Margaret Declaration* was signed on the Feast Day of St. Margaret (16th November 2022) in Dunfermline Abbey by Archbishop Leo Cushley on behalf of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland and by the Rt Rev Dr Iain Greenshields on behalf of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Further the Signing of the Saint Margaret Declaration was witnessed by the Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal.^[xi]

4.3 The Signing of the Declaration took place in conjunction with the Service to mark the 950th Anniversary of the founding of the Priory at Dunfermline, and the Committee is indebted to the Rev MaryAnn Rennie, minister of Dunfermline Abbey, for her gracious invitation to incorporate the Signing into the wider Service. The Sermon was preached by Archbishop Leo Cushley who stated:

We all know the history that we share. It contains much for us to regret, and it would be naïve to pretend it all away; but it's a further reason to do something about it. Given our context, then, a friendship that is the unlooked-for consequence of the last 40 years is something to be noticed, to be welcomed, and to be built upon...Instead of listing our problems and points of friction or grievance, old or new, the Declaration chooses to focus on what we have in common, and to underline that we treasure together, so much that is inspiring and ancient, profound and beautiful...We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We stand shoulder to shoulder before an unbelieving world. And we wish to respect each other, to be a support to each other, and to do all we can, with patience and humility, to achieve the unity that the Lord prayed for. And if St Margaret and the first men who came here nearly a thousand years ago were here with us now, I would like to think that they would welcome and approve of us setting out in this way, again, in friendship, to face the next thousand years, not as enemies or rivals, but as sisters and brothers – and friends in Jesus Christ.^[xii]

4.4 Within the context of the Service, the Signing of the *Saint Margaret Declaration* was preceded by a Liturgy in which representatives of the Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland articulated and affirmed the *Declaration* as an expression of our desire:

[T]o live as sisters and brothers in Christ, in public and in private, in life and in mission; to pray with each other and for each other; to be good neighbours, both to each other and to all people among whom we live, of all faiths and none; and to work together for the common good of the nation, as it is given to us to see it.

The Liturgy took up the substance of the *Declaration* and, with some slight adjustment in form, articulated and expressed that desire as embodied within it.

4.5 The Committee reflected on the significance of the liturgical act in relation to the *Declaration* and gave consideration to the potential value of such a Liturgy being made available for use in the parishes of our two churches. The Committee consulted with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland and agreed that there would be value in commending the Liturgy to a wider audience.

4.6 The Committee commends the Liturgy (Appendix 3) to the wider Church and encourages its use in the parishes of Scotland as an expression of that which the Catholic Church in Scotland and the Church of Scotland hold in common.

4.7 The Committee was delighted to hear that the Rev Dr George Whyte, former Principal Clerk of the General Assembly, had been honoured by the Catholic Church for his contribution to the ongoing dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland. Dr Whyte was invested as a Papal Knight of the Order of St Gregory the Great by Archbishop Leo Cushley at St Bennet's, Edinburgh on 24th January 2023 and the Committee wish to offer their congratulations to him on the reception of this significant honour.

5. BILATERAL RELATIONS: SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH – SAINT ANDREW DECLARATION

5.1 The General Assembly of 2021 approved the *Saint Andrew Declaration*, consisting of mutual Acknowledgements and Commitments between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church and our two churches have engaged in ongoing conversations in relation to the living out of the implications of the *Declaration*.

5.2 Within the Commitments, we pledge together 'to seek appropriate ways to respond to our common calling within the life of the Church of Jesus Christ', including how: 'To encourage, affirm and support local expressions of our common calling within the life of the Church as it participates in the mission of God, and to explore opportunities for new partnerships in the communities in which we serve'.^[xiii]

5.3 Although our ecclesiologies may differ and our ecclesiastical governance embody distinctive traditions, the same essential challenges face us in the living out of 'our common calling within the life of the Church of Jesus Christ'. No less than the Church of Scotland: 'The SEC today pursues its calling to mission and ministry in the very secular and increasingly diverse context of Scotland and the rest of the world'.^[xiv]

5.4 In the light of this, the Contact Group established by the *Declaration* wish to explore the implications of this shared context for our understanding of mission and ministry and to continue to explore opportunities for partnerships in the localities where we minister together.

6. BILATERAL RELATIONS: CHURCH OF ENGLAND – COLUMBA DECLARATION

6.1 The Church of England and the Church of Scotland have continued to build on the relationships developed since the signing of the *Columba Declaration* in 2016 and the challenges facing our two churches are, in many ways, similar.

6.2 In February 2023, the Moderator and the Most Rev & Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury and His Holiness Pope Francis journeyed to South Sudan. The symbolic significance of a shared Pilgrimage of Peace is considerable and offers a model to be reflected upon within the local and national context, as well as the international.

6.3 In December 2022, the Moderator met with the Archbishop of Canterbury and discussions focussed on matters of common interest including, *inter alia*, the Coronation of HM King Charles III and the visit to South Sudan, alongside a discussion on the ecumenical significance of the *Saint Margaret Declaration* and the ecumenical implications of the *Living in Love and Faith* process being undertaken by the Church of England.^[xv]

6.4 The Church of Scotland is represented at the General Synod of the Church of England by the Rev Dr David Coulter who reported to the Committee on the meeting of the Synod held on 6th-9th February 2023, particularly in relation to the outcome of the *Living in Love and Faith* process undertaken by the Church of England since 2017.^[xvi]

7. SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN FORUM

7.1 The General Assembly of 2021 agreed:

[T]o the participation of the Church of Scotland in the Scottish Christian Forum and recognise it as the national ecumenical body in Scotland and note the proposal to dissolve Action of Churches Together in Scotland once the Scottish Christian Forum has been formed.^[xvii]

7.2 The establishing of the Scottish Christian Forum continues to be a matter under discussion and the Committee is unable, at this point, to confirm a definite date for the realisation of the Forum. At present, Action of Churches Together in Scotland functions, in effect, as a grant-making body supporting ecumenical initiatives.

7.3 On 16th January 2023, a conference organised by the Ecumenical Officers' Forum on "The Future of Scottish Ecumenism" took place in Edinburgh and sought to review the issues related to the establishing of the Scottish Christian Forum. Representatives from ten churches participated alongside representation from Action of Churches Together in Scotland, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Christian Aid and the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office. The discussion on the nature and purpose, aims and vision of the Scottish Christian Forum is one that has

continued over a number of years and the contribution of the Church of Scotland to the conference, and to the ongoing discussion, is set out in Appendix 4.

7.4 The conference resolved to task the Ecumenical Officers' Forum with bringing proposals for the realisation of the Scottish Christian Forum to a future gathering of those committed to the future of Scottish ecumenism.

8. SCOTTISH CHURCH LEADERS' FORUM AND ECUMENICAL OFFICERS' FORUM

8.1 The Scottish Church Leaders' Forum (SCLF) was established in March 2020 in the context of the initial response of the churches to the Covid-19 pandemic and is composed of senior representatives of participating churches. The scope of the work of the SCLF is described in the Report of the Committee to the General Assembly of 2022.^[xviii]

8.2 The Report of the Committee in 2022 noted that the SCLF had grown in representation from ten to twelve churches and we note that there are now fourteen churches and communities participating: 1. Church of Scotland; 2. Catholic Church in Scotland; 3. Scottish Episcopal Church; 4. United Free Church of Scotland; 5. United Reformed Church; 6. Methodist Church in Scotland; 7. Quakers; 8. Salvation Army; 9. Congregational Federation; 10. Baptist Union of Scotland; 11. Free Church of Scotland; 12. Redeemed Christian Church of God; 13. Orthodox Church (Ecumenical Patriarchate); and 14. Ukrainian Catholic Church.

8.3 In the course of the past year, the SCLF has given consideration to, *inter alia*, the ongoing war in Ukraine and our support for refugees; drugs policy in Scotland; the churches' engagement with Local Government, Scottish Government and United Kingdom Government; the future shape of Scottish ecumenism; support for the *Thy Kingdom Come* Global Prayer Initiative and initiatives taken by participating churches to address the ongoing challenges of mission and ministry.

8.4 The Report of the Committee to the General Assembly of 2022 noted the development of the Ecumenical Officers' Forum. The Forum is composed of those tasked by their churches with representing their interests in ecumenical matters, and is composed of representatives of the: 1. Church of Scotland; 2. Catholic Church in Scotland; 3. Scottish Episcopal Church; 4. United Free Church of Scotland; 5. United Reformed Church; 6. Methodist Church in Scotland; 7. Quakers; 8. Salvation Army; 9. Redeemed Christian Church of God; and 10. Congregational Federation. As noted above, the principal focus of the Ecumenical Officers' Forum has been consideration of the future shape of Scottish ecumenism.

8.5 The Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and the Ecumenical Officers' Forum are two forums that have developed in recent years and which may be said to inhabit the space previously occupied by Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS). They embody an agile, flexible and responsive model of ecumenism and whatever future developments there may be in terms of the shape of Scottish ecumenism, we would wish to retain those characteristics.

9. CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND (CTBI)

9.1 The Trustees of CTBI met in Edinburgh on 9th-10th March 2023 and consideration was given, *inter alia*, to the ecumenical implications of the *Saint Margaret Declaration* and the model of ecumenism to which it gives expression.

9.2 The Committee welcomes the ongoing work undertaken by Dr Nicola Brady, General Secretary, in seeking to ensure that the work of CTBI is embedded in the life of its member churches.

10. CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN CHURCHES (CEC)

10.1 The General Assembly of CEC takes place from 15th-20th June 2023 in Tallinn, Estonia on the theme: "Under God's blessing – Shaping the future", with keynote contributions from Archbishop Emeritus Rowan Williams and His All-Holiness Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch.

10.2 CEC is a fellowship of 113 European churches from the Orthodox, Protestant, and Anglican traditions who seek to work together to strengthen our common witness, 'promote peace, and work for the unity of the Church', and the interests of the United Reformed Church in CEC discussions are currently represented by the Church of Scotland.

10.3 'The Conference of European Churches emerged as a peacebuilding effort in 1959, building bridges between the East and the West during the Cold War. This original mission carries us forward today as we continue to work for a humane, social and sustainable Europe at peace with itself and its neighbours.'^[xix]

11. COMMUNION OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN EUROPE (CPCE)

11.1 CPCE was founded on 16th March 1973 on the basis of the *Leuenberg Agreement* with the Church of Scotland being one of the original signatories, and this year marks the 50th Anniversary.^[xx] The *Leuenberg Agreement* (2) affirms:

The Church is founded on Jesus Christ alone. Through the gift of his salvation in preaching and the sacraments, he gathers the Church and sends it out. This is why, according to the understanding of the Reformers, the necessary and sufficient pre-requisite for the true unity of the Church is agreement in the right teaching of the Gospel and the right administration of the sacraments. It is from these Reformation criteria that the participating churches derive their understanding of church fellowship as set out below.

11.2 CPCE is a community of Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist, Waldensian, United Churches, and others, and the interests of the Church of Scotland in CPCE discussions are currently represented by the United Reformed Church.

12. WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES (WCC)

12.1 The 11th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches met in Karlsruhe, Germany from 31st August to 8th September 2022 under the theme 'Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity'. The WCC is a fellowship of 352 member churches who together represent more than half a billion Christians. The General Assembly is the highest governing body of the WCC, and normally meets every seven or eight years. It is the only time when the entire fellowship of member churches comes together in one place for prayer and celebration and, with more than 4000 participants from all over the world, is the most diverse Christian gathering of its size in the world.

12.2 The gathering place for the General Assembly was of particular significance, both geographically and temporally, with the Assembly being hosted jointly by churches in Germany, France and Switzerland at Karlsruhe in the Rhine valley. This area has been both a place of historic conflict and a place of contemporary reconciliation. That the Assembly took place in Europe at a time of major conflict may be said to have heightened the urgency of the quest for unity and reconciliation, and highlighted the need for repentance by all nations and peoples for the attitudes and behaviours which lead to war.^[xxi]

12.3 A major feature of every WCC General Assembly is the publication of a Unity Statement which aims to give an overview of the state of global ecumenism.^[xxii] The Unity Statement of the 11th WCC General Assembly focuses on the distinctive Christian calling to love and is built upon the concept of "ecumenism of the heart", an idea which seeks to move beyond a focus on difference and division to the quest for a true unity founded in love, as revealed in Jesus Christ.

12.4 Recognising that the world in which we live is 'at the same time God's beautiful creation and broken by ecological crisis, war, pandemic, systemic poverty, racism, gender-based violence, human rights violations, and many other sufferings', (1) the Statement calls the churches to an 'ecumenism of the heart' (14), witnessing and working together across their differences. The Statement declares:

It is when we are kind to one another as churches, warmly welcoming of each other, building profound and evident friendship in sincerity and respect, when we are drawn to one another out of compassion, fascination, and longing for one another – across our differences and divisions – that we will find the grace to search for that common faith, the truth together held that will overcome our separation. (19)

12.5 The love which unites churches should be a love which 'is able to address the deepest evil and injustice', recognising that 'that love which in private is tenderness in public is justice'. (20) In the Unity Statement, the churches of the WCC commit themselves 'to strengthen each other in a transforming discipleship'. (25)

12.6 The concluding prayer of the Statement is one that we may echo in a broken and divided world that cries out for reconciliation and unity:

Holy God, source and creator of all things,
eternal love, we give thanks to you:
Father, who loves us infinitely,
Son who reveals to us unconditional love,
Holy Spirit who empowers us with divine love,
gather us together in your love,
that we may grow in visible communion and so witness to unity in the world.
Where your people are broken, may love mend.
When hatred shouts in the world, let love bring peace with justice.
As creation groans, may redemption come to all the earth.
Come with your divine love, and enter our hearts.
Move your church, and move the world to reconciliation and unity. Amen.

13. ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE REMIT

13.1 The terms of the present Remit of the Ecumenical Relations Committee were agreed at the General Assembly of 2017.^[xxiii] Since then, the ecumenical landscape has changed within Scotland. Alongside this, the Church of Scotland itself is in an ongoing process of reconfiguration. In addition, the Church of Scotland has approved a number of bi-lateral Declarations with partner churches (Church of England: *Columba Declaration* (2016); Scottish Episcopal Church: *Saint Andrew Declaration* (2021) and the Catholic Church in Scotland: *Saint Margaret Declaration* (2022)).

13.2 The Committee is of the view that a revision to the terms of the Remit is required in order to take account of these changes. Further, it is of the view that any such revision should assume that the process of reconfiguration will continue and that the landscape will continue to change. This being the case, the revised terms ought to ensure that the Committee is not tied to the particularities of the present configuration of the Church of Scotland, nor to the landscape as it is at present. In the light of this, the Committee proposes that its remit be amended in the terms set out in Appendix 5.

14. CONCLUSION

14.1 'No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.' (John Donne (1572-1631)) The words of Donne are found to be apposite in many different contexts and in the ecumenical context they might be thought to be especially so.

14.2 A recent contribution to the discussion on mission in contemporary Scotland includes within its overall thesis the contention that disunity within the Christian church has been one of the primary contributors to the process of secularisation within Scotland. On this view, the movement of the provision of 'key social services', such as education

and the relief of poverty, from the Church to the State in the mid-Nineteenth Century is integral to the 'primary definition of secularisation'. Further, it may be said that:

In Scotland, this process [of secularisation] was not the result of atheist philosophies, anti-Christian government policy, or any other external factor, but the disunity and infighting of the Christian Church.^[xxiv]

14.3 As the Church in Scotland faces the challenges that now lie before it, the lessons of the past ought to inform our present and our future. The luxury of disagreement is no longer afforded to us and, to paraphrase Donne: No Church is an island, entire of itself, every Church is a piece of the Church in Scotland, a part of the Universal Church.

14.4 The Report of the Committee offers no simple answers. Rather, it affirms the ecumenical imperative embedded within the Constitution of the Church of Scotland and highlights its significance at this particular time in the life of the Church. The Church of Scotland understands itself to be 'a national Church' with a 'distinctive call and duty to bring the ordinances of religion to the people in every parish of Scotland through a territorial ministry'. In seeking to live out that 'distinctive call and duty', it may be said to have an obligation to do so in partnership with the broad spectrum of churches throughout Scotland. There has been no more pressing time in its recent history in which to fulfil that obligation.

In the name of the Committee

ROSS BLACKMAN, *Convener*
EILEEN MILLER, *Vice Convener*
JOHN L MCPAKE, *Secretary*

Addendum

Rev Eileen Miller

The Rev Eileen Miller became Vice Convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee at the General Assembly in May 2020 and the Committee is indebted to her for her service throughout the years since. Eileen brought to the task her commitment to ecumenism in its local expression and a desire to see that expressed relationally. Her characteristic sensitivity and attentive listening to the contribution of others, allied to her good humour, served the Committee well in its deliberations. Her opening up of new angles and the offering of fresh insights enriched the meetings of the Committee and we wish to express our thanks to her at this time.

ROSS BLACKMAN, *Convener*
JOHN L MCPAKE, *Secretary*

Appendix 1

BEK (Burntisland Parish Church, Erskine United Free Church and Kinghorn Parish Church):

Easter 2022 saw the launch of the BEK Partnership Covenant which had gradually evolved prior to March 2020 and developed more fully thereafter. A major factor in this being the joint online services held during the Covid-19 pandemic, entitled: "BEK and Call", with inspiration for this taken from Mark 4: 41: 'even the winds and waves are at his beck and call'. The Partnership Covenant was launched during a united act of worship on Easter Sunday and has been deepened in working together to fund and appoint a BEK Children and Families worker. A contemporary service of worship: "Chilled Church" has been developed and is led by a team from the 3 churches and shared regularly among the 3 churches. The Ecumenical Partnership has seen joint working enabled across two communities and three churches and is the basis for the two Church of Scotland churches to move towards a Union as agreed in the Presbytery Mission Plan.

Dunfermline Abbey:

Towards the close of 2021, Dunfermline Abbey, along with other congregations, secured funding from the Fife Presbytery Mission Fund to be used towards the recruitment of a Pilgrim Pastor for the Fife Pilgrim Way. While Dunfermline Abbey was the lead name on the bid for funding, part of the pioneering part of the role was to enter into partnership with other Church of Scotland congregations, the Diocese of St Andrew, Dunkeld and Dunblane of the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Scottish Pilgrim Route Forum. A Memorandum of Agreement was developed alongside the terms and conditions of the Pilgrim Pastor and, in due course, the Rev Duncan Weaver was appointed and a unique service of licensing and commissioning took place on 30th November 2022, a year on from the signing of the *Saint Andrew Declaration*. Worshipers gathered at the Fife Pilgrim Way route marker at Ceres and participated in a torchlit procession to the parish church, where the worship was a collaborative combination of all partners with both the Diocesan Bishop and the Moderator of the Presbytery participating.

Lindores Parish Church:

In Newburgh, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century there were six or seven church buildings, the places of worship of five different denominations. In 2023, only two of these, the Lindores Parish Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church are still active. The two churches work closely together and join in worship on a Sunday morning once a month, sharing resources and collaborating in pastoral visiting and in a Community Choir. It is intended that a form of covenant between the two churches will be established. As an element of the work of Lindores Church in reaching out into the community, alternative forms of worship are offered on a monthly basis, such as a midweek celebration of communion in the form of Celtic Communion, and a Taizé style Sunday evening service. These have proved to be attractive to members of other denominations, and also to those who have little or no attachment to any church. The Taizé services appeals to a wider cross-section of ages.

Within the context of the Fife Presbytery Mission Plan, Lindores Parish is charged with establishing a pioneering ecumenical community within the parish and conversations are already taking place with the Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Appendix 2

[] ACT AMENDING THE SACRAMENTS ACT (ACT V 2000) (AS AMENDED)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Sacraments Act (Act V 2000), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. *Delete section 1 and substitute the following:*
1. The Sacraments of the Church may be administered only by the following persons:
 - (1) a person who has the status of a minister of the Church of Scotland and who (a) has been ordained by a Presbytery of the Church of Scotland; or (b) has been inducted to a charge of the Church of Scotland; or (c) has been admitted by the General Assembly as a minister of the Church of Scotland;
 - (2) a person who has the status of an ordained minister of the United Reformed Church, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland or the Presbyterian Church in Wales, and who has been duly authorised to administer the Sacraments by the Presbytery of the bounds, in which matter the Presbytery shall be the sole judge;
 - (3) a person who has the status of an ordained minister in the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (Leuenberg Fellowship) or in the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and who has been duly authorised to administer the Sacraments by the Presbytery of the bounds, in which matter the Presbytery shall be the sole judge;
 - (4) a person who has the status of an ordained minister in the Church of England, in virtue of the *Columba Declaration* (2016), or of the Scottish Episcopal Church, in virtue of the *Saint Andrew Declaration* (2021), and who has been duly authorised to administer the Sacraments by the Presbytery of the bounds, in which matter the Presbytery shall be the sole judge.

Appendix 3

Liturgy for the *Saint Margaret Declaration*

Two representatives each of the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland stand together, facing the congregation, and, following the Introduction, say:

Introduction

The Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland have agreed a Declaration of Friendship between the two Churches and have chosen to call it the Saint Margaret Declaration, conscious of Saint Margaret's important role in the life of our nation and of her work, in her own life, for the unity and peace of Christ's Church in Scotland.

Voice 1:

Jesus said: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you."

Voice 2:

In response to the commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church in Scotland, recognising of each other as Christians and as children of God in Christ, now wish, publicly and irrevocably, to express our friendship and respect for one another as fellow Christians, and as citizens and partners in announcing the kingdom of God in our land.

Voice 3:

Together, we acknowledge and celebrate our shared faith. We believe in one God, the Creator; we believe in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, true God and true man, fully divine and fully human, who died in the flesh and rose to save us from sin and death; and we believe in the Holy Spirit.

Voice 4:

We believe in the Holy Trinity, one God in three persons. We believe that the Church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic; and we acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Voice 1:

We believe our faith to be rooted in that of the Apostles, Christ's first disciples, those who knew and followed our Lord in this life.

Voice 2:

We recognise and treasure the Sacred Scriptures as God's revelation of His love for all humanity. We recognise and hold in common the great ecumenical councils of the first five Christian centuries.

Voice 3:

We acknowledge and celebrate our common heritage in the Gospel first brought to our shores so very long ago. We recall with gratitude to God the earliest missionaries, our forebears in the faith, who lived and preached the Christian faith to our land.

Voice 4:

We recall those from that time who led and formed the Church, nurturing a society inspired by Christian values, including St Ninian, St Columba and St Margaret.

Voice 1:

Before God and before one another, we recognise the hurt and the harm that our forebears did to each other in times past, and we repent and ask forgiveness of one other.

Voice 2:

We also recognise that, even in more recent times, much could have been said between us more kindly, written more magnanimously, and done more charitably, to promote pardon and healing and friendship among Christians in our land.

Voice 3:

We acknowledge that there remain points at which we have not yet found a meeting place, and that some questions still divide us.

Voice 4:

None the less, we reaffirm that what we hold in common is often greater than what divides us, and we commit ourselves to continuing our pilgrimage towards greater unity, as we believe that it is the Lord's will that we be one. We trust that such developing unity in Christ is the Lord's work and the Spirit's doing.

Voice 1:

Therefore, in faith and hope and mutual trust, we pledge ourselves to live as sisters and brothers in Christ, in public and in private, in life and in mission.

Voice 2:

We promise to pray with each other and for each other; to be good neighbours, both to each other and to all people among whom we live, of all faiths and none.

Voice 3:

And, building upon many years of co-operation and ecumenical work alongside one another as the body of Christ throughout Scotland and beyond, we recommit ourselves to work together for the common good of the nation, as it is given to us to see it.

Voice 4:

So, we pray together:

May there be an ever more united Christian voice in this land.

May the charity and love of Christ renew our participation in the mission of God.

May we contribute together to the good of society.

May we learn humbly from others, and from our own mistakes.

May all our work together thrive.

***And may our pilgrimage together bear much fruit,
to the good of all,***

and to the greater glory of God.

Amen.

Appendix 4

Scottish Christian Forum

Nature and Purpose:

The Scottish Christian Forum is intended to be a forum in which particular Scottish Churches gather together for the purpose of sharing fellowship, information and insight. It is intended to be a participatory body and its purpose is to further the mission and realise the unity of the Church Universal and to encourage the living out of our shared response to the prayer of Jesus that we may 'all be one' (John 17: 21).

Aims:

The Forum seeks to:

1. Encourage the mission of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in the light of the mission of God;
2. Encourage a broad spectrum of churches to participate in its life;
3. Encourage the commissioning of research into areas of mutual interest;
4. Encourage the living out of our shared response to the prayer of Jesus that we may 'all be one' (John 17: 21);
5. Provide a platform for working cooperatively with other church and ecumenical bodies within Scotland, and within Britain and Ireland;
6. Provide a platform for liaising and engaging with the Scottish Government;
7. Provide a platform for liaising and engaging with the United Kingdom Government.

Vision:

1. The vision for the Scottish Christian Forum is rooted in the belief that the Holy Spirit is calling the churches, inter-church and religious organisations in Scotland to a pilgrimage of greater unity, cooperation and common witness. The Forum will create an open space where respectful conversation among leaders and representatives from many churches and organisations can take place.

2. The vision is inspired with the renewal of the spirituality of ecumenism. Embracing this spirituality will lead to the deepening of a shared spirituality; support for ecumenical initiatives at all levels and the exploration of common challenges. It will foster ecumenical relationships and encourage participation among Christians in Scotland in mission, in service, and in a shared response to the promptings of God's Spirit.

3. The foundation will be based on mutual respect, acceptance, attentive listening, allied to the recognition of diversity among the participants and an emphasis on the local ecumenical situation. The Forum will discern the work of the Holy Spirit, will identify mission tasks, and will be challenged to engage in an ecumenism of action.
4. The Forum will resource and nourish theological and strategic ecumenical dialogue. It will provide a space for creative and imaginative thinking. It will seek to bring together senior church leaders, opinion formers, and theologians in ground breaking exploratory events. Implicit in these exchanges is the recognition that participation will not require any individual or organisation to abandon particular theological perspectives or traditional religious identities. Participation is to be understood theologically, whereby it is acknowledged that all participants are members of the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
5. The Forum's mission activity will be embodied in the local context, complemented by the experience of the Church at regional, national and international levels. It will be the task of the Forum to endorse good local ecumenical initiatives and to encourage further good practice.
6. The vision and mission of the Scottish Christian Forum will be rooted in respect for one another, so that Christians in Scotland might come together in pilgrimage in a flexible structure to work for God's Kingdom through mutual appreciation, genuine trust and authentic friendship. This will lead to renewed ecumenical cooperation and in engagement with the significant issues of the day.

John L McPake
January 2023

Appendix 5

Church of Scotland Ecumenical Relations Committee Remit

1. Serve the General Assembly, and the bodies appointed by the General Assembly, in advising it with respect to the ecumenical life of the Church of Scotland, with particular reference to Article VII of the *Articles Declaratory of the Church of Scotland*.
2. Articulate the Ecumenical Policy of the Church, and review the Policy as necessary.
3. Brief and advise the Moderator of the General Assembly and the Principal Clerk of the General Assembly, through the Ecumenical Officer, with respect to the ecumenical life of the Church.
4. Facilitate engagement with the presbyteries of the Church with a view to encouraging the development of local and regional ecumenical initiatives.
5. Facilitate the establishing of mission-orientated local ecumenical partnerships in conjunction with the presbyteries of the Church and other partner churches.
6. Maintain and develop the relationship of the Church of Scotland with: the Church of England, in the light of the *Columba Declaration* (2016); the Scottish Episcopal Church, in the light of the *Saint Andrew Declaration* (2021) and the Catholic Church in Scotland, in the light of the *Saint Margaret Declaration* (2022).
7. Facilitate engagement with the member churches of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) (and with any successor body), and with other churches in Scotland.
8. Facilitate engagement with the member churches of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), Churches Together in England (CTE), and with other churches in the United Kingdom.
9. Facilitate engagement with the member churches of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE), the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), and with other churches and ecumenical bodies.
10. Facilitate theological and doctrinal engagement in Faith and Order dialogue in conjunction with the Theological Forum.
11. Nominate representatives of the Church of Scotland to represent the Church in the Assemblies and Synods of other churches, and on ACTS, CTBI, CTE, CEC, CPCE, WCRC and WCC, and to receive reports from them.
12. Support the work of the Ecumenical Officer in their representative and administrative functions.

Appendix 6

Delegates to other Churches

The following have been appointed as delegates to the Assemblies, Synods and Conferences of other Churches:

Presbyterian Church of Wales – Moderator

United Reformed Church – Moderator

Church of England – Rev Dr David Coulter

United Reformed Church National Synod of Scotland – Rev Dr Peter McEnhill

Methodist Church in Scotland (Synod) – Rev Dr John L McPake

Methodist Conference –

Scottish Episcopal Church – Rev Ross Blackman

United Free Church of Scotland – Rev Dr John L McPake

Ecumenical Bodies

The following represent(-ed) the Church on Assemblies and Committees of the ecumenical bodies of which the Church is a member:

World Council of Churches

General Assembly (September 2022)

Rev Alexander Horsburgh, Ms Miriam Weibye

Central Committee

Ms Miriam Weibye

Conference of European Churches

General Assembly (June 2023)

Miss Gemma King, Mrs Pauline Weibye

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Board of Trustees

Action of Churches Together in Scotland

Members' Meeting

Voting Member: Convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee

Non-Voting Member: Vice Convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee

Non-Voting Member: Ecumenical Officer

Trustee

Miss Carole Hope

Columba Declaration Contact Group

Co-Convener: Rev Dr Russell Barr

Co-Secretary: Ecumenical Officer

Members: Rev Dr Peter McEnhill

Saint Andrew Declaration Working Group

Co-Convener: Convener of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations

Co-Secretary: Ecumenical Officer

Rev Dr Nikki Macdonald

Rev Eileen Miller

Scottish Church Leaders' Forum

Moderator, Principal Clerk, Ecumenical Officer

Ecumenical Officers' Forum

Ecumenical Officer

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ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Agree the total number of planned ministry posts for 2024 remains at 600 plus 60 vacancies and for this to be the basis for the next five years, subject to annual reporting and agreement of the General Assembly (*Section 1.2*).
3. Note that under Giving to Grow congregational contributions will reduce from a total of £47.7 million in 2020 to £38.9 million in 2023 and:
 - (i) urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to engage with the National Stewardship Team and the range of its resources to develop new streams of income and generous giving (*Section 10*)
 - (ii) urge congregations and Presbyteries to consider making voluntary contributions towards our ministries during the transition phase as the scheme is implemented and to develop Giving Agreements in the longer term (*Section 5.3*).
4. Agree with the decision of the Assembly Trustees in respect of the following areas as priorities (*Section 3*):
 - (i) the growth and development of the Church through the new Presbyteries working closely with the local congregations;
 - (ii) the work of the national on the local need with a particular emphasis on recruiting and equipping our future leaders in ministries of the Church and
 - (iii) the modernisation and simplification of our governance structure
5. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to identify and deliver further savings in line with the deficit reduction plan which will impact on all areas other than the agreed priorities (deliverance 4) (*Section 3.3*).
6. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to provide a five-year rolling budget plan to the General Assembly on an annual basis, noting that in future the current budget will be set by the Assembly Trustees in the previous Autumn (*Section 4.7*).
7. Instruct the Trustees to carry out a review of the Giving to Grow Scheme and bring any modifications to the regulations to the 2024 General Assembly (*Section 4.13*).
8. Pass Regulations amending the Congregational Contributions "Giving to Grow" Regulations (Regs I 2022) as set out in Appendix 1 (*Section 5 & Appendix 1*).
9. Agree to the funding arrangements for the Presbytery of International Charges and Presbytery of England (*Section 7.4*).
10. Encourage Kirk Sessions to engage with the rescheduled Christian Aid and ecumenical partners' legacy giving initiative, *Faith Will...*, around Harvest 2023 in order to encourage giving to the Church including CrossReach (*Section 9.6.9*).
11. Welcome the launch of the Seeds for Growth Fund as of 1st June 2023 recognising that it is an investment in the future of mission and growth within the local church that will draw on our reserves (*Section 10*).
12. Pass Regulations amending the "Seeds for Growth" Fund Regulations (Regs IV 2022) as set out in Appendix 2 (*Section 10 & Appendix 2*).
13. Celebrate the work of CrossReach and note that it accounts for approximately half of the Church of Scotland's total income and expenditure (*Section 11*).
14. Approve the merger of the work of the Faith Nurture Forum with the work of the Faith Impact Forum to become the work of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, as prioritised and shaped in anticipation by the Forums, to take effect on 1 June 2023, with the structure, remit and membership set out in Appendix 3 of this Report, and to note the involvement of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Theological Forum in the membership of the Leadership Team (*Section 13 and Appendix 3 – Structure and Remit of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team*).
15. Thank and discharge the members of the Faith Nurture and Faith Impact Forums with effect from 31 May 2023, noting the huge amount of work done by them and the significant challenges faced, including that of the Covid-19 pandemic during the first two years of their life (*Section 13.18*).
16. Note that the Ministries Council and World Mission Council will remain as constituent committees of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, for the purposes of acting as the statutory employer for the Church of Scotland Pension Scheme for Ministers and Overseas Missionaries and the Church of Scotland Pension Scheme for Ministries Development Staff (*Section 13.19*).
17. Approve the appointment of members of the Assembly Trustees as the (ex officio) trustees of the Salvesen Fund in succession to the members of the Faith Impact Forum (*Section 14*).
18. Urge all congregations, Presbyteries and national entities to engage with the work of the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Group, in particular the research outcomes of the Research Group on Ethnic Minorities and the work of the Disability Inclusion Working Group (*Section 15*).
19. Agree the decision of the Assembly Trustees in respect of the George Street Building in terms of an income generation strategy for the next five years (*Section 18*).

20. Approve amendments to the Constitution and Remit of the Assembly Trustees, including a remit for the Governance Group, as set out in Appendices 4 and 5 (*Section 22*).
21. Approve the appointment of Miranda Heggie, member of St. Giles. Edinburgh as Assembly Trustee for a two-year period and the reappointment of David Harrison, Jean Couper, Geoff Miller and Jennifer MacDonald for a second (and final) full term (*Section 22.6.1*).

Report

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Assembly Trustees are tasked by the General Assembly to act as the Charity Trustees of the Church of Scotland (the Unincorporated Entities) Scottish Charities No. SC011353 with 'general control and management of the assets of these entities'. All initial Trustees, appointed as a result of the 2019 Special Commission on Structural Reform, completed their terms of office at GA 2022 having navigated the Church through extraordinary times both with global events and changes ongoing across all levels of the Church; Mission Planning within the local Church; Presbytery reform leading to new regional structures and within the national infrastructure; significantly reduced budget spend and changed configurations of staffing and committee structures.

1.2 The recommended actions as ratified by the GA from 2019 have all been completed and continue to be actively embedded. It is now to the future that the Assembly Trustees turn as we seek to discern God's will in these matters. The Church of Scotland is currently undergoing the most significant transformation since 1929. The number of ministerial posts, congregations and buildings, have not reduced as part of any managed, planned or natural attrition. The Church has therefore reached a place where significant action is needed for we simply do not have enough people to support the structures which were serviced by previous generations. These numbers are explored further in the report. The Trustees recognise that the speed and pace of change, particularly in relation to Mission Planning, with Presbyteries seeking to implement by 2025 Presbytery Plans based around 600 ministries and a target of no more than 60 further charges vacant, has been a difficult, challenging and painful experience for many. The majority of plans have now been agreed and it is now to the work of forming new connections and communities within our congregational life that we must turn.

1.3 The report that follows does not present an easy read, for the Trustees need to bring to the attention of the wider Church of Scotland the perilous operational (in terms of numbers of people) and financial situation that the Church now finds itself in, the outcome of many years of falling numbers attending and supporting Church. The figures presented through the congregational statistics and financial report make stark reading confirming the previous projections of the rate of decline which were seen by some as being unnecessarily bleak. As noted later, if congregational income falls as quickly as predicted, the only means of paying ministers' stipends and staff salaries will be from the Church's General Fund (funds which are not restricted). Based on the estimates used, the General Fund will be extinguished by 2026-2027. Reserves can only be used once and whilst the Church does indeed have other funds on its balance sheet, the majority of these are restricted or designated for specific purposes. During 2023 the finance team will be completing their review of all funds and this should result in further reclassifications which could increase the General Fund. How the Church has moved into such a difficult position is described below.

1.4 This report comes at the end of another monumental year of change for all involved within the Church, congregational members, Ministers, those delivering Ministry and staff working at all levels of the Church. Particular mention is made of CrossReach and those working and volunteering in the caring professions at a time of truly increased societal need. The Trustees would like to extend their thanks for all the work that is taken forward in the name of the Church of Scotland.

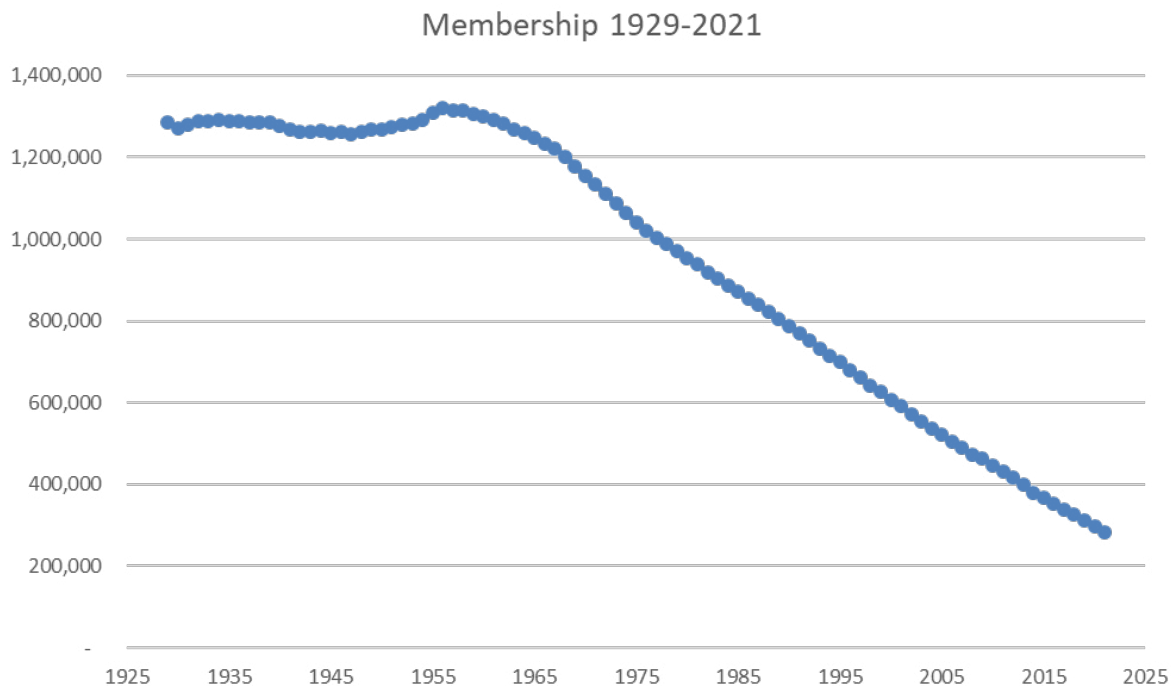
2. THE CHURCH IN NUMBERS – WHY CHANGE IS REQUIRED

2.1 Congregational statistical returns are made each year and published in the Supplementary report. At the time of writing, the 2022 returns are being collected, however the 2021 figures reveal the following:

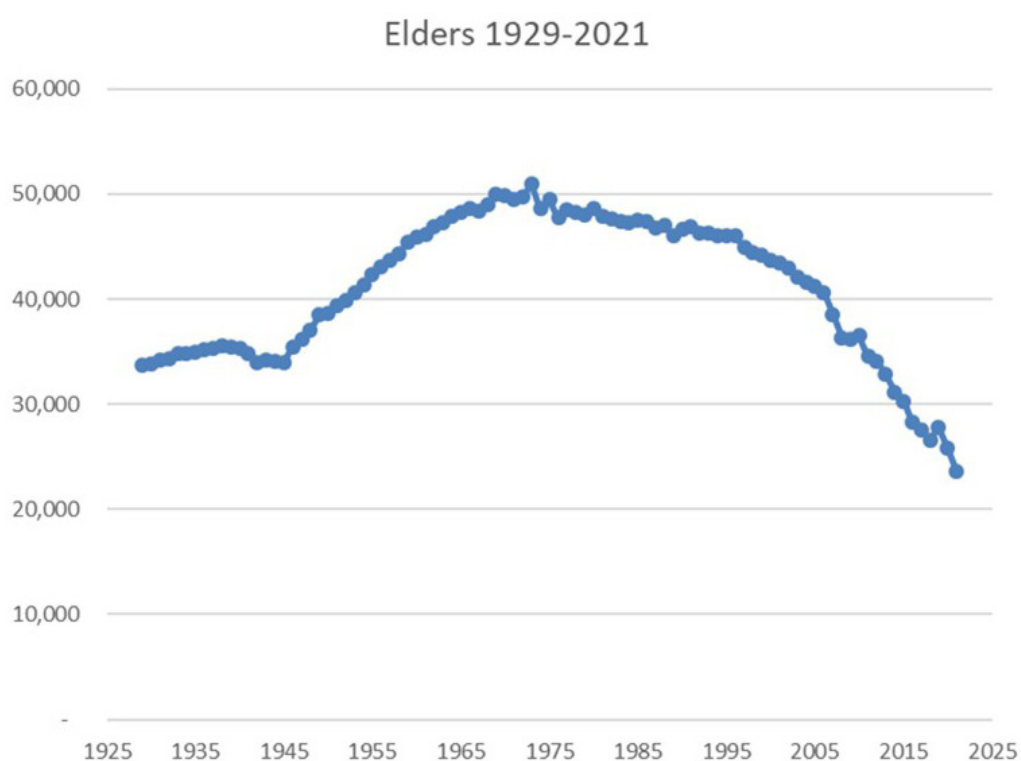
- We now have 283,600 members. This is a figure that has been declining year on year since the highs of over 1.3 million in the later 1950's. The 2021 number was a 4.6% reduction compared to 2020 – similar falls in previous years and same expected in 2022.
- We had 1,280 baptisms, that is an average of just over 1 per congregation compared to 50,000 per year in the late 1950's.
- 430 professions of faith – a small number of new members compared to around a 10,000 reduction in our membership numbers each year. There were over 40,000 professions per year at the peak of new members in the 1930's. Whilst membership numbers are not a true reflection of our full attendance you only need to look around many of our Churches to see the decline in numbers.
- We are averaging just 1 wedding per year per congregation.
- Around 60,000 people in comparison with our 283,600 members worship in person on a Sunday (pre- pandemic this figure was 88,000). We have well over 1,000 church buildings to cater for this number of people which is simply untenable and unsustainable.
- 45,000 people now worship online and 8,275 in 'other ways'. Clearly something is changing in the pattern of worship – at a much faster pace post-pandemic.
- The average age of those attending church is 62 years old – so the trends of decline are not likely to change without us taking positive action and addressing the demographic profile.

- The vast majority of our ministers are over the age of 50 and it is estimated that 40-50% of them could retire in the next 10 years. At our current rate of securing new ministers (20-30 per year including the admission programme) we will have more vacancies than ever before – this isn't about money it is about the practicalities of managing with less people. Prior to the start of mission planning we already had over 320 vacancies – the vacancy gap has been growing unaddressed from year to year putting lots of pressure on our existing ministers to cover vacant charges in addition to their own Churches. Over one in three congregations is now in vacancy.
- We had 48,000 elders in 1977 – and still have around 23,000 now. One in every 12 members is an elder – and almost two in five of regular attenders will be elders. The pressure of managing our Church is falling on a high proportion of our remaining number.
- We still love our buildings – at the end of 2021, acknowledging that it is very difficult to have an accurate number in what is a moving target with many locally vested properties, we had somewhere in the range of 4,500 to 5,000 buildings to maintain and pay for. As a shrinking Church in terms of numbers this really has to be addressed.

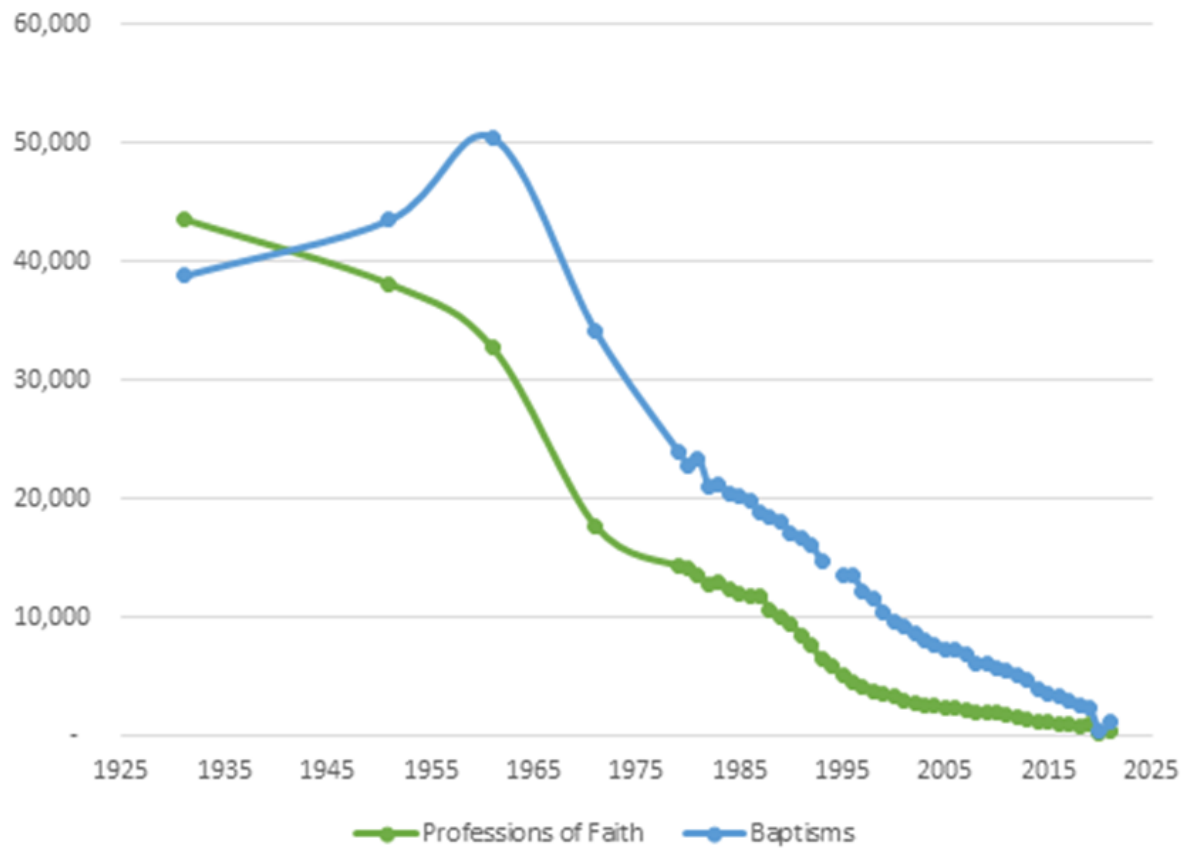
2.2 The Membership decline since the early 1960's has not been reversed



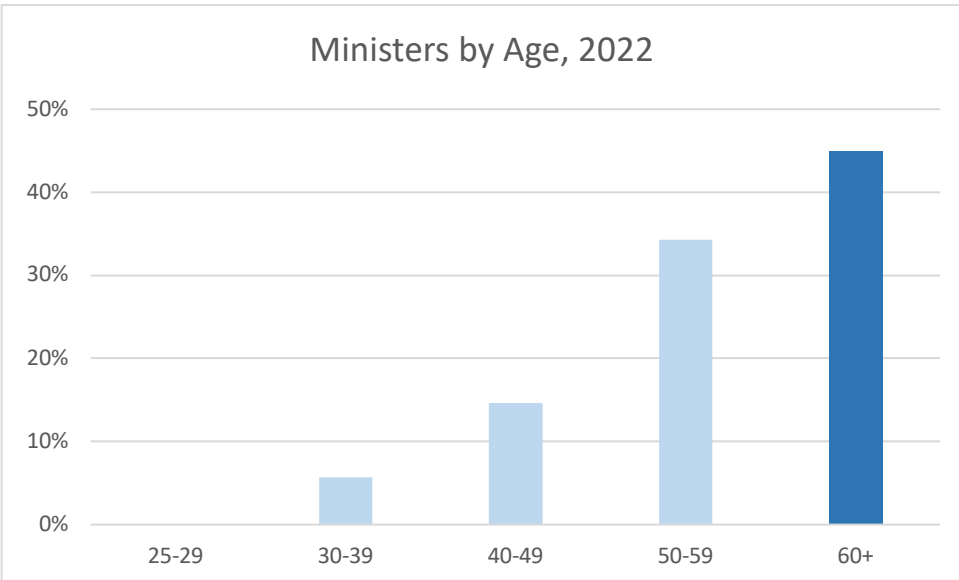
2.3 We still have a large number of elders from a smaller membership population – exerting pressure on fewer people.



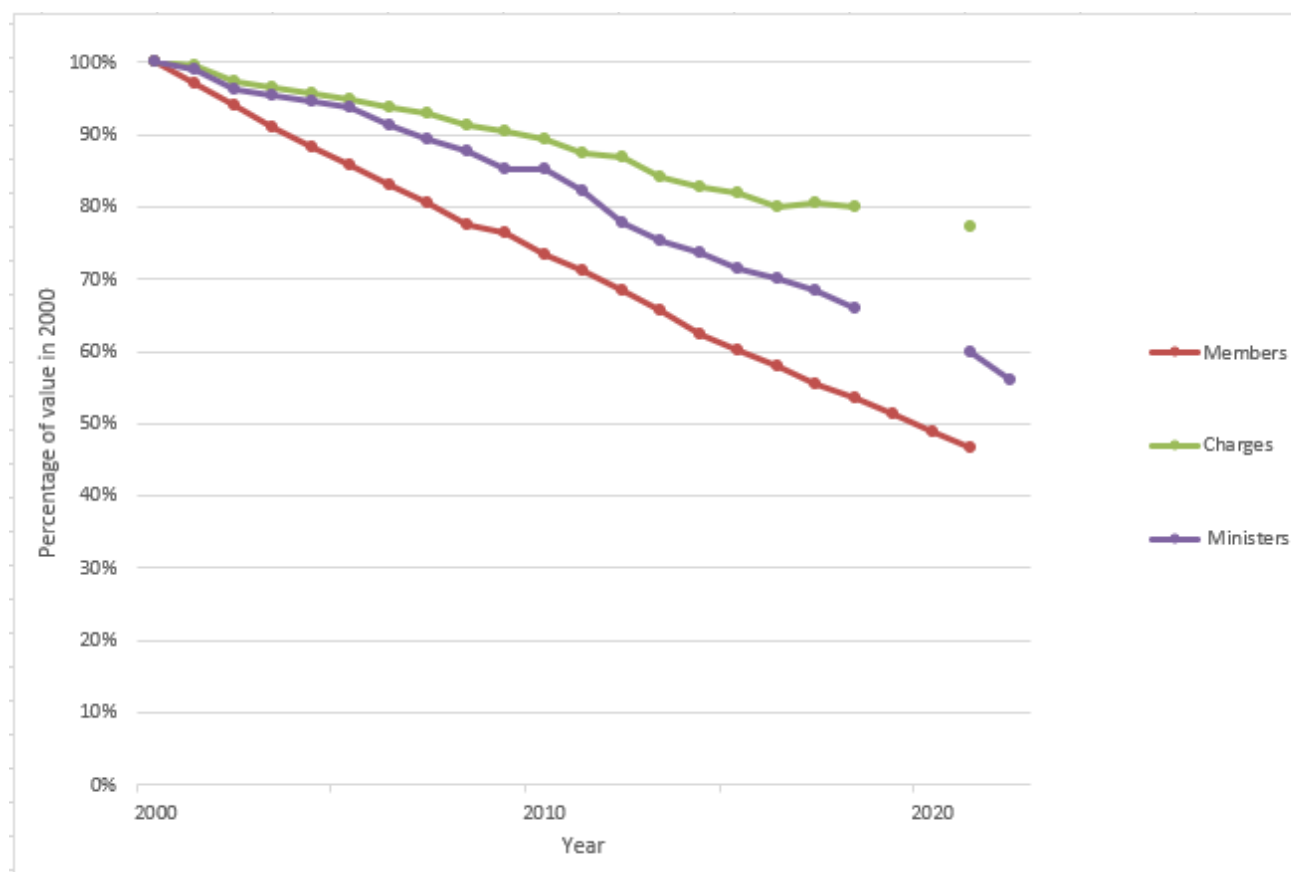
2.4 Professions of faith and baptisms have almost baselined.



2.5 Our Ministers are aging with a demographic that suggests that 40-50% will retire in the next 10 years with limited ability to replace them without a new intervention due to the current low rate of recruitment



2.6 Putting this all together and turning to the more recent past, in 2021 the Church of Scotland membership had dropped to less than half (46.6%) of the figure recorded in 2000; The number of ministers in 2022 was 60% of those recorded in 2000, whilst 77% of charges^[1] remained. This is no fault of one group of people or any decision-making body, but a trend that has not been reversed; we have lost members and Ministers of Word and Sacrament but not adjusted the number of charges. One in three charges are in vacancy whilst across Scotland the size of almost every congregation is shrinking. Ministers are retiring and people are not coming forward (as has been the case for years) in the numbers needed to replace them. The good news of Jesus Christ, whilst being shared amongst some is not reaching the majority of the people of Scotland.



3. MOVING FORWARD – NEW DIRECTIONS

3.1 Whilst significant time could be spent examining past actions and decisions, it is to the future that the Trustees and the church as a whole need to look, as we discern the new pathways being opened to us. The Trustees are of a view that our future as a Church must be about the provision of inspirational and motivational ministries and leadership, proactive missional activity and making new disciples which will lead to growth and renewal of the Church of Scotland in a different way to fit the 21st Century. The Special Commission report of 2019 set the direction of travel for the Church, the proposals presented below are the next developed steps from the report that so shaped our new structures

3.2 Three principal areas of focus have been identified for the Trustees and Chief Officer to focus work around which are explored further within this report. The Trustees goal is to support change and transformation, ensuring that focus of activities is best placed to support the missional activities of Church at Presbytery and local level. The principal focus for the Assembly Trustees is proposed as:

3.2.1 (1) An emphasis on progressing the growth and development of the Church through the new Presbyteries working closely with the local congregations.

The aim will be to provide effective support to the new presbytery structure, development and delivery of presbytery mission plans, the enablers to establishing new ministry models and supporting health and well-being of our people across the Church. Investment will be important here which is where the £25 million Seeds for Growth comes into the picture – this will be about supporting new activities rather than sustaining our old infrastructure.

The work of the Seeds for Growth Initiative is discussed below as is the financial and practical support being made available to Presbyteries. The Trustees are delighted that a collegiate and productive working relationship is being established with the new Presbyteries and look forward to continuing this work over the forthcoming years.

3.2.2 (2) Ensuring that the work of the national is focused on the local need with a particular emphasis on recruiting and equipping our future leaders for the ministries of the Church in light of the different challenges ahead.

This must be underpinned by a flexible integrated training programme.

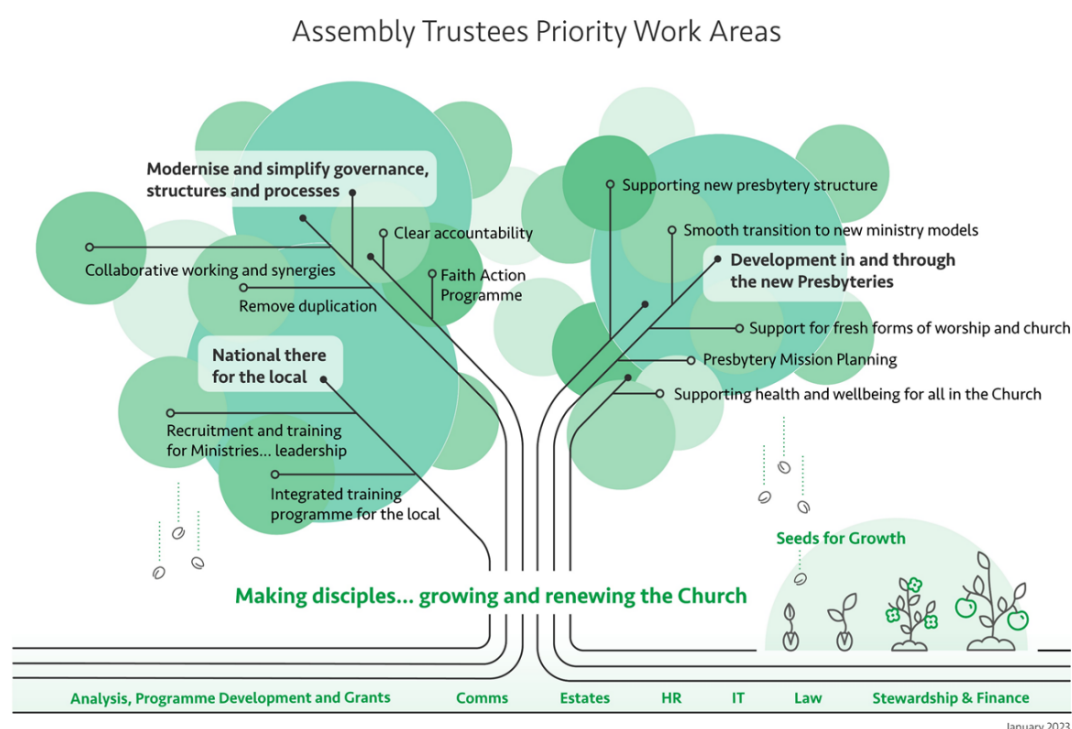
The Trustees have a particular concern over how stretched the Ministerial workforce has become and is closely monitoring the retirement and recruitment figures. Recruitment to Ministries has become a particular priority for the work of the Faith Nurture Forum with the recruitment of the Rev Eleanor McMahon and Very Rev Dr Martin Fair to support this vital work. The report of the Faith Nurture Forum details the progress made and next steps regarding recruitment to ministry and training of all of Gods people.

3.2.3 (3) Progressing the identified imperative of modernising and simplifying our governance, structure and processes.

This will require true collaborative working, clear accountability, removal of duplication, reduction in future work and a robust Faith Action Programme that is focused on local need and has been defined through detailed prioritisation of all work by the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team taking account of our financial constraints. At a national level this also requires delivery of lean and efficient professional services in support of the needs of the local Church.

3.3 The Trustees are pleased that a prioritisation exercise around the work of the Faith Action Programme has begun although it recognises that further work is required to ensure service provision is entirely focused to support the local Church. At a national level and as explored below, our financial situation remains a serious concern despite achieving the 30% reduction in controllable costs (equating to £8m savings) as requested by the Special Commission. The Chief Officer is undertaking a review of all support departments to ensure that work is aligned to need. Work is ongoing looking at delegated authorities within the national structures of the Church with a report coming to GA 2024.

3.4 The areas for prioritisation are be summarised in the diagram below:



3.5 The report which follows sets out the areas of work and support that are being progressed by the Assembly Trustees and through the work of the Chief Officer and national staff. There is no question that going forward, hard decisions, including commercial ones need to be made given the backdrop of our people and financial situation. Looking into the organisation of our Church alone will never get us to the place of becoming a missional community in this new world, but it can help us on our journey. Missional leadership and resources for mission lie within our new Presbyteries and we must look to, and help them, to develop our future through small, significant steps working with our congregations.

4. FINANCE ACROSS THE CHURCH

4.1. In 2019, the Special Commission on Structural Reform sought a move away from deficit budgeting in the National budget. The National office responded with budget cuts and controls on expenditure which met the original target of a 30% reduction in costs of the central administration. These could not however counteract the financial effects of the subsequent Pandemic, nor the wider financial crisis facing the Church. The aspiration to eliminate operational deficits cannot now be met without some further radical action being taken. Even with significant action the Church is likely to have to live with some level of deficit budgeting for the next five years.

4.2 At the heart of the issue is the declining number of ministers, members and Church supporters who are involved in the life of the Church and supporting it financially. Alongside this, the Church's structures and decision-making processes continue to reflect a denomination which was, in the past, numerically stronger. Whilst finances cannot drive the vision and future shape of things, it is clear that, in order for the Church to survive and then thrive, the close connections between church involvement, structures and finances need to be understood. The changes required locally, regionally and nationally to move the Church of Scotland onto a more secure financial footing are significant and wide-ranging.

4.3 Due to the scale and scope of activities being supported at local, regional and national levels, and combined with our cumbersome structures, it becomes very difficult to reduce costs without further radical action. To date, the elimination of deficits has not been possible due to our changing financial circumstances however significant further change is underway and the Assembly Trustees are committed to seeing this through. In making significant reductions in our expenditure it is recognised that we also need to invest in the following areas (1) fulfil the implementation of the new Presbytery structures; (2) transition from the former Ministries and Mission system to *Giving to Grow*; (3) launch the Seeds for Growth Fund; and (4) invest in the recruitment of more ministries. The additional investment will require further reductions in other lower priority work areas.

4.4 With these changes come big challenges. Other than its reserves, the Church's main source of funding comes from its congregations. If congregational income falls off as quickly as is currently predicted, then the only means of paying ministers stipends and staff salaries will be from the Church's General Fund. Based on our estimates, the General Fund will be extinguished by 2026-2027 depending upon the assumptions used.

4.5 The significant financial investment in Seeds for Growth needs to deliver real growth, turning around the Church's situation from scarcity and decline into spiritual and numerical growth, fruitfulness and generosity. The Trustees acknowledge that we are in a transition phase with Presbytery Mission Planning, Seeds for Growth, Giving to Grow and development of financial priorities all running concurrently. All of these matters need to come together to achieve sustainability for the Church.

4.6 The 2024 budget and rolling budget for 2024-2028 will be brought to the Assembly in the Supplementary Report. Based on our financial modelling, these will show a continuing and damaging reduction in congregational contributions unless mitigating action is taken, and that deficits will return to the pre-2019 level. We currently predict that contributions from congregations will fall dramatically between 2024 and 2028. Part of the reduction is because the new Giving to Grow scheme is intended to leave more income at a congregational level. The direct cost of parish ministers and Ministries Development staff is also predicted to reduce, but we believe there will come a point within this time span where congregational income will not cover the costs of parish ministry even with the rapidly reducing levels of ministers. It is at that point the General Fund will need to pay for stipends and staff salaries as well as other costs.

4.7 The presentation to the General Assembly of a budget which needs to be created some eighteen months in advance has always proven to be problematic. Due to the increasing financial uncertainty and forthcoming constraints, the General Treasurer and Assembly Trustees request that the timetable for budget presentation is altered in that a five-year rolling budget continues to be presented but the budget for the current year is presented retrospectively. This will increase the accuracy of budget reporting and will be of benefit to the Assembly in terms of actual monies available within that year. These proposed changes require an amendment to the Constitution and Remit of the Assembly Trustees which are outlined in Appendix 3. The proposed deletion of sections remove wording that is either no longer relevant (clause 34) and the timescales which are currently problematic (clauses 35 & 36)

4.8 The Trustees' work on setting priorities is well underway, with high level financial priorities having been set. It is worth stating that these priorities are not intended to measure the worth of any area of the Church's work. It is never easy to let go of work that is loved and valued by the Church, or which enthuses young people or attracts new people, but there has to be a more realistic expectation of the nature and breadth of support which the national offices can provide to the wider Church. This support has been provided for a sum which has been held relatively stable whilst at the same time the need for governance, Information Technology and other statutory costs has risen. Furthermore, additional support and budget are now being provided to the new Presbyteries, adding further pressure to the overall financial position.

4.9 Congregations and reserves cannot fund everything we would like to do. At the same time as acknowledging and getting behind the programmes the National church has already developed in line with the strategic and financial priorities, proposed new programmes need to be thoroughly evaluated against those priorities too.

4.10 In setting up the Seeds for Growth Fund, in line with the Radical Action Plan, the Trustees acknowledged that the Church's "rainy day" had come. Using a significant portion of the Church's reserves in this way is a statement of belief in the plan to reinvigorate the local church. The new Giving to Grow scheme was seen by the Ministries and Mission Review Group as another way of encouraging and supporting the local church and new mission initiatives are already being developed by congregations whose contributions to the National Budget have reduced.

4.11 In order to realise this vision fully, hard decisions will need to be made now so that resources can be concentrated where they are needed. How then can we approach this challenge?

4.12 Congregational contributions: We have radically changed the system for funding ministries and mission to encourage congregations to grow their income and use this for local purposes. This was the expressed intention of the General Assembly. It is true that with congregational income decreasing, even the former allocation system could not have maintained the previous levels of contributions, but it did provide a measure of certainty. One of the principles behind Giving to Grow was that Presbyteries could work at a local level to redistribute income by amending presbytery dues or other means.

4.13 The Giving to Grow regulations include provision to review the system but it would be premature to make any changes before the first year of operation has been completed. Our forecasts indicate that by 2026 the contributions will barely cover the direct costs of ministries. Any moves to reduce even further the contributions towards the cost of ministries, when it could be very dangerous. We are listening to the feedback from congregations and Presbyteries and there will be some anomalies just as we predicted when the General Assembly approved the new scheme. During 2023/2024 we therefore propose to review how the scheme is operating and bring any necessary modifications to the 2024 Assembly.

4.14 In the meantime, we encourage congregations and Presbyteries to continue liaising with the Stewardship and Finance Department as to application of the current regulations.

4.15 Income Generation: The Church at all levels must consider how to increase or replace income in meaningful and appropriate ways. This can serve as a way of engaging more people and partner organisations in our work, as well as resulting in a more financially stable future. This is an area which the Trustees will be investigating closely over the forthcoming period.

4.16 Rationalisation: The metaphor of pruning in order to grow is a familiar one within the church, and within the Church of Scotland the time for pruning is now. The National Budget expenditure needs to be cut back to the absolute basics such as recruiting, training and supporting ministers and providing practical support to congregations and presbyteries. We need to recognise the value of our ministers and Ministries Development Staff but also need to focus on how they will become the leaders who can reinvigorate the Church of the future.

4.17 As a result of this pruning, national programmes will be affected. It is clear that much of this work can be and is being carried out by local churches, and this is to be encouraged.

4.18 Seeds for Growth: This is currently planned to be funded from General Funds. Consideration needs to be given to backing the Fund with alternatives such as income generation from potential donors and other sources. The Seeds for Growth Committee will consider this alongside the Finance Committee as the work develops.

4.19 National Buildings: The Church is in the fortunate position of owning its national buildings – namely, the Offices at 121-123 George Street, General Assembly Hall, Scottish Storytelling Centre and other properties. The rolling budgets incorporate the most basic expenditure to maintain these buildings but the potential expenditure could be much greater. Long term decisions on the future of these properties must be made to enable robust plans for future expenditure to be developed that are balanced by the opportunities for income generation. We should consider rationalising our buildings, making better financial returns from them or where they are no longer required, dispose of them.

4.20 General Assembly: How can this be reformed to be more in proportion to the reduced number of ministers and members without detracting from its role and sovereignty? The annual cost of the General Assembly, Moderator and upkeep of the Assembly Hall and Rothesay Terrace is £0.8 million. This is based on a hybrid General Assembly which has allowed costs to be reduced. As noted below, only essential health and safety work is being carried out on the Hall due to budget pressures.

4.21 Funds: By 2016 the former Mission and Renewal Fund had been completely extinguished due to having supported the budget for over a decade. As a result of a detailed review of our funds, £75 million was reclassified into the new General Fund. This new Fund has already reduced due to funding operational deficits and, as stated above, will be extinguished by 2026 to 2027 unless serious actions are taken.

4.22 Further progress has been made with the submission to OSCR of a reorganisation scheme for the £15.8 million Salvesen Fund which, if approved, will fund our overseas work with partners. A further review of other former World Mission funds is to be undertaken when staff resources permit. These steps should protect some of the Church's work overseas.

4.23 CrossReach: In 2022, CrossReach's income represented almost half of the Unincorporated Entities' income and expenditure. The Special Commission of 2019 proposed that it should work towards financial self-sustainability. CrossReach is devising a route map towards achieving this, including establishing the necessary financial boundaries within the national Church budgets. The Assembly Trustees have agreed £1.115 million funding to CrossReach for 2023. The relevant senior managers are now working together to seek to increase external funding of CrossReach in order to reduce the central church contribution. The work of CrossReach and its contribution is considered later in the report.

4.24 Whilst work is already underway on several of the areas above, a number of matters are dependent on the will of the Assembly. Over the next year, the Trustees will be developing proposals to present to General Assembly 2024, mindful that it will take some time for the impacts of changes to be financially realised.

4.25 The Church is distinctly different from other charities, but it is a charity nonetheless. The charity sector is facing more financial challenges than ever before including subsidising the work of government, not only in providing social services, but community outreach and practical help for society's poor and marginalised. The current economic climate has added huge costs to salary budgets, reduced investment income and impacted on the income of congregational members. There may be a recovery, but in the meantime, the Church's reserves will be heavily drawn upon, and these can only be used once.

5. GIVING TO GROW CONTRIBUTIONS

5.1 The new Giving to Grow scheme became effective from 1st January 2023. Draft statements were issued to Presbyteries in September 2022 and final statements to congregations in December 2022. In the lead up to this, the Stewardship and Finance Department conducted a series of webinars and surgeries on the new system; the Stewardship Team is to be thanked for hosting these events and preparing comprehensive follow-up handouts. Inevitably though, the Finance Team received a very high number of enquiries after the final statements had been issued and it has taken some time to work through these. One of the principles behind the scheme is transparency; this includes providing congregations with the details of their income base which was previously only provided on request. Enquiries are therefore focusing on what income is and is not assessable. The following website link contains a tool which congregational treasurers can use to calculate their assessable income and their Giving to Grow contribution, and many have found this very useful for budgeting purposes: <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/stewardship-finance-and-trusts/congregational-contributions-giving-to-grow>

5.2 The regulations for the new scheme are clearer in relation to assessable income. Some amendments for clarification of the regulations are being proposed to the General Assembly and these are included at Appendix 1.

5.3 The Assembly Trustees would like to acknowledge once again the continued faithful commitment of many of our Church members and adherents in maintaining their offerings to the Church. We thank all the congregational treasurers and office-bearers for their service during these challenging times.

5.4 Voluntary Contributions

5.4.1 Under the new *Giving to Grow* scheme, around 70 congregations are not contributing towards either Ministry Here, Ministry Elsewhere or Shared Activities. There are various reasons for this: the charge's income may be relatively low and together with the application of vacancy allowance, income from the Stipend Endowment Fund, rent received from glebe land or transition funding the contribution balance is negative and is therefore restricted to zero. 75% of congregations are contributing less under Giving to Grow than under the previous Ministries and Mission scheme. This could cover a wide range of scenarios from those paying only marginally less to those paying substantially less.

5.4.2 Sharing what we have is an important part of what it means to belong to a national church. Our commitment to providing ministry across the whole of Scotland is contingent on the sharing of resources.

5.4.3 The finance team has already been approached by a few congregations who would like to make voluntary or additional contributions towards the scheme, despite not being required to do so under its terms. These congregations see giving to support the Church and other congregations as an important part of living out the tenets of their faith. As a national and Presbyterian denomination, we believe that churches are connected to one another as part of the church universal. By supporting each other, we strengthen the church as the body of Christ and act out the grace and generosity shown to us by God. Acts 4 recounts the ways in which the early church demonstrated this kind of attitude: "the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had... and God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them."

5.4.4 The Trustees recognise the financial pressures on many congregations. The Giving to Grow scheme takes account of the different contexts and circumstances across our churches. Not every congregation will be in a position to make voluntary contributions; their contribution to the wider Church and to their own communities comes in many different forms and expressions, and we acknowledge this. But for those congregations who are in a position to contribute and who are not currently obliged to do so, and for those whose contributions under Giving to Grow are significantly lower than under the Ministries and Mission scheme, we would ask you to consider this matter, reflecting on the privilege of supporting work which will bear fruit in other places for God's kingdom.

5.4.5 The regulations allow for more formal Giving Agreements but congregations are also welcome to make additional payments simply by notifying the Stewardship and Finance Department when they have done so.

5.5 Congregational Contributions

5.5.1 As is customary, due to the timing of printing deadlines, full details of congregational contributions and the budget proposals for 2024 and indicative budgets for 2025 to 2028 will be presented in the Supplementary Report. The budget will include estimates of the contributions payable by congregations under the *Giving to Grow* scheme.

5.5.2 Congregational contributions are required to support the work of the Church. They fund Parish Ministries, the programmes of the Forums and Committees and the work which supports congregations and Presbyteries. During the first year of the Pandemic (2020) the local Church suffered a reduction in its assessable income of 15%, £12.4 million compared to the year before. In 2021 there was an increase of £1.1 million, up 1.5% from 2020. This was still £11.3 million, 13.2% below pre-pandemic levels and follows a trend in reducing assessable income in real terms which was taking place before the Pandemic.

5.5.3 As well as the effects of the Pandemic and decline in membership the move to Giving to Grow has fundamentally changed the way contributions to the National Budget are made. In 2020 before the start of the Pandemic net congregational contributions receivable were £47.7 million. In 2023 this has reduced to £38.9 million, a difference of 18.4 percent.

5.5.4 Congregational financial statistics schedules help gauge the levels of congregational income, the key element upon which the Church's budget is based. The initial analysis of the 67% of on-line returns received to date for 2022 congregational income indicates a decrease of 4% in offerings compared to 2021. With some recovery in other income such as hall lets the indication is for an overall 2% reduction in the assessable income of congregations which is in line with our previous forecasts.

5.5.5 By 31 December 2022, congregations had remitted £38.7 million in Ministries and Mission contributions, which was 96.6% of the final adjusted total for 2022. In cases where congregations are unable to pay their full allocation, the Assembly Trustees encourage Presbyteries to engage with them and offer assistance where appropriate. Feedback from several Presbyteries has indicated that they have had successful discussions with congregations over the payment of contributions.

5.5.6 The Assembly Trustees wish to record their sincere thanks to all congregations for their 2022 Ministries and Mission contributions, with a particular thank you to the congregations who do so by standing order and to all congregations which met their contributions in full by 31 December 2022.

6. RESULTS OF NATIONAL BUDGETS

6.1 2022 RESULTS

6.1.1 The Trustees' final 2022 budget for the Unincorporated Entities was for a deficit of £6.4 million from National Reserves including CrossReach, the Housing and Loan Fund, The Guild, New College Funds and miscellaneous trusts. The budget includes income of £99.5 million and expenditure of £105.9 million.

6.1.2 The actual unaudited operating result for the Unincorporated Entities in 2022 was a deficit of £2.4 million and the reasons for the improvement are outlined below. The reduction in funds for the year was £18.1 million once unrealised investment losses of £17.2 million and realised net gains on property and investments were included.

6.1.3 2022 was the final year of the former Ministries and Mission system. Congregational Contributions recognised in the accounts were £41.6 million including stipend endowment and glebe income.

6.1.4 Legacies to the National Church, both unrestricted and for more specific work including CrossReach, were £2.4m which was more than budgeted and the Assembly Trustees gratefully acknowledge the generosity of those who provided for the Church in their wills.

6.1.5 National departmental deficits were better than budget by £4.4 million.

6.1.6 The Faith Nurture Forum, which includes the cost of Parish Ministries, had net expenditure of £40.7 million compared to a budget of £41.8 million, £1.1 million less than budgeted. Stipend and MDS salaries were £0.5 million below budget and the Forum made its other expenditure savings on work programmes and grants.

6.1.7 The Faith Impact Forum had net expenditure of £1.2 million for the year compared to a budget of £1.5 million. The cost savings were the result of vacant mission partner posts and reduced grant payments. Support and Services Departments also managed to save £0.6 million against their total budget of £5.3 million including underspends on staff salary costs.

6.1.8 Due to the hybrid format of the 2022 General Assembly, the Office of the General Assembly saved £0.4 million against its budget of £1.9 million. As well as the General Assembly and Moderator, this budget includes Ecumenical Relations, payments to the World Churches and the Theological Forum.

6.1.9 There was an underspend of £1.5 million on Other Trusts and Funds, mainly the Housing and Loan Fund which is overseen by an independent Trustee body. The Fund had a budget of £1 million for its property improvement programme which could not be used during 2022.

6.1.10 CrossReach budgeted for a deficit of £2.2 million and by the year end had an actual deficit of £2.6 million. This included significant additional net costs in Older People Services, as much of the extra staff costs were mitigated by additional income. This reflects the difficulties in running these funded services in the care sector as a whole, including a need to build up occupancy after the pandemic which had fallen to under 80% and severe difficulties in recruiting care staff. The continuing effects of the Pandemic were managed within operating budgets, and sustainability payments continued to be received from Local Authorities post Pandemic.

6.2 FINAL 2023 BUDGET

6.2.1 The indicative budget presented to the General Assembly in May 2022 for all of the Unincorporated Entities, including CrossReach, Housing and Loan and all Other Funds was for a deficit of £8.7 million. The Assembly Trustees approved a final deficit budget for 2023 of £7.7 million to be drawn from National Reserves.

6.3 FORWARD BUDGET

6.3.1 The Trustees' Supplementary Report will contain an outline budget for the years 2024 to 2028. There are already strong indications that this will be substantially worse than the 2023 budget, hence the urgency with which some of the mitigations noted above need to be implemented.

6.3.2 Risks to the budgets include the effects of Presbytery Mission Planning and uncertainty around recruitment of ministers, as well as the continued roll out of *Giving to Grow* which mean that these numbers will be best estimates.

7. PRESBYTERY FUNDING

7.1 The funding of Presbyteries comes from a variety of sources including congregational contributions, Presbytery Dues, local investment and fundraising income. In addition, a block grant is supplied from the national finances. During 2022, £0.6 million was provided to Presbyteries for their running costs. This included early funding for those new Presbyteries commencing in 2023. From consultations and discussions with the newly forming Presbyteries, it has become clear that no two are likely to be exactly the same, although there are common elements. The Assembly Trustees have therefore not been prescriptive as to how the core funding should be used for the efficient running of a Presbytery.

7.2 Under the Presbytery Mission Plan Act, much is expected of our Presbyteries and they too will have to work towards long term sustainability. Presbyteries should aim to grow their income and develop plans for financial sustainability alongside Presbytery Mission Plans. The Assembly Trustees will continue to work with Presbyteries as they ensure that financial and other resources are available for their work in the long term.

7.3 The National Office is providing payroll and pensions auto-enrolment functions as a service provider and with service agreements in place. Other departments have been heavily involved with advising the new presbyteries as they recruit and appoint staff and implement IT and other systems.

7.4 FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PRESBYTERIES OF ENGLAND AND INTERNATIONAL CHARGES

7.4.1 Following GA 2022 and the instruction for the consideration of a five-year budget for the Presbyteries of England and International Charges, the Chief Officer and General Treasurer have been in discussions with the two Presbyteries on behalf of the Trustees. Agreement has been reached for funding the Presbytery of England (POE) and the Presbytery of International Charges (POIC) from the National Budget: for POE (not historically funded from the national) £20k in 2023, £15k in 2024, £10k in 2024 and £5k in 2026, (self-funding from 2027); for POIC (historically grant-assisted from Salvesen Fund) in 2023 a maximum of 43,000 euros to be reduced as far as possible and then phased down over 2024-28. The £80,000 contingency in the budget will cover both Presbyteries. The Trustees acknowledged that there had been fruitful discussions with the Presbyteries and that conversations are to continue with POIC which will include the impact of Presbytery Mission Planning and future planning for Salvesen expenditure.

8. PENSION SCHEMES

8.1 Defined Benefit Schemes

8.1.1 The triennial valuation of the Schemes took place as of 31 December 2021 with the Pension Trustees and employing agencies agreeing actuarial assumptions for the valuation. No deficit repair payments are required due to the schemes being fully funded.

8.2 Defined Contribution Schemes

8.2.2 Membership of the Church's Plan has now been made available to staff directly employed by Presbyteries. The Group Personal Pensions Governance Group monitors the arrangements for both the CrossReach Pension Plan and the Church of Scotland Plan for defined contribution pensions. It meets to review the provider's performance reports, service provision and developments, which currently include Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and related matters. A review of the investments provided by Legal and General was carried out by the Church's Pension advisors in 2021 and their recommendation to change the default investment fund was implemented 2022. Members may still elect to invest in Legal & General funds of their own choosing.

9. STEWARDSHIP

9.1 The New Testament word which is translated as 'stewardship' is *oikonomia*, which means to manage the affairs of the household, a steward being someone who managed the household or property of another person. We, as Christians, are honoured to be given the role of stewards of God's household – that is, the church. Ephesians 2:19 refers to God's people as members of his household. What a privilege, firstly, to be members of God's household and, secondly, to be honoured with a role in its care.

9.2 Now is always the right time for exercising our God-given role as stewards. This applies to us collectively as the Church of Scotland – in all its different parts and expressions – and as the universal church of God, but it begins with a personal response, "for we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Ephesians 2:10

9.3 Key Resources

9.3.1 The *Joyful Generosity* series is a resource which focusses on our personal giving, offering congregations a way to explore the links between God's generous nature and our financial stewardship.

9.3.2 The *Narrative of Generosity* is a modular resource which encourages a whole-life approach to stewardship. New material has been added in the last year, providing starters for worship, small group study guides and personal devotions on the themes of God, Earth, Vision, Possessions, Gifts and Time. The *Exploring Generosity* series offers intergenerational resources on those same six themes.

9.3.3 Mindful of the impact of Presbytery Mission Planning on so many congregations, and the related stewardship considerations, the team has produced a resource to help congregations prepare for union. This offers prompts for discussion, reflection and action, and points to additional resources which may be helpful. This material sits under the umbrella of the *Narrative of Generosity* resource and connects with different themes, offering choice and flexibility. Practical guidance on the legalities and financial procedures around unions has been issued to Presbyteries and is available on the website: <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/finance-resources>.

9.4 Webinars

9.4.1 Over the last twelve months, the stewardship team has hosted webinars and online surgeries to support congregations with the introduction of the new *Giving to Grow* scheme. This has enabled congregational treasurers, in particular, to better understand the key concepts of the scheme as well as the method of calculation of both assessable income and final contribution. Question and answer handouts have been issued following each event along with links to online calculation tools to aid forward planning by congregations.

9.4.2 An online event encouraging congregations to get the most from the Consolidated Fabric Fund offered practical advice on the ways in which balances in the Fund's capital account can be invested to generate revenue which can then be used to offset day-to-day buildings-related costs e.g. heat, light, buildings insurance, maintenance.

9.4.3 Whilst regular, committed, generous and sacrificial giving remains the key way in which we can financially sustain the church, we need to seek out new opportunities for income generation that not only create a more secure financial picture, but which grow and enliven our mission, outreach and discipleship. Fundraising itself can and does act as a powerful form of ministry, by giving people an opportunity to fully invest in the vision we share for the flourishing of our communities.

9.5 Digital Giving

9.5.1 The team has seen an increased number of congregations seeking support and guidance in the area of digital giving. The team is able to support congregations who wish to consider moving to digital giving with discussions ongoing with congregations who have been using digital giving for a longer period of time, in order to learn and share from their experiences.

9.6 Legacy Giving

9.6.1 A legacy gift to the Church is one of the most valuable and lasting ways we can continue to support its mission and its ministry, whether the gift is directed to a local congregation or to the wider work of the Church.

9.6.2 In 2020, 243 congregations benefitted from legacy income totalling £4.46 million.

9.6.3 In 2021, 286 congregations benefitted from legacy income totalling £6.66 million

9.6.4 Based on 658 congregational returns received by February 2023, 233 congregations benefitted in 2022 from legacy income totalling £4.82 million.

9.6.5 Legacies received for the wider work of the church (i.e. the Unincorporated Entities) for those years totalled: 2020: £1.1 million, of which unrestricted legacies were just under £0.6 million.

2021: £3.0 million, of which unrestricted legacies were £1.2 million.

2022: £2.4 million, of which unrestricted legacies were £0.9 million.

9.6.6 It was reported to last year's General Assembly that, in a survey of 800 regular church goers in the UK, 89% of those surveyed said they gave regularly to their church, but only 15% planned to leave a gift to the church in their wills. Forty percent said gifts to charities were important, but only 22% said gifts to the church were important. This research suggested that church members were more likely to leave a gift to a charity than to their church and, for the most part, this was due to having been asked by the charity but not by their church.

9.6.7 Legacy giving is a powerful expression of faith, and churches should not be afraid to be bold in raising its profile among our members and supporters.

9.6.8 As a first step, we would encourage every Kirk Session to establish and make known its own legacy policy. This is simply a statement of how a legacy gift to the congregation will be used. The aim is to highlight that gifts left to your church will be put to good use, for example, funding work that wouldn't otherwise be afforded. More detailed guidance can be found at: <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/stewardship/leaving-a-lasting-legacy-through-your-will>

9.6.9 As a second step, we invite congregations to engage with a joint legacy initiative in autumn 2023, entitled "Faith will...", involving Christian Aid, the Church of Scotland including CrossReach, Church of England and Quakers in Britain. This initiative was flagged in our Report to last year's General Assembly but, for reasons out with our control, the 2022 legacy 'moment' was postponed and rescheduled for Harvest 2023. Together with our partners, we will be inviting congregations throughout the UK and beyond to participate in this initiative by making time for reflection on the place of legacy gifts within the church context. Churches will be supported with resources, handouts and promotional content. Further information will be communicated to congregations through various channels from May to September.

9.7 Looking Ahead

9.7.1 The Stewardship Consultants cover the whole of the country and those congregations outwith the UK too. They support churches with all aspects of stewardship including digital giving, legacies, Gift Aid and the Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme (GASDS), income generation, personal giving and broad stewardship teaching resources. They can facilitate workshops, day conferences and Kirk Session discussions to help congregations identify their priorities and better steward their resources to ensure that their vision and mission plans are achieved.

9.7.2 The team continues to seek opportunities to engage more effectively with the regional church and encourages Presbyteries to set aside time for input from their appointed stewardship consultant. This might be within formal meetings of Presbytery or in special events where stewardship stalls or workshops would be welcomed.

9.7.3 The services of the National Stewardship Team are provided free of charge. Contact details can be found on the Church's website: <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/stewardship>.

9.7.4 The series of stewardship webinars can be viewed on the team's YouTube page here: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqb_rm5hftSGVK00tBFv6og

9.7.5 The stewardship newsletter is proving to be another effective tool in reaching the right people with stewardship news, ideas, events and information. Please subscribe through the website: <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/newsletters>

10 SEEDS FOR GROWTH FUND

10.1 The General Assembly has frequently affirmed that for the Church of Scotland to play its part in the flourishing of the Gospel, we must embrace a culture which is missional and permission giving. At GA 2022, the Assembly Trustees established the Seeds for Growth Fund. This £25 million initiative, funded through Church reserves and operating across the next seven years, is to support Presbyteries as they help to reinvigorate the local church through mission. New models of church, relevant to their local contexts, must be enabled and allowed to flourish and develop, and coexist with models which historically have served us well. Together we must seek and embrace what has been called "a mixed ecology" of Church life.

10.2 The purpose of the Fund is to enable pathways whereby members, elders and ministers in the Church, moved and led by the Holy Spirit, might seek to inspire and grow new worshipping communities through pioneer ministry and church planting; and thus, encourage the renewal of the whole Church. The Fund will thus focus on:

- (i) The planting of new worshipping communities;
- (ii) Work focused on the development of new forms and fresh expressions of Church life;
- (iii) Creative engagement with all sectors of society, in particular with those aged 40 and under; and
- (iv) The enablement of community transformation motivated by Christian service.

10.3 Whilst being managed under the auspices of the Assembly Trustees, the Committee which oversees the Fund is independently chaired with the membership selected through the Nominations Process. The Convener of the Fund will be Rev Neil Glover with the Vice Convener Rev Jamie Milliken. The Fund recognises the importance of effective mission being grounded in local context, and thus it is for Presbyteries and groups of Presbyteries to discern their own missional opportunities and make application.

10.4 The Fund will not be prescriptive although it will require proposals to demonstrate, particularly in respect of the larger grants, how each new expression of Church can become self-sustaining.

10.5 The Fund will be seeking initiatives which are new, and experimentation is welcomed. The intention is that as Seeds for Growth becomes established, the learning taken from the different initiatives are fed back both into the wider Church and into the Fund's design.

10.6 The Seeds for Growth Committee met for the first time in March 2023, with proposals for the different fund sizes and arrangements for distribution of monies being discussed. Prior to this, wide ranging consultation and guidance has been taken from those with expertise in missional church, building a discipling culture, and growing New Worshipping Communities. The Church of England has been heavily consulted (including colleagues from Holy Trinity Brompton, Fresh Expressions and HeartEdge based out of St Martin in the Fields, Covent Garden) with knowledge gathered from previous funds and initiatives operated by the Church of Scotland (including Go For It, New Charge Development and Church Extension). As thinking has developed, Presbytery Clerks have been consulted to ensure that the fund fits with the needs of the newly forming Presbyteries. This close working relationship with Presbyteries will continue throughout the Fund's existence with Presbytery input at all levels of the fund's operation remaining essential.

10.7 The Fund will formally launch on the 1st June 2023 with information available from the week of the General Assembly in respect of fund size available, criteria for application and the assessment process. The more significant levels of grant giving are to commence in 2024. Further information is available through contacting grants@churchofscotland.org.uk.

10.8 In light of real-world experience in setting up the Fund, minor amendments are required to the Governance arrangements contained in the Schedule to the "Seeds of Growth" Fund Regulations 2022, and the General Assembly is requested to agree changes as outlined in italics below.

10.9 Work is commencing with Presbytery Clerks regarding the creation of a pool of assessors from Presbytery representatives. Once again, to provide a level of flexibility the Committee propose the following change to the Regulations:

Delete the following words in numbered paragraph 3 of the Schedule to the Regulations under the heading "Governance":-

"(3) In carrying out their duties the Committee will engage with applicants through regional teams and carry out the process of assessment in partnership with local Presbytery representatives. Each team shall be convened by a member of the Committee and shall comprise two members of the Committee, in addition to two other persons with local knowledge chosen by the Presbytery. Each team shall be appointed to work within the life-cycle of the purpose for which the grant application is being considered. Once a grant application has been approved by the Committee, a team shall report to the Committee both in respect of the terms of the grant and also for determinations on any matter requiring consideration outwith the terms of the grant".

To be replaced with:

"(3) In carrying out their duties the Committee will engage with applicants through regional teams and carry out the process of assessment with local Presbytery representatives. The Committee shall have the ability to co-opt additional non-voting members who hold requisite expertise in certain areas onto the Committee as required".

10.10 From the Church of Scotland's own experiences, as also experienced in the Church of England, administering small grants takes considerable time within Committees, it would therefore be beneficial for this process to be conducted by a member of staff following set criteria for awards. Should there be any query relating to a potential award, this can be referred to the Committee, in line with the financial regulations of the Church of Scotland. We therefore propose the following addition to the Governance criteria as a new paragraph 5, the subsequent paragraphs being re-numbered:

"(5) Grants of £1,000 and below can be awarded at the discretion of the Grants Manager. Any such grants awarded will be presented for information to the next meeting of the Committee".

11 THE SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

11.1 The role that CrossReach plays in relation to the Church of Scotland and indeed Scottish life is significant but not recognised as it should be. Cross Reach provides residential support to some 700 people, with a wide variety of needs, aged between 7 and 97 and beyond. It also offers care and support to thousands of people each year who are dealing with complex issues arising from mental health, old age, homelessness, family breakdown, addictions, criminal justice, and exclusion, to name a few of its activities. Support is, as far as possible offered for as long as is needed with some supported people accessing CrossReach services for a short time and some for many years. The Church of Scotland should be proud and claim aloud the work that is undertaken in its name, providing support to those in need. The relationship that CrossReach has to the wider Church was highlighted through the Special Commission Report and Radical Action Plan of 2019. The Assembly Trustees formed a task group in 2022, chaired initially by Lord Wallace and subsequently by Ian Forrester, KC. At the time of report writing, the results of this review, which involved close working with CrossReach are being considered.

11.2 In terms of operations, CrossReach now accounts for approximately half of the Church of Scotland's total income and expenditure. Despite the best endeavours of the CrossReach Board and management, due to the continuing pressure on funding from local authorities, reduction in spend from central Government, impact of Brexit, Covid, the cost of living crisis as well as issues related to recruitment and retention, the financial picture presented from CrossReach is challenging. An agreed rise to Living Wage in June 2022, negotiated with the Trustees, which was not fully covered by Scottish Government did put pressure on the 2022 budget and continues to have an effect in 2023. The Church has and will continue to support CrossReach through this period of financial difficulty whilst progressing towards a place where CrossReach is self-sustaining. The challenging position facing social care across the UK is well known and understood, and the Church of Scotland needs to be part of the vanguard which turns the tide to ensure that those most vulnerable in society become the most treasured and that staff working in this arena (in any of the care providers) are properly recompensed and supported in the roles they do. Work will be continuing over the next year between the Trustees and CrossReach in terms of seeking an agreed financial way forward and for ensuring that CrossReach has a heightened profile within the Church's work.

12. HOUSING AND LOAN FUND

12.1 The Trustees, through the Chief Officer have continued to work closely with the Housing & Loan Trustees through the year in order to establish how surplus funds could be used for the benefit of the wider Church. The Housing & Loan Trustees are undertaking a Strategic Review of the fund with the Assembly Trustees remitting their input into this work to the Chief Officer to take forward on their behalf. The Housing & Loan Trustees intend to complete this work prior to GA 2024.

13. SPECIAL TASK GROUP (D10) – PROPOSED GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE WORK OF THE FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME

13.1 In 2019 the General Assembly approved a report from the Special Commission on Structural Reform which sought to bring about leaner and more responsive structures in the national work of the Church. That report envisaged a continuous process of reflecting on the Church's national work, and evolving the structures which would ensure its effectiveness.

13.2 In 2020 the General Assembly agreed the Faith Action Plan presented by the Assembly Trustees. The Faith Action Plan relied on the aspiration for the Church agreed by the General Assembly: to be a Church which seeks to inspire the people of Scotland and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ...through enthusiastic worshipping, witnessing, nurturing and serving communities. Underpinned by the Five Marks of Mission, the Faith Action Plan followed on from the Radical Action Plan and set high-level outcomes. The vision was that Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, the Assembly Trustees and the General Assembly would generate robust plans for the future and these would be integral to delivering the Faith Action Plan outcomes. [[The Faith Action Plan](#) | [The Church of Scotland](#)]

13.3 Faith Action Programme is the national dimension to taking forward the Faith Action Plan. This single, integrated, programme was to incorporate the work of the Faith Nurture and Faith Impact Forums. In 2022 the Assembly Trustees recommended that a single Leadership Team should oversee the Faith Action Programme with four Programme Groups taking forward the detail. The General Assembly commended the continuing involvement of the two Forums in the development of the Faith Action Programme, and instructed the Assembly Trustees, to bring a detailed structure for the new arrangements to this year's General Assembly.

13.4 The work of developing these detailed proposals was carried out by the Assembly Trustees' Strategic Planning Team (the "SPT"). This was convened by the Assembly Trustees' Administrative Trustee and comprised Vice Conveners from the Faith Impact and Faith Nurture Forums, the Conveners of the Theological Forum and the Ecumenical Relations Committee, the Principal Clerk, the Head of the Faith Action Programme and a number of other individuals with considerable experience of the national work of the Church. The SPT is grateful to Kay Cathcart and other staff for providing essential support for its work, and the Trustees are greatly appreciative of the collegiality and commitment of the SPT.

13.5 As set out in 2022, the single Leadership Team is to lead and champion the Faith Action Programme. This is a limited life Programme, running from 2023 to 2028, with review in 2025 (previously 2026). The key aim of the Programme is to equip and support the local Church in its mission. The principal definition of mission being used is the Five Marks of Mission. As well as People & Training and Mission Support the programme also encompasses the national work of the Church in speaking on Public Life and Social Justice, partnering with the World Church and overseeing a number of the Church's entities which have a commercial element.

13.6 As part of the Forums' continuing involvement in the development of the Faith Action Programme, they have approved the overall priorities for the Faith Action Programme which in turn align with the Assembly Trustees overall view of priorities. The purpose of the Faith Action Programme is to equip people to live out the mission of God. This is detailed as: to equip the people of God in the Church of Scotland and beyond to be disciples; to equip the Church so it is best able to glorify God, love God and confidently serve its communities, and impact people's lives through the missional marks; and to build God's kingdom in Scotland.

13.7 In terms of the priorities we describe earlier in this report, the work within the Programme will include the role of the Faith Nurture Forum in regard to Mission Planning, linking with the Church internationally, and input into new worshipping communities. As indicated elsewhere, including in the Faith Action Plan, the focus is to recruit and train for inspirational leadership in our Church which includes proposals developing around a Ministries Apprenticeship scheme.

13.8 It is in this exciting context that we set out what the SPT has developed as the proposed governance structure for the Faith Action Programme, and the remits for the Leadership Team and Programme Groups. These are informed by our work as Assembly Trustees on priorities, by detailed work within the SPT and by the Forums' work, with the Programme staff, on the priorities for the Programme.

13.9 The proposed governance structure is:

- a. That there be an overall Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (previously referred to as the "Active Faith Leadership Team" and in this Report referred to as "the Leadership Team")
- b. That this Leadership Team comprise:
 - A Convener
 - Vice Conveners each with the responsibility of leading a Programme Group (one of the Vice Conveners to be designated Depute Convener)
 - Nominees who will first have been nominated by Presbyteries before receiving final nomination from the Nomination Committee
 - Nominees who are directly nominated by the Nomination Committee
 - A representative from each of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Theological Forum
- c. That there be four Programme Groups with responsibility respectively for:
 - Mission Support (previously referred to as "Mission")
 - People and Training
 - Public Life and Social Justice (previously referred to as "Public Life and Global Justice")
 - Resource and Presence.

13.10 The rationale for this new structure closely aligns with that agreed in principle at the General Assembly of 2022. In essence the aim is to balance cohesion (for one overall Faith Action Programme, and overall priorities within that) with focus (so that small Programme Groups, whose members have particular expertise, will be trusted to work on the detail of policy). The detailed rationale and process are given in the Assembly Trustees' report to the General Assembly of 2022.

13.11 Although major work has been done to identify priorities within the Faith Action Programme, these need to be implemented and continued prioritisation within the national work of the Church remains a key objective. The creation of one unified structure for the Faith Action Programme is designed to enhance continued prioritisation, taking account of agreed budgetary constraints, and its implementation.

13.12 In 2022, the Assembly instructed that detailed proposals for the Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Theological Forum in relation to the structural arrangements for the Faith Action Programme should be brought whilst retaining their direct accountability to the General Assembly. In response, the first step was to involve the Conveners of both Agencies in the work of the SPT from the outset, with a view to reaching agreement on the relationship with the new structure and whether any remit or membership changes were needed. Both Conveners made a substantial contribution to the discussions and, having conferred together and with the rest of the SPT, the conclusion is that both Agencies should be represented on the Leadership Team. It is considered that this will suffice to ensure good integration and communication as the new structure becomes established and be the position unless and until it becomes evident that other changes are appropriate in relation to these Agencies.

13.13 Regarding Mission Planning, final approval for Presbytery Mission Plans (in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act) will rest with the Leadership Team and it is proposed that PMPIC will be retained, as a sub-group of the Mission Support Programme Group, until December 2025. It is anticipated that the Leadership Team will seek to retain those members of PMPIC who wish to continue, and will make any new appointments if required.

13.14 Considerable discussion within the SPT related to Presbytery-nominated members, and the process by which they were to be appointed. The SPT concluded that these members were not "Presbytery representatives" with the expectation that they would represent the views of their Presbytery, but would have freedom to represent their own views in the context of the needs of the Presbyteries. In this respect, their role is similar to that of Commissioners to the General Assembly. Ensuring that the Faith Action Programme is closely aligned with the work of Presbyteries was a key factor in SPT's thinking.

13.15 With the agreement of us as Assembly Trustees and the Nomination Committee, Presbyteries were requested to nominate two possible members for the Leadership Team. This was so that the Nomination Committee could assess and as far as possible ensure the overall diversity of the Leadership Team. As Assembly Trustees we note the complexity that this, and the number of appointments needed, has added to the work of the Nomination Committee and we express our gratitude to Nomination Committee members and support staff.

13.16 One aim of the Church's restructuring, which began in 2019, was the devolution of national work to new expanded Presbyteries. Now that most of these new Presbyteries are in place, it is time to assess and identify which areas of the Faith Action Programme should be devolved to Presbyteries. It is hoped that the prominent role of Presbytery-nominated members in the new Leadership Team will give increased impetus to this.

13.17 The SPT reported to us as Assembly Trustees how vital they see 'culture', and the importance of openness, a willingness to ask difficult and challenging questions, and effective delegation. We agree with their thinking that the work of the Faith Action Programme is spiritual work, going to the very heart of who we are as a Church. We therefore support the SPT's encouragement of ongoing training and reflection among all those involved with the Programme and the development of measures to assess progress on its implementation, not simply in delivery terms, but also in terms of values and culture. We also recognise how complex decision-making can be across our organisation, and support the strong emphasis from the SPT on effective delegation, both from the Leadership Team to the Programme Groups, and to staff. As our main report shows, simplifying our processes is important, and we must use people's precious time well. All of these developments require courage and must be rooted in prayer.

13.18 The Assembly Trustees take this opportunity to thank the Faith Nurture and Faith Impact Forums for the work they have undertaken since being formed in 2019. Theirs was already a monumental task, to bring together the work of four large Councils, and to do so by working in a new way. That they did this through the unique circumstances of lockdown in the first two years of their life is a significant achievement. To carry out their work with the prospect of further restructuring added further challenges. The Assembly Trustees express their gratitude to all the Forum Members, in particular to the Forum Conveners and Vice Conveners.

13.19 The proposed Structure and Remit of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team is set out in Appendix 3.

14. SALVESEN FUND

14.1 Following discussions between the Trustees and members of the Faith Impact Forum as trustees of the Salvesen Fund, in 2022 an application was submitted to the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator to widen the trust purposes of the Fund. If the application is approved, the new purpose will enable the Fund to provide support to the Church of Scotland in its work as it labours, itself or through its partner Churches, organisations, or communities, for the advancement of the Kingdom of God throughout the world (but outwith the United Kingdom and Channel Islands) through Christian worship, fellowship, instruction, mission and service.

14.2 It has been agreed between the Assembly Trustees and the Faith Impact Forum that authority should be sought from the Assembly for the appointment, as from 1 June 2023, of the members of the Assembly Trustees to replace the members of the Forum as the ex officio trustees of the Salvesen Fund. The Salvesen Trustees will continue to meet twice a year in June and November and will be supported by the Mission Support Programme Group of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team who, with input from the Salvesen Trustees, will oversee the normal administration of the Trust and will consider applications and bring recommendations to the full body of Salvesen Trustees as regards the suitability of applications for consideration for grants.

15. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) GROUP

15.1 Introduction and Overview

15.1.2 Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) continues to be a growing and developing area of work under the governance of the Assembly Trustees. The EDI Group's vision for the Church is that all people are welcome and that everyone who visits a congregation, the national offices and any other Church setting, can discern this as a result of welcoming attitudes and behaviours, the built environment and the atmosphere that everyone plays a role in creating. 2022-2023 has been focused on continuing to progress the three strategic priorities for the EDI Group, fixed for the next five years, and the programmes of work that have developed around them. These priorities are: racial justice, disability inclusion, and conduct and culture. Each of these priorities have a corresponding group made up of EDI Group and co-opted members with specialist interest and expertise in these areas. In general terms the EDI Group has also responded to inquiries and initiatives relating to policy, procedure and themes of work which do not fit within the recognised priorities and areas of ongoing work.

15.2 Racial Justice

15.2.1 The Racial Justice Group has been continuing and completing the research project it embarked on in 2021. This was to learn from the experiences of ethnic minority members of the Church and from congregations which have a higher than average representation of congregants from an ethnic minority background. The full report from this research can be found on the website <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/more-inclusive-church>. This work will provide the Church with a set of key insights, alongside others gleaned from the work the group has done in other areas, to improve the collective knowledge of the Church on the experiences of those from an ethnic minority background. The intention is to help the Church recognise examples of good practice as well as areas for reflection and improvement, for example to shape policies and procedures, inform beliefs, design and target training, and improve structures in the Church. Given that racial justice is relevant to so many aspects of the life of the Church training and facilitated discussion will be core components as the EDI Group seeks to improve the capacity of individuals to recognise issues and feel at ease with discussing 'race', racism and racial justice issues. This will help those disclosing an experience of racism to receive an empathic and a compassionate response, as well as being offered an appropriate set of options to formalise a complaint, if necessary. Overall, this work is one part of helping the Church to name the fact of racism which exists in all parts of society. The ordinariness of the interpersonal, systemic and institutional nature of the problem requires the Church to be intentional in embedding racial equity goals in all areas of Church life.

15.2.2 The Racial Justice Group was also involved in the parallel research on the legacy of slavery, which brings to the attention of the Church many similar lessons and poignant moments for reflection that the contemporary research has done. Together, what we have learned from our past and our present may inform and inspire our work for justice and inclusion in the future. The full report on the legacy of slavery and the Church of Scotland is included in the report of the Faith Impact Forum, with a related deliverance.

15.3 Disability Inclusion

15.3.1 The overarching aim of the Disability Inclusion Working Group (DIWG), is *to support and enable Church of Scotland congregations to proactively seek to cultivate a culture where they are communities of belonging for all.*

15.3.2 What is the DIWG doing?

15.3.3 In order to support and enable congregations effectively to meet this aim, the DIWG has begun its work in the following ways:

- *Gathering insights directly from those who have lived experience of disability.* This will inform the group's understanding of the needs and the resourcing required to create congregations as communities of belonging for all. The group has partnered with a variety of disability organisations to gather a diverse range of people to participate in a series of small group online discussions.
- *Carry out research into what is happening in Church of Scotland congregations and presbyteries.* A questionnaire was sent to all Church of Scotland congregations in November 2022 which resulted in 278 responses containing a rich variety of data. This has enabled the group to gather good news stories, resources and ideas that can be shared, and has enhanced its understanding of the needs to be addressed.
- *Carrying out a mapping exercise of organisations and services (secular and faith-based) already involved in enhancing disability inclusion in Scotland.* The DIWG will make the information on these organisations and services readily available to congregations, by providing easy signposting to them, and will investigate if there is scope for collaborative or complementary work with them.

15.4 Conduct and Culture

15.4.1 The Conduct and Culture Group is working to create a network of champions across Scotland so that there are individuals and groups acting as advocates of equality and inclusion, creating connections and sharing resources across geographical areas. Establishing a network allows individuals to seek support and advice from others working to the same goals and discuss ideas and initiatives. It also provides a visible network of listed champions for people to approach in presbyteries and congregations. The exact role of each champion and the function and design of the network is still being outlined.

15.4.2 EDI training across a number of areas including a general introduction to EDI principles, bias, and racial justice are being recorded and delivered as e-learning and facilitated training respectively. The aim is for training and information to be widely available to anyone who plays an active role in Church life.

16. GRANTS FUNDING – THE SMALL GRANTS FUND AND PIONEER MISSION FUND

16.1 The Small Grants fund, now in its third year of operation, and the Pioneer Mission Fund which successfully launched in 2022 are operated under the direction of the Assembly Trustees. Each fund has £100,000 assigned with all grants assessed by two independent panels, one for each fund. The Small Grants Fund provides grants of up to £1,000 to congregations and Presbyteries for short-term projects of between 3 and 12 months. In Autumn 2022, recognising the urgent need, 'Winter Support' criteria were added in order to allow churches or groups of churches to apply for funding of up to £5,000 to help support communities through the winter cost-of-living crisis. In total, £93,000 was distributed under the Winter Support Fund criteria, with the Trustees providing additional monies due to the demand on the fund. In respect of the Small Grants criteria, £17,800 were made to a range of projects. The Pioneer Mission Fund resulted in 10 awards of £5,000 being made to a range of Pioneer projects in 2022.

16.2 The Trustees intend to offer one final year of Pioneer Mission Fund grants in 2023 prior to the fund being merged into the far larger Seeds for Growth monies. The Small Grants Fund is set to continue through 2023 and beyond with the intention again to open the fund in late summer to support winter needs within communities.

16.3 The Grants Unit has continued to support congregations at the local level in sourcing external grants. A significant number of congregations have been successful in securing Scottish Government funding in relation to winter support costs for communities. Support and signposting services for external grant requirements can be found through emailing grants@churchofscotland.org.uk

17. PAY AND GRADING REVIEW OF CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

17.1 The Pay and Grading Review for the Central Services Committee (CSC) was completed in the Summer of 2022 following a significant period of work and included the engagement of an external agency. The CSC employs staff within the national offices (including the Glasgow Priority Areas Office) and Storytelling Centre. This work completed the final outstanding deliverance from the Special Commission report of 2019. Jobs were grouped into appropriate grades to enable the CSC to apply the same pay and other contractual terms and conditions of employment in a fair and competitive manner. This provides a consistent framework for managing the pay system and reduces the risk of an equal pay issue.

17.2 The guiding principles of the work were to ensure:

- A fair and consistent pay structure
- A fair and consistent progression system
- Competitive pay & benefits package
- Ensure that pay is in line with best practice, legislation and is future proof
- Ensure transparency of the pay and grading system

17.3 In deciding on the recommendation, the CSC had to balance the impact in three main areas: affordability, the desire to achieve a competitive, benchmarked salary structure and implications for existing staff.

17.4 There are some important points to note. Salary benchmarking used was Croner Reward Data, specifically the Not for Profit comparator data in Edinburgh. Salaries were set just above the median for most roles. The notable exception was the Chief Officer role where the proposed salary was set just above the lower quartile benchmark. Overall, the approved model increased the CSC pay bill by 2.9%.

18. NATIONAL OFFICE BUILDING OPTION APPRAISAL AND BUSINESS PLAN: THE FUTURE OF 121 GEORGE STREET

18.1 The future of the George Street Offices is one which has been debated by the General Assembly over many years. Operationally, the past three years has seen significant changes to working practices with the impact of pandemic lockdown and technological change resulting in the National Office along with many other organisations adapting to remote and hybrid working. This includes a considerable increase in the use of video conferencing replacing in person meetings.

18.2 Accompanying the changes to working practice brought about by the pandemic have been the significant reforms within our own church structures. As the new Presbyteries begin to take shape, accompanied by the reprioritisation exercise and modernisation of systems and processes of the national infrastructure, it is currently difficult to establish how many staff will need to be housed in a central building.

18.3 As reported to previous Assemblies, extensive work has been undertaken on financial and option appraisals modelling various scenarios of basic maintenance, relocation or refurbishing the National Offices and letting out surplus space. There are two decisive elements which influence the results, firstly, the ability to generate revenue from an asset and second, the amount of floor space required to accommodate staff, meeting space and storage.

18.4 As an interim position, the Assembly Trustees agreed that the National Office Buildings should be used to generate much needed income to offset operational running costs. The re-organisation of staff working arrangements arising out of the pandemic and our learning from this process has allowed for the establishment of a new operational model with increased use of technology and less reliance on physical processes and systems. This hybrid model with a flexible work style will impact on the total and nature of physical space required.

18.5 The National Office is therefore going through a process of consolidating its desking footprint onto two floors, adopting shared desking, reducing storage and utilising more video conferencing. This exercise will inform the size and layout of floor space required to support the future operations of the National Offices. In the interim we will seek to use any surplus space to generate income to help offset operational costs. During 2022 we were able to generate £172,000 of rental income from lettings to Charitable organisations and we would hope to double that moving forward.

18.6 Engagement has also occurred with the Presbytery of Edinburgh to determine whether the relocation of the Church Offices to an existing Church building within the Presbytery might be feasible. This focused on properties within a 20-minute walk of a major public transport hub. Properties were visited and the feasibility of repurposing as an office building assessed with initial results suggesting that a number of these Church properties are either too small or too complex in terms of listed status and cost of conversion to provide a realistic office space.

18.7 The Assembly Trustees are currently not in a position to provide any firm recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the future of the George Street Buildings. This is due to many unknown factors in play at the same time; uncertainty as to the physical space requirements any building would be required to support set against a volatile financial and property market. The Assembly Trustees are also cognisant of the amount of money and staff time that would be required in undertaking any changes from the current practice. Focus for our National staff over the next few years must be on supporting the local church rather than seeking new premises. The Assembly Trustees believe that a relative holding position, in terms of using the building as an asset for revenue raising whilst ensuring safe and basic maintenance continues as the most pragmatic and beneficial way forward at this juncture. The Trustees would therefore like to propose to the Assembly that rather than continually reporting on the future, a strategy is developed for all of our estate whilst optimising income generation in the short to medium term. For the National Office this equates to a five-year period of consolidation which enables us to provide security for new tenants and significant new income generation for the Church.

19. OFFICE HOLDER EMAILS

19.1 In 2018, the Council of Assembly were tasked with considering 'the issues arising from the use of personal email addresses for the processing of personal data by elders and other non-ministerial congregational and Presbytery office-bearers and to put in place appropriate support mechanisms to ensure that such individuals are able to fulfil their duties fully whilst observing best practice in relation to data protection principles'. As the Assembly will appreciate, five years in technology terms works at a considerable pace and following an initial pilot project and the appointment

of a new Head of IT within the CSC, a detailed assessment of this request was made. The conclusion was reached that, as we strive to minimise the national office expenditure as instructed by the General Assembly in 2019, it would be cost prohibitive to give every office holder an email address and that a more pragmatic approach would be required utilising a revised intranet service being developed through the National Offices. Further information will be communicated to Office Holders through 2023.

20. SUPPORT FOR MINISTERS – MANSE LIVING COSTS

20.1 The General Assembly of 2022 instructed the Assembly Trustees to urgently develop, in consultation with other key partners, a scheme which supported Parish Ministers who found themselves facing **hardship** with the rise in costs of heating and electricity. The deliverance also required a renewal of the commitment of the Church to continue to fight **poverty** in all its guises wherever it is found and felt.

20.2 A task group was established under the leadership of the Chief Officer. Membership included an Assembly Trustee/Minister, the Principal Clerk, representatives from Finance, Law and the Faith Nurture Forum. A number of options were presented for consideration by the Trustees, who agreed upon the following criteria. Grants of £1,000 were available for those who:

- Were a parish minister living in a manse (& planned to do so for at least the next 12 months);
- Confirmed that they were in financial hardship due to the rising cost of heating;
- Have capital of less than £75k (held by applicant and partner);
- Met the disposable income threshold for their household type noted below:

20.3 Disposable Income thresholds:

Household type	Initial disposable income threshold	Revised disposable income threshold*
Applicant living along with no dependent in manse	£17,000	£22,400
Applicant and partner with no dependents living in manse	£26,000	£31,100
Applicant (without partner) with dependents living in manse	£26,000	£33,600
Applicants and partner with dependents living in manse	£37,000	£38,200

*Revised standard introduced post review of minimum standards by Joseph Rowntree Foundation

20.4 The original Ministers Fixed Hardship Grant scheme was launched on 15th September 2022 and closed on 7th October. Due to a change in minimum income standards set by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the scheme was reopened on 12th October and closed on 4th November. Approximately 20% of ministers and assistant ministers applied for the grant. In total 145 applications were received, with 89% successfully meeting the criteria for payment. 129 eligible claims were processed with total expenditure of £129,000. The scheme was subject to income tax and national insurance, with the Church of Scotland settling the liability.

21. CONSOLIDATED FABRIC FUND REVIEW

21.1 The report in respect of the use of sales proceeds from properties surplus to requirements can be found within the General Trustees report.

22. ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES CONSTITUTION AND REMIT

22.1 The Trustees' Constitution and Remit was approved by the 2019 General Assembly on the Report of the Special Commission on Structural Reform. As the work of the Trustees, and its groups have developed over the years, practice has shown that further minor amendments are now required.

22.2 Clause 10 of the Constitution and Remit provides that, in addition to Trustees appointed by the General Assembly, the Chair of the Church of Scotland General Trustees shall be a Trustee by virtue of office. The post of Chair of the General Trustees is an onerous one, involving considerable time and attention and attendance at a large number of meetings, and the Assembly Trustees accept the view of the General Trustees' Chair *pro tem* that it is not practicable for one individual fully to discharge the duties of a charity trustee as a member of the Assembly Trustees whilst at the same time shouldering the burden of responsibility as Chair of the General Trustees.

22.3 The Assembly Trustees have since their inception greatly valued the input to their work made by the Chair *pro tem* and his predecessors and are keen that the knowledge and insight of the General Trustees should continue to be available to them, so as to facilitate good communication across the Church and broad participation in the ongoing exercise of prioritisation. It is proposed that this should happen, in future, via the appointment by the General Trustees of a representative who would attend and participate in meetings of the Assembly Trustees but would explicitly not be a member of the Assembly Trustees' board. The pattern of regular informal meetings between the Chair and Chief Executive of the General Trustees and the Convener and Chief Officer of the Assembly Trustees, which has developed over the past year, will continue.

22.4 The Assembly Trustees therefore seek the authority of the General Assembly to make the following change to their Constitution and Remit:

Delete the final sentence of Clause 10 and substitute the following: "In addition to appointed Trustees, the Convener of the Business Committee of the General Assembly shall be a Trustee by virtue of office. The Church of Scotland General Trustees shall appoint one of their members as a representative who shall be entitled to attend all meetings as a corresponding member but without a right to vote or make a motion, such member being eligible to serve for a maximum period of three years".

22.5 Governance Group remit

22.5.1 The Governance Group, following review, was re-established in meeting format in 2021 and is tasked in ensuring that the Trustees fulfil their legal and functional responsibilities in all respects. It advises and assists the Trustees in exercise of their supervision of the component elements of the Church as required by the Church's Designated Religious Charity status, and oversees compliance by Forums, Committees, Councils, Congregations and Presbyteries in the proper discharge of their duties and responsibilities under charity and accounting legislation and General Assembly Acts and Regulations.

22.5.2 The Governance Group acts in an advisory capacity to the Assembly Trustees and is not a decision-making authority. In order to reduce workloads, the Trustees seek to reduce membership to four members from the Assembly Trustees.

22.5.3 The Assembly Trustees therefore seek the authority of the General Assembly to make the following change to Schedule B of our Constitution and Remit. Delete clause 1 and substitute the following 'A Governance Group ('the Group') comprises a minimum of four and a maximum of five members of the Trustees, one of whom is the Vice Convener of the Trustees and one the Administrative Trustee, with in addition the Convener of the Trustees able to attend ex officio. A quorum will be two members. The Convener of the Group will be appointed by the Trustees and not be one of the three office bearers'.

22.5.4. The remit of the Governance Group, which details areas of activity of the Group, is outlined in Appendix 5 and for ease of reference is requested to be added as Schedule B.B to the Constitution and Remit of the Charity Trustees.

22.6 THE ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

22.6.1 Since last reporting, the Assembly Trustees have started hybrid meetings, holding the majority of meetings virtually with the occasional in person meeting. As required by the Constitution and Remit, the trustees strive to maintain a diverse skillset and approach whilst ensuring that as far as possible the Board has a balanced age and gender representation. When the ex officio trustees are included, in 2022-2023, there were six Ministers of Word and Sacrament (two of whom are Presbytery Clerks, three Parish Ministers and one Professor of Christian Dogmatics). The Trustees also have amongst their number, a strategic HR specialist, a former executive chairman, a group finance director, an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Project Manager, a practising KC and former UK Judge on the General Court of the European Union and a retired lawyer with significant parliamentary experience. All are active members of congregations and most are elders. Many have significant third-sector experience. The geographical spread of Assembly Trustees now extends to the International Presbytery. In May 2023 we welcome one additional Trustee due to the retirement of one trustee due to personal reasons and the reappointment of a further four. The change to the attendance as an ex-officio Trustee of the Chair of the General Trustees is noted above.

22.6.2 Assembly Trustee information as at 11 March 2023

Trustee	Meetings	Attended
David Cameron (<i>Convener from June 2022</i>)	11	10
Jean Couper	11	8
Ian Forrester (<i>from June 2022</i>)	11	9
David Harrison <i>Vice-Convener</i>	11	10
Barry Hughes	11	8
Alan Kennedy <i>Pro tem Chair of the General Trustees (by virtue of office)</i>	11	1
Jennifer MacDonald (<i>from June 2022</i>)	11	8
Peter McEnhill	11	9
Geoff Miller	11	9
Ann Nelson	11	11
Gillian Paterson (<i>from June 2022, resigned September 2022</i>)	4	2
Norman Smith	11	9
Philip Ziegler	11	9
Donald McCorkindale, <i>Convener, Assembly Business Committee (by virtue of office)</i>	11	10

In the name of the Committee

DAVID CAMERON, *Convener*
DAVID HARRISON, *Vice Convener*
ANN NELSON, *Administrative Trustee*

Appendix 1

REGULATIONS AMENDING THE CONGREGATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS 'GIVING TO GROW' REGULATIONS (REGULATIONS II 2022)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Congregational Contributions 'Giving To Grow' Regulations (Regulations II 2022), shall be amended as follows:

1. *In paragraph 1, insert "a" between "with" and "registered" in the first line, and in the last line delete "make a Contribution" and substitute "contribute".*
2. *Delete the existing paragraph 12 and substitute:*
 "12. The required Contribution shall be calculated, based on each Charge's Income Base and the total Cost as defined below of all Minister(s) of Word and Sacrament allocated to that Charge. The "Cost of a Minister of Word and Sacrament" is the total of the gross salary at the maximum of the stipend scale, employer's national insurance contribution, employer's pension contribution, death in service benefit cost and cost of income protection. The Income Base is the sum of the assessable income of all of the Congregations within that Charge. The Stewardship and Finance Department shall determine and report annually the "Cost of a Minister of Word and Sacrament"."
3. *In paragraph 16, delete the existing paragraphs (a) and (b) and substitute:*
 "(a) Ministry Here: 50% of the Charge's Income Base, but not exceeding the Cost of the Minister(s) of Word and Sacrament allocated to that Charge. This allocation shall be based on the number of full-time equivalent posts of Minister(s) of Word and Sacrament allocated to that Charge as at 31 August in the year of calculation.
 (b) Ministry Elsewhere: 35% of the income which is over and above twice the Cost of the Minister(s) of Word and Sacrament allocated to that Charge as at 31 August in the year of calculation. This component shall not exceed 1.5 times the Cost of the Minister(s) of Word and Sacrament allocated to that Charge."
4. *Delete the existing paragraph 23 and substitute the following three paragraphs, renumbering thereafter:*
 "23. Presbyteries may increase the proposed Contributions for individual Congregations where they deem that there is considerable potential for increased giving by completing a 'Giving Agreement' with the trustees of the Congregation which will indicate the agreed Contributions for the following financial year. As per paragraph 9, Presbyteries shall communicate by Extract Minute the required Contributions for Congregations within their bounds subject to application of a Giving Agreement for the following financial year to the Stewardship and Finance Department not later than 15 November each year. Any agreed increase in the proposed Contribution can be used either by Presbytery or Nationally to fund initiatives, as determined by the congregation entering into the Agreement.
 24. Agreed Additional Giving increases to fund National initiatives will be included in the Confirmation of the required Contributions for the following financial year issued by the Stewardship and Finance Department by 31 December each year. The monies will be credited to the Church of Scotland General Fund.
 25. Where the Agreed Additional Giving is to fund Presbytery initiatives, a separate invoice will be issued by the Presbytery concerned. The monies will be credited to Presbytery Funds."
5. *In the existing paragraph 26, delete the words "ensuring that the newly adjusted Congregation will not pay more in that financial year under the adjusted form compared to the previous form".*
6. *In the existing paragraph 27, delete the word "further".*
7. *Delete the existing paragraph 29 (Transitional Provisions) and renumber thereafter.*
8. *Delete the definition of "Excess Income".*

Appendix 2

[] REGULATIONS AMENDING THE 'SEEDS FOR GROWTH' FUND REGULATIONS (REGULATIONS IV 2022)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the 'Seeds for Growth' Fund Regulations (Regulations IV 2022), shall be amended as follows:

9. *In the Schedule to the Regulations, under the heading "Governance" delete the existing paragraph 3. and substitute the following:*
 "3. In carrying out their duties the Committee will engage with applicants through regional teams and carry out the process of assessment with local Presbytery representatives. The Committee shall have the ability to co-opt additional non-voting members who hold requisite expertise in certain areas onto the Committee as required."
10. *In the Schedule to the Regulations, under the heading "Governance" add a new paragraph 5. and renumber the following paragraphs:*
 "5. Grants of £1,000 and below can be awarded at the discretion of the Grants Manager. Any such grants awarded will be presented for information to the next meeting of the Committee."

Appendix 3

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM – STRUCTURE AND REMIT

Definitions

In this Remit:

The terms 'Agency' and 'Agencies' mean the following bodies being Standing Committees of the General Assembly, namely:

- a) the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team
- b) the following Committees: Assembly Business, Chaplains to His Majesty's Forces, Ecumenical Relations, Legal Questions, Nomination Committee, Safeguarding and Theological Forum.

The terms "Agency" and "Agencies" will include any successor bodies to each of the bodies named above.

The term "Leadership Team" refers to the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.

The term "Ministers' Scheme" refers to the Church of Scotland Pension Scheme for Ministers and Overseas Missionaries.

The term "MDS Scheme" refers to the Church of Scotland Pension Scheme for Ministries Development Staff.

The term "Programme Groups" refers to the Groups whose leaders are the Vice Conveners of the Leadership Team and which report to it.

The term "Unincorporated Entities" refers to the charity of which the Assembly Trustees are the charitable trustees.

Purpose, status and membership

1. The Faith Action Programme Leadership Team ('the Leadership Team') and its Programme Groups will have the remits set out in the Appendix.
2. The Leadership Team will lead and oversee the development and implementation of the five-year Faith Action Programme, within the framework of the Church of Scotland's Faith Action Plan, to enable the delivery of the Church's identified priorities.
3. The Leadership Team will be a Standing Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. As a successor body, the Leadership Team is one of the Agencies referred to in the Constitution and Remit of the Assembly Trustees and the Assembly Trustees, as charity trustees, exercise general oversight over the work of the Leadership Team.
4. The Leadership Team will comprise: -
 - a Convener
 - four Vice Conveners to deputise for the Convener when unavailable and lead Programme Groups (with one of the Vice Conveners to be designated, on the recommendation of the Nomination Committee, as Depute Convener)
 - five members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee
 - twelve members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, having first been nominated by their Presbytery. It is anticipated that Presbyteries nominate more than one possible member, and that the Nomination Committee select by the skills and experience which have been identified by the Leadership Team as being requisite bearing in mind the need for diversity in the membership of the Leadership Team and Programme Groups. There will be one such member for each Presbytery or Presbytery grouping.
 - The Convener, or substitute, of the Theological Forum
 - The Convener, or substitute, of the Ecumenical Relations Committee.

No Assembly Trustee, member of another Agency of the Church or employee of the Church will be eligible to be a member.

5. The quorum will be five members. The Convener will have a casting vote.
6. The Convener will be appointed for a term of four years. Of the Vice Conveners two will be appointed for two years and two for three years as decided by the Nomination Committee. Subsequent to those first appointed, the Convener and Vice Conveners may be appointed from existing members and will conclude service at the conclusion of their term as Convener or Vice Convener.

Of the other Members of the Leadership Team first appointed, one third will serve for four years, one third for three years and one third for two years as decided by the Nomination Committee.

Programme Groups

7. There will be four Programme Groups, with the remits set out in the Appendix. Programme Groups will report to the Leadership Team and will have written delegated authority from the Leadership Team to take forward their respective elements of the Faith Action Programme. This will include the development of strategy and policy, and working alongside staff members in their implementation.
8. Each Vice Convener will lead a Programme Group. No other members of the Leadership Team will be a member of a Programme Group.
9. Programme Groups will each consist of four members, appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee plus their Programme Group Leader. Of the four, two will serve for four years and two for three years as decided by the Nomination Committee. Programme Groups will have power to co-opt members to their Group, subject to approval by the Leadership Team and notification to the Assembly Trustees. The number

of co-opted members will not exceed the number of General Assembly appointed members, and only General Assembly appointed members will have the right to vote on decisions of the Programme Group.

10. Programme Groups may form short-life Task Groups to assist or advise them in the delivery of the Faith Action Programme. With the exception of the Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group, such Groups will comprise no more than five individuals (of whom no more than two may be non-members of the Church), and be headed by a Programme Group member, with freedom to select other persons, including members of staff, as co-opt. The remit and composition of each such Group will be agreed by the Leadership Team and reviewed annually, should the task for which it is formed not be completed within a year. Task Groups will report to the relevant Programme Group. The number, size, remits and activities of such Groups will be approved by the Leadership Team Convener and reported to the General Assembly.

The Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group will report to the Leadership Team in regard to the approval of Presbytery Plans.

The Ministries Council and World Mission Council

11. The Ministries Council and World Mission Council will remain as constituent committees of the Leadership Team, with members appointed from among the membership of the Leadership Team and with specific responsibility for acting as the statutory employer of individuals who are members of the Ministers' Scheme and the MDS Scheme.

Operation

12. Meetings of the Leadership Team will be held at least five times each year and will be attended by the Head of the Faith Action Programme or identified representative. Meetings of a Programme Group will be attended by the Head of the staff team working with that Programme Group or identified representative. The work of the Leadership Team and its Programme Groups will be serviced by such staff as is agreed in consultation with the Head of the Faith Action Programme.

Finance and Management

13. The General Treasurer and Chief Officer will allocate a budget for the Faith Action Programme in consultation with the Leadership Team and by approval of the Assembly Trustees, based upon available finance resources and the Leadership Team's three-year plans (see Appendix para 5).
14. The Head of the Faith Action Programme will be responsible for budgetary control and, in consultation with the General Treasurer and directed by the Chief Officer, will establish arrangements for internal accountability, reporting and adherence to the Unincorporated Entities' Financial Regulations and Policies.

Reporting

15. A draft of the Report on the Faith Action Programme will be submitted to the Assembly Trustees for approval no later than four weeks before the date on which it is due to be lodged with the Principal Clerk.
16. The Convener and Vice Conveners together on behalf of the Leadership Team and its Programme Groups will present the Report on the Faith Action Programme to the General Assembly, assisted as appropriate by other members or by senior staff.

Continuity

17. Other than as provided for in terms of paragraph 11 of this remit, the Leadership Team shall assume all of the rights, assets and responsibilities of the Faith Nurture Forum and the Faith Impact Forum, whose work and functions are incorporated into the work and functions of the Leadership Team. Any existing trust funds and all future donations and legacies received in connection with either the Faith Nurture Forum or the Faith Impact Forum or any such work or functions will be held and applied by the Assembly Trustees on behalf of the Leadership Team, all according to the terms and conditions applying to individual donations.
18. The Leadership Team has and may exercise all the functions and powers held formerly by the Faith Impact Forum (formerly the World Mission Council and its Middle East Committee) under the Constitution of the Scots Memorial, Jerusalem (St. Andrew's Church and Hospice) Trust. The Convener of the Leadership Team and the Head of the Faith Action Programme shall be the successors in office of the Convener and Secretary of the World Mission Council and as such are trustees *ex officio* under the said Constitution.

Review

19. The Assembly Trustees will review this structure and remit in 2025 and report to the General Assembly in 2026 with recommendations either for adjustment within the five-year period of the Programme, or for the organisation and work of the Programme beyond 2028, or both.

Appendix – Remit of the Leadership Team

1. Except as set out in paragraph 7 below, the Leadership Team will succeed to all of the responsibilities, rights, assets and remits of the Faith Impact Forum and Faith Nurture Forum and their work and functions will be incorporated into the work and functions of the Leadership Team. (The work of the Faith Nurture Forum and of the Faith Impact Forum was set out in the Remit section for each of them in Appendix 1 to the approved Report of the Assembly Trustees to the Commission of the General Assembly held on 21 November 2019 and amplified in Appendix 2 'fundamental aims and key areas of work for the Faith Nurture and Faith Impact Forums' set out in the Schedules to Appendix 2 to the approved Report of the Assembly Trustees to the General Assembly held in October 2020.)

Without prejudice to this generality the focus of the Leadership Team will be on the objectives and the areas of responsibility set out below.

2. The Leadership Team will seek to shape and then implement the instructions, policies, priorities and strategic objectives of the General Assembly relating to the Faith Action Programme. In so doing it will work with the Assembly Trustees, Presbyteries and other parts of the Church to achieve a collaborative approach with the purpose of nurturing the people of the Church in their witness, worship and service.
3. In particular, the Leadership Team will seek to deliver the objectives of the Faith Action Programme over the period 2023-2028 which are to:
 - i. Build and launch an integrated training programme for members of local churches/congregations/communities, carrying in the first instance resources for faith, life and mission.
 - ii. Create pathways that attract and allow the Church of Scotland to recruit the required number of leaders for the recognised ministries for which they are suited and called.
 - iii. Establish a programme to develop and support congregations/churches/communities to grow in the Christian faith, to develop national and international partnerships with the local and world church, to deliver missional activity throughout the year and to establish nationally 100 new worshipping communities.
 - iv. Establish and deliver with all Presbyteries a comprehensive programme of support to equip all those responsible for evolving fresh forms of worship, including digital ministry, alongside continued support for developing best practice in existing worship.
 - v. Contribute to public life and social justice on behalf of the Church of Scotland.
 - vi. Deliver the Presbytery Mission Plan Act – with a configuration of ministries and congregational estates which is sustainable and affordable.
 - vii. From 2024 decrease annually, by amounts agreed through the Assembly Trustees’ budgeting process, the operating costs of national programmes as work is devolved or ended, and generate income to fulfil the Programme and further the wider work of the Church.

4. The Programme Groups which report to the Leadership Team will have responsibility for these work streams of the Programme:

The Mission Support Programme Group

- 1) Equipping, inspiring, resourcing and supporting the church locally, at presbytery and at the national level in mission.
- 2) Engaging with congregations through international education and support.
- 3) Exploring new ways of being Church.
- 4) Overseeing presbytery mission planning and international partnership support.
- 5) Developing the Church’s ministry and mission in Priority Areas.
- 6) Informing worship, both traditional and digital, and developing a digital strategy.
- 7) Supporting the work of the Education and Schools Group and the Gaelic Group.
- 8) Supporting Ministries through pastoral care provision.

The People and Training Programme Group

- 1) The recruitment, training and formation of those in the Recognised Ministries of the Church of Scotland.
- 2) The training, discipleship and support of members and elders of the Church of Scotland and maintaining key partnerships including those with Presbyteries and Academic Partners.
- 3) Alongside Presbyteries, recruiting, resourcing and training people intentionally for the mission of God, especially nurturing those who are new to faith.
- 4) Supporting ministries and learning through the ASCEND programme.

The Public Life and Social Justice Programme Group

- 1) Equipping the Church to pursue God’s mission of inclusivity, social justice and care for creation in Scotland and around the world.
- 2) Supporting activities of Presbyteries and congregations in engaging with national and international issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation, with a priority for inclusion of those who are marginalised or struggle against poverty.
- 3) Engaging policies which contribute to public life by developing and sharing the witness of the Church with government, parliament, ecumenical partners, faith groups, and civil society, and supporting the exchange of information and opinions between national institutions and presbyteries and congregations.
- 4) Providing a space in which to explore theologically, reflect, discuss and respond as a Church to important public matters that arise.

The Resource and Presence Programme Group

- 1) Engaging people with the mission of God through the optimisation of assets in an ethical and values driven way.
- 2) Ensuring that net revenues are maximised through the resources available within the Faith Action Programme.
- 3) The business output for Life and Work and increasing advertising and sales.
- 4) Maximising the use of furlough properties.
- 5) Reviewing the John Knox House/Scottish Story-Telling Centre in terms of scope, purpose and future direction.
- 6) Ensuring the business viability of the Israeli entities.

5. In relation to the Faith Action Programme as a whole the Leadership Team will:
 - 1) lead and oversee its development and implementation
 - 2) ensure liaison with all appropriate parties including Presbyteries, the General Trustees, the Principal Clerk and the Assembly Business Committee, and good communication with the wider Church and beyond.
 - 3) have regard to the strategic objectives of the General Assembly and the strategic priorities of the Assembly Trustees to:
 - a. ensure consistency with the Faith Action Plan
 - b. model and lead a shared culture and values for the Programme
 - c. ensure that in delivering the General Assembly's emphasis on supporting local congregations and Presbyteries, the Church of Scotland's commitments to world church/global mission, and the Gospel imperative for the poorest, are maintained
 - d. lead in, and oversee the development of
 - i. strategic objectives for the Programme
 - ii. implementation plans
 - iii. specific projects
 - iv. milestones and measures to assess progress
 - e. ensure
 - i. co-ordination and oversight of priorities with work ceasing if no longer required and working within budgets agreed by the Assembly Trustees
 - ii. creativity and excellence in Strategic Planning
 - iii. encouragement of talent
 - iv. effective collaboration and communication
 - v. elimination of duplication
 - vi. reporting from the Programme Groups to the Assembly Trustees,
 - vii. that the Programme's objectives, plans, measures etc are being implemented
 - f. contribute to reviews and adjustments of the strategic priorities of the General Assembly and the priorities of the Assembly Trustees.
 - 4) In relation to the life and work of the Church of Scotland, and of the wider Church:
 - a. maintain a broad view and ensure that Leadership Team members are continuously aware of the context in which the Faith Action Programme is being undertaken
 - b. champion the work of the Programme.
6. The Leadership Team will agree with the Assembly Trustees by October each year a three-year rolling action plan within the overall five-year Faith Action Programme, with the measurable outcomes which it seeks to achieve during the ensuing three years.
7. **Salvesen Fund**
 The members of the Leadership Team shall not succeed to the trusteeship of the Salvesen Fund, which shall pass to the members of the Assembly Trustees *ex officio*. The Schedule to the said Remit set out in Appendix 1 to the approved Report of the Assembly Trustees to the Commission of the General Assembly held on 21 November 2019 shall accordingly not form part of this remit.

Appendix 4

CONSTITUTION AND REMIT OF THE CHARITY TRUSTEES OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, (the Unincorporated Entities), SCOTTISH CHARITY NO SC011353

Approve the following amendments to the Constitution and Remit of the Assembly Trustees (*Section 23*):

1. Delete the final sentence of Clause 10 and substitute the following: "In addition to appointed Trustees, the Convener of the Business Committee of the General Assembly shall be a Trustee by virtue of office. The Church of Scotland General Trustees shall appoint one of their members as a representative who shall be entitled to attend all meetings as a corresponding member but without a right to vote or make a motion, such member being eligible to serve for a maximum period of three years".
2. In Section 33 (b) delete the wording "prepare, approve and present annually to the General Assembly an indicative Rolling Budget and outline Financial Plan for the following five years" and replace with "prepare approve and present annually to the General Assembly an indicative rolling budget and outline financial plan for the following four years and the budget for the current year.
3. Delete sections 34,35 and 36.
4. In Schedule B
 Delete clause 1 and substitute the following 'A Governance Group ('the Group") comprises a minimum of four and a maximum of five members of the Trustees, one of whom is the Vice Convener of the Trustees and one the Administrative Trustee, with in addition the Convener of the Trustees able to attend *ex officio*. A quorum will be two members. The Convener of the Group will be appointed by the Trustees and not be one of the three office bearers'.

5. The remit of the Governance Group is presented in Appendix 5 below and is to be added as an additional Schedule B.B (ie after Schedule B) to the Constitution and Remit of the Charity Trustees.
6. In Schedule D, delete section 2 (i) and replace with “requiring each Agency to submit to the Chief Officer and the General Treasurer (a) budget proposals for the cost of its work in the next calendar year and (b) draft budget proposals for such costs in the four ensuing calendar years;”.

Appendix 5

SCHEDULE B.B

GOVERNANCE GROUP REMIT

**THE ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,
(the Unincorporated Entities),
SCOTTISH CHARITY NO SC011353
REMIT of the GOVERNANCE GROUP**

1. The Governance Group (“the Group”) has been established by the Assembly Trustees (the “Trustees”) under and by virtue of Schedule B of the Constitution and Remit of the Trustees as approved by the General Assembly 2019 (“the Constitution”).
2. The Group comprises a minimum of four and a maximum of five members of the Trustees, one of whom is the Vice Convener of the Trustees and one the Administrative Trustee, with in addition the Convener of the Trustees able to attend ex officio. A quorum will be two members. The Convener of the Group will be appointed by the Trustees and not be one of the three office bearers. The Chief Officer, Principal Clerk, General Treasurer, Solicitor of the Church and the Head of Analysis and Programme Development will attend meetings of the Group. The Convener of the Audit Committee will be entitled to attend on any matter which that Committee believes to be of sufficient importance.
3. The Group shall meet on at least four occasions a year. It will have no decision-making powers unless provided for in Schedule B of the Constitution and Remit or specifically authorised by the Trustees.
4. The Group shall ensure that the Trustees fulfil their legal and functional responsibilities in all respects. It shall advise and assist the Trustees in the exercise of the supervisory function of the component elements of the Church as required by the Church’s Designated Religious Charity status, and shall oversee compliance by Forums, Committees, Congregations and Presbyteries in the proper discharge of their duties and responsibilities under charity and accounting legislation and General Assembly Acts and Regulations.
5. The Group shall assist the Trustees in their duties to:
 - a. maintain a Code of Conduct for all Agencies of the Church as defined in clause 74 of the Constitution and Remit and supervise compliance with that Code by all members of such Agencies;
 - b. maintain a Code of Conduct for the Trustees, adhere to it and supervise compliance with that Code by all Trustees;
 - c. maintain, and in consultation with the Agencies subject to a periodic review, an appropriate Scheme of Financial Delegation such as that set out in Schedule F of the Constitution and Remit to be followed by the Agencies;
 - d. maintain, and in consultation with the Agencies subject to a periodic review, an appropriate Scheme of General Delegation;
 - e. ensure that all necessary policies are in place and regularly reviewed.
6. The Group shall receive regular reports from the Audit Committee and the Audit Committee should in turn receive copies of the Minutes from the Governance Group. The Governance Group remit shall be considered annually by the Audit Committee.
7. The Group will keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of risk management arrangements of the Unincorporated Entities. The Group shall consider the scope and effectiveness of the systems established by the Chief Officer to identify, assess, manage and monitor risk. This shall include periodic review of the principal risk register and, where applicable, the Chief Officer’s assessments and reports on the effectiveness of the systems for risk management
8. The Group shall advise and assist the Trustees on the governance aspects of management, resourcing, organisation and administration and shall undertake such other functions as may from time to time be delegated to or referred to it by the Trustees.
9. The Group shall ensure that there are effective induction and mentoring processes for new Trustees and that they have the necessary knowledge to be able to discharge their responsibilities. In particular, the Group shall ensure –
 - a. that each Trustee is aware of the terms of the Constitution;
 - b. that each Trustee is aware of the deliverance from the most recent General Assembly;
 - c. that each Trustee is aware of her or his role as an Assembly Trustee within the broader context of all of the component elements of the Church of Scotland;
 - d. that each Trustee is aware of the need to act with independence of mind and with probity;

- e. that the effective working of the Trustees is enabled through the body of Trustees having appropriate skills, experience and diversity;
 - f. that the Trustees exercise the controls necessary to ensure that the strategic priorities, policies and decisions of the General Assembly are implemented effectively and efficiently and establish appropriate checks on management, financial control mechanisms and risk appraisal; and
 - g. that the Trustees and the Agencies are open and accountable in their actions, enabling good communication among themselves and with staff, with others working within the Church, with members of the Church and with those with whom the Trustees and the Agencies engage.
10. The Group shall establish, maintain and keep under review an appraisal system for the Trustees which is in accordance with current good governance practice, as provided for in Schedule B of the Constitution and Remit.
 11. The Group shall exercise the functions provided for in Schedule B of the Constitution and Remit in respect of complaints regarding possible material breaches of duty by Trustees.

References

- [i] The pastoral charge is the unit that a Minister is responsible for e.g. linked congregations are a single charge.

THEOLOGICAL FORUM MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the Confessions of Faith Overture as set out in Appendix 1 and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the provisions of Article VIII of the Articles Declaratory in Matters Spiritual (1921), directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2023 (*Section 2; Appendix 1*).
3.
 - (a) Receive the Report "The Calling of the Church" as a response to the instruction given by the General Assembly of 2022 (*Section 3; Appendix 2*).
 - (b) Approve and adopt this report as an expression of the Church's calling and purpose.
 - (c) Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to raise awareness of the calling and purpose of the Church.
 - (d) Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to provide resources to enable every member of the Church to discover and develop their giftings and callings.
 - (e) Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to introduce training for Ministers of Word and Sacrament in recognising, developing, and deploying the gifts of members and Elders.
 - (f) Instruct the Theological Forum, the Faith Nurture Forum, and the Ecumenical Relations Committee to explore options for widening access to ordained sacramental ministries within the Church in light of the principles contained in the 2019 Report of the Sacramental Ministry Working Group, and report to the General Assembly of 2024.
 - (g) Instruct the Theological Forum and the Faith Nurture Forum to investigate the production of pastoral guidance on situations where a minister or congregation's sense of call is not affirmed by the Presbytery during its planning processes.
4. Instruct the Theological Forum to explore the theology of transgender identities within the context of the Church's life and ministry, and report to the General Assembly of 2024 (*Section 4*).

Report**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Theological Forum was established by the General Assembly of 2013 to 'resource, express and challenge the theology that informs the life and work of the Church'. Its remit is to:

- (a) articulate and develop the doctrinal understanding of the Church in accordance with Holy Scripture and with reference to the confessional standards of the Church of Scotland;
- (b) express the theological vision of the Church in its worship, fellowship, witness and mission in and beyond contemporary Scotland;
- (c) respond to particular theological requests as and when these arise from the General Assembly, the Council of Assembly and the ecumenical partners of the Church;
- (d) draw to the attention of the General Assembly theological matters which the Theological Forum considers to be of pressing contemporary relevance;
- (e) stimulate wider theological reflection throughout the Church on key doctrinal, ethical and apologetic matters through the provision of appropriate materials and other activities.

1.2 The Forum has continued to serve this wide-ranging remit and over the last year has concentrated on those issues assigned to it by the General Assembly of 2022. Its work has been carried out through substantial reading, discussion, reflection and prayer in its meetings, and through consultation with the other Councils, Committees and Fora of the Church. The Forum has also advised upon a spectrum of issues that have arisen out of enquiries received from the wider Church. The following Report and Appendices are offered as an update on work carried out throughout 2022.

2. WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

2.1 The General Assembly of 2018 passed an Overture from the Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles, instructing the Theological Forum:

- (1) *to review the reports and debates on the role of the Westminster Confession of Faith in the Church's life arising from the General Assembly of 1968 and the years following;*
- (2) *to give fresh consideration to the issues raised therein in light of developments within Reformed and ecumenical theology since 1646 in which the Church of Scotland has been actively involved;*
- (3) *to advise the General Assembly on the continuing role of a 'Subordinate Standard';*
- (4) *to look afresh at the wording and terms of reference of the Formula of subscription used in services of ordination;*
- (5) *to explore the possibility of producing a Book of Confessions, in print and/or on-line as a teaching resource for office-bearers, members and enquirers;*
- (6) *to report to the General Assembly of 2020.*

2.2 The work carried out to date in obedience to this instruction has included a conference^[i], an interim report in 2021^[ii], a webinar, a consultation with Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and individuals, a video resource^[iii] and a final report bringing firm proposals to the 2022 General Assembly^[iv].

2.3 Our 2022 report found that the Westminster Confession of Faith has played an important part in the history of the Church of Scotland, and has long been accorded particular honour and status in formal terms as its principal subordinate standard. In practice, however, the Westminster Confession now has a limited role in the life of the Church, and several statements of the Confession are considered problematic in the present-day Church of Scotland. The apparently literal claim that the world was created in six days is felt by some office holders to be at odds with the findings of contemporary science. Similarly, the Confession's statement concerning predestination, that 'some men and angels are predestined [by God] to everlasting life; while others are foreordained [by God] to everlasting death'^[v] is considered unbiblical by some, who view it as at odds with the God of love. Because the majority of office holders have not been able to fully commit to the Confession for some time, the relation of Church office holders to the Confession has been carefully limited by the vows required by the Church since 1929, by which office holders declare their belief in the basic Christian doctrines contained in the Confession but not the entire Confession itself. This has, however, created the current situation in which the Church of Scotland has a subordinate standard that many of its office holders reject, and vows which they do not always understand. The report concluded that this was an unsatisfactory situation that requires correction.

2.4 The 2022 General Assembly received the Forum's report, and approved its proposals. In line with this, with the Legal Questions Committee, the Forum is now bringing an Overture effecting the creation of a Book of Confessions, and corresponding changes to the vows and subscription of office holders. The Book of Confessions will contain the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, The Scots Confession, The Westminster Confession of Faith, and the 1992 Statement of Faith. If the overture is accepted, these will form the subordinate standards of the Church of Scotland. The new vows will explicitly identify the location of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. These creeds are short and relatively accessible, and should help ministers, elders and other office holders to disciple enquirers and work with those interested in the Christian faith, as well as promoting ecumenical partnerships with the many other Christian Churches that also accept these creeds. Nevertheless, by retaining the Westminster Confession as a subordinate standard, and adding the Scots Confession and 1992 Statement of Faith, the Reformed character of the Church of Scotland will be maintained. Commissioners who wish to understand more of the reasoning behind our proposals will find our full 2022 report on the Church website.

2.5 The Forum therefore commends these proposals to the Assembly for approval. The Forum is grateful to all those who have taken time to engage with this important work, and would like to thank the Faith Nurture Forum and the Legal Questions Committee for their support and guidance throughout. The Theological Forum will continue to consult the wider Church on its proposals for confessional reform.

3. THE CALLING OF THE CHURCH

3.1 The Forum began first to consider the purpose and calling of the Church in response to specific questions on these subjects brought by office holders, and other individuals in the Church. Furthermore, in 2022, the General Assembly approved the following deliverance:

The Assembly instruct the Theological Forum, in consultation with other relevant parties, to prepare a Report with recommendations for a future General Assembly on a theological and missiological understanding and practice of church membership. The Forum considered that both issues could helpfully be addressed together, and consequently presents the appended report, "The Calling of the Church", to the General Assembly.

3.2 As the Assembly will be aware, the Forum's discussions proceeded within a context of a reorganisation of presbyteries and ministerial posts in the wider church, and during ongoing debate on whether authorisation to administer the sacraments should be limited to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament and Ordained Local Ministry. Beyond these specific issues, however, the Church's calling is obviously a vital subject to address given the scepticism in wider society regarding the usefulness of the Christian Church at all in a secular age. The Church's own ministers and congregations need a clear sense of their own call if they are to be able to fulfil that within their local communities. The subject is therefore practical as well as theological.

3.3 In considering this subject, the Forum undertook reading of various works, notably Rev. Dr Lynn McChlery's book *How do you know it's God? The Theology and Practice of Discerning a Call to Ministry* (London: SCM Press, 2021), and Professor Paul Nimmo's chapter, 'Vocation', in *Wiley Blackwell Companion to Karl Barth*, eds. George Hunsinger and Keith L. Johnson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020), 317-326. The Forum also consulted the Church's Director of Assessment regarding the discernment process for verifying the call of candidates for ministry, and undertook a fuller discussion of the issues in a dedicated retreat day on 1st September 2022, at which several members of the Forum read papers. Particular thanks are due to the Convener, Rev. Dr Lynn McChlery and Professor Paul Nimmo for their contributions during the report drafting process.

3.4 The Forum trusts that the resultant report will meet with the Assembly's approval.

4. TRANSGENDER IDENTITIES

4.1 During the past year, the Forum has received specific requests from office holders for it to explore the theology of transgender identities. Questions around transgender identities are already a matter of extensive public debate in Scotland, especially since the passage of the Gender Recognition Reform Bill by the Scottish Parliament. Some pastoral guidance material is already available on this subject, entitled *Diverse Gender Identities and Pastoral Care*. This can be found here: https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/48256/Web_PDF_Diverse_Gender_Identities_and_Pastoral_Care.pdf.

4.2 The Forum recognises a need for a fuller theological perspective to be brought to this subject, and therefore recommends that the Assembly instruct it to explore the matter further and report to the General Assembly of 2024.

5. FUTURE WORK

5.1 The Forum expects to continue to address issues relating to the calling of the Church. If so instructed by the Assembly, the Forum also expects to explore further the theology of transgender identities and prepare a report for the General Assembly of 2024. The Forum stands ready to assist the General Assembly and its Councils, Committees and Fora in any matter of theology and doctrine and would welcome consultation at an early stage in any significant pieces of work.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

6.1 The Forum was established by the General Assembly of 2013, and celebrates its first decade of existence this year. It is grateful for the hard work, commitment and contribution of each of its members over the years, and is grateful to all those who have sought its views and listened so graciously to its comments. In particular, it would like to express its thanks to all those who have contributed to the discussion on the Westminster Confession of Faith since work began in 2018.

In the name of the Theological Forum

LIAM JERROLD FRASER, *Convener*
PAUL T. NIMMO, *Vice-Convener*
ALASDAIR J. MACLEOD, *Acting Secretary*

Addendum

Rev. Dr Ruth Morrison

Rev. Dr Ruth Morrison completes a second four-year term as a member of the Theological Forum at the 2023 General Assembly, and will accordingly retire from membership from the rising of the Assembly. Ruth has served on the Theological Forum since 2015, and is one its longest-serving members. She has brought to the Forum not only her expertise on baptism, but has contributed important insights concerning the relation of theology to ministry, and the missional significance of church sanctuaries. As she retires from the Forum, we thank her for her long service, and wish her, her family, and her parish every blessing for the future.

In the name of the Theological Forum

LIAM JERROLD FRASER, *Convener*
PAUL T. NIMMO, *Vice-Convener*
ALASDAIR J. MACLEOD, *Acting Secretary*

Appendix 1

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH OVERTURE

The General Assembly adopt the Overture the tenor whereof follows, and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the provisions of Article VIII of the Articles Declaratory in Matters Spiritual (1921), directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2023.

The General Assembly, with consent of not less than two-thirds of the whole of the Presbyteries of the Church obtained in two immediately successive years, enact, ordain and declare that Articles II and V of the Articles Declaratory in Matters Spiritual (1921) enacted by the General Assembly of 1926 and the Preamble, Questions and Formula authorised by the General Assembly of 1929 shall be amended as follows:

1. Articles Declaratory

1.1 Change Article II from:

II. The principal subordinate standard of the Church of Scotland is the Westminster Confession of Faith approved by the General Assembly of 1647, containing the sum and substance of the Faith of the Reformed Church. Its government is Presbyterian, and is exercised through Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, and General Assemblies. Its system and principles of worship, orders, and discipline are in accordance with "The Directory for the Public Worship of God," "The Form of Presbyterial Church Government" and "The Form of Process," as these have been or may hereafter be interpreted or modified by Acts of the General Assembly or by consuetude.

To:

II. The subordinate standards of the Church of Scotland are contained in its Book of Confessions. Its government is Presbyterian, and is exercised through Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, and General Assemblies. Its system and principles of worship, orders, and discipline are in accordance with "The Directory for the Public Worship of God," "The Form of Presbyterial Church Government" and "The Form of Process," as these have been or may hereafter be interpreted or modified by Acts of the General Assembly or by consuetude.

1.2 Also remove references to "confession" in Article V and replace with "Book of Confessions".

2. Ordination and Induction Vows

2.1 Change the vow:

Do you believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Confession of Faith of this Church?

To

Do you believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith **expressed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds?**

2.2 Also create a new vow after the aforementioned one:

Do you confess the Catholic and Reformed Faith of the Church as contained in its Book of Confessions, and promise to be guided by the said Book in your life and doctrine?

3. Formula of Subscription

3.1 *Change the first paragraph of the Formula from:*

I believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Confession of Faith of this Church.
To

I believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith **expressed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. I promise to be guided in my life and doctrine by the Book of Confessions of this Church.**

4. Preamble

4.1 *Change the last paragraph of the Preamble from:*

The Church of Scotland holds as its subordinate standard the Westminster Confession of Faith, recognising liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine as do not enter into the substance of the Faith, and claiming the right, in dependence on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, to formulate, interpret or modify its subordinate standards: always in agreement with the Word of God and the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith contained in the said Confession – of which agreement the Church itself shall be sole judge.

To:

The subordinate standards of the Church of Scotland are contained in its Book of Confessions, recognising liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine as do not enter into the **fundamental doctrines** of the Faith, and claiming the right, in dependence on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, to formulate, interpret or modify its subordinate standards: always in agreement with the Word of God and the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith **expressed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds** – of which agreement the Church itself shall be sole judge.

Appendix 2

THE CALLING OF THE CHURCH (2023)

1. Introduction

1.1 The Church is at a crossroads. The secularisation of Scottish society, and a decline in church membership, has seen churches close across the country. Those that remain now operate with diminished resources, and through Parish and Presbytery reform, face the prospect of unions, linkages, and dissolutions to come. These changes and challenges mean that many in the Church have grown demoralised and confused, uncertain as to the future and purpose of their congregations.

1.2 At a time of great change and uncertainty, this question of the *purpose* of the Church is perhaps the most pressing of all. For some of our neighbours, the Church does not serve any purpose. It is an irrelevance, a relic of a bygone age. Yet Christ is clear: we *do* have a purpose, we *do* have an abiding role in the world, and if we seek to fulfil that purpose rather than following our own then Christ will be with us, even in this secular age.

1.3 For this reason, the Theological Forum has chosen to undertake an investigation into the calling and purpose of the Church. Our predecessor committee – the Panel on Doctrine – reported on some aspects of the Church's call in 2005. Since then, however, the context of the Church of Scotland has changed significantly. New questions regarding the relation of ministry to mission, what missional projects to prioritise, and situations of conflict between different understandings of call have developed, and require a fresh exploration of the Church's calling. In addition, the Theological Forum received an instruction from the General Assembly of 2022 to explore the missional implications of Church membership. We do not believe that this instruction can be fully addressed without a consideration of the Church's calling as a whole, and for this reason, we seek to fulfil this instruction in the current report.

1.4 Our report begins by exploring some of the ways in which the language of 'call' or 'calling' is used in the Church. This leads to a discussion of what it means for God to call us. The foundation of our calling is to become like Christ, by worshipping, loving, serving, and witnessing as he does. If this is the general calling of the whole Church, however, it is fulfilled and lived out through diverse individual callings. When these are ordered to each other in love, the Church serves and witnesses to Christ, manifests the Kingdom of God, makes disciples, and helps to transform the world. While this is the earthly purpose of the Church, it is dependent, however, on worship and discipleship, something that has implications for our understanding of the relationship between ministry and mission. We conclude with a discussion of the particular calling of the Church of Scotland as Reformed, Missional, Presbyterian and National, and explore two areas of confusion regarding callings within the Church.

1.5 While much ground is covered in this report, its ultimate point is this: that in a secular and post-Christian Scotland, where Christians face many uncertainties, the Church *does* have a purpose, and an abiding role in the mission of God. Yet this is true only if we serve *God's* mission and *God's* Kingdom and not our own, something that is only possible when we allow the Spirit to shape us into the likeness of Christ.

2. What is Call?

2.1 Before we are able to understand what the Church's calling might be, we must begin by clarifying what 'call' and 'calling' are.

2.2 At its most basic level, to 'call' means to attract someone's attention. We 'call' friends on the phone, or 'call' them as we see them on the street. We do not call people for no reason, however. We call them to communicate something. Sometimes it is simply to convey our good wishes towards them or to share news. At other times, however, someone is called to convey a particular message, or to be asked to undertake a particular task.

2.3 Within the Church, the word 'call' is used in a number of distinct ways, albeit with related meanings. The first use of 'call' relates to the call a congregation issues to a prospective new minister. For example, the Vacancy Procedure Act (2003) governs the 'call' of the congregation to a sole nominee, thereby initiating a new pastoral relationship.^[vi]

2.4 The second use of 'call' language within the Church relates not to the call of congregations or human beings, but to the call of *God*. This is most evident in the selection process for recognised ministry, where applicants must articulate their sense of God's call. Sometimes this discernment of call also has an administrative function, as in the Admission and Readmission of Ministers Act (2022) where it says, 'The Readmissions Panel ... shall assess the Readmission Applicant's *call* [our emphasis] doctrine and gifts/character and beliefs, vocation...'.^[vii] Here, a committee of the Church is tasked with discerning whether something called a 'call' exists, and, if it does, to appoint the applicant to office in the Church.

2.5 These examples of selection for ministry, and of admission and readmission to ministry, bring us closer to the central meaning of the word 'call' within the Church: God communicating with us to ensure that someone does something. While the call may be recognised and affirmed by the Church in general or by a particular Presbytery or congregation, it is not the belief of the Church of Scotland that the call comes from these bodies alone. Rather, in a theology dating back to at least the Second Book of Discipline (1578), the call comes from God, and is then recognised and affirmed by God's Church.^[viii]

2.6 Whether the call is from God or from God's people, however, calling in our Church usually relates to *individuals*. Individuals are generally thought to have callings, and these callings are then tested and recognised, and allow their recipients to be appointed to exercise particular offices.

2.7 In a time of Presbytery and Parish reform, however, and at a time when the Church's role in society is not as clear or as welcome as it once was, a range of questions about calling have arisen. What is the purpose of the Church in contemporary Scotland? What does God want us to do with our diminishing resources? In a time of rapid change, do ordination and church offices help or hinder ministry and mission? And what happens when there is an apparent conflict between the felt calling of an individual or congregation, and the sense of call of the wider Church?

2.8 While discussions of calling – and by extension ministry – have generally concerned the calling of individuals, in order to answer these and related questions, we believe that we must answer the question of what the Church *as a whole* is called to do, and then – and only then – consider questions of personal calling. This point has been noted previously by the Panel on Doctrine, who argued that ordination and ministry depend on a theory of the Church (ecclesiology), which in turn depends on an understanding of the person and work of Christ (Christology).^[ix] As such, we begin with the common calling of the whole Church and its relation to Christ, then continue with the priesthood of the whole Church, and finally consider particular callings to ordained office.

3. The Calling of the Church

3.1 As Niebuhr notes, before secularisation, the question of what the Church was for did not arise with the same urgency as it does now. When our neighbours looked to the Church for regular worship, life events, and even social activities, it was often felt to be clear what the Church was called to do. Yet as the West grew more secular, and the Church became a less visible part of social life, these certainties disappeared.^[x] The result for some in the Church has been a loss of morale brought about by feelings of insignificance; for others a sense of 'drift', with an inability to set clear objectives and prioritise work; while for others the outcome has been burnout, brought on by over-exertion in the attempt to reverse decline.

3.2 The Church Exists Because of Christ

3.2.1 The question of call – of what we are for and what we should be doing – is therefore a timely one, and touches upon the very purpose – and indeed future – of the Church.

3.2.2 While calling has a long history throughout the Old Testament, being particularly connected with the calling of Adam to obedience (Genesis 2: 15-17) the calling of Israel into covenant relationship with God (e.g. Deuteronomy 30), and the calling of the prophets (e.g. Isaiah 6: 1-8; Jeremiah 1: 4-10), we gain a clearer understanding of the calling of the Church and its members from the New Testament. In the familiar story of the calling of the first disciples in Matthew 4: 19-22, we read:

And [Jesus] said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

3.2.3 While there is much to reflect on in this passage, we will focus on four points relevant to the call of the Church today.

3.2.4 The first is that God's call can be known at all. It is sometimes thought that we can know nothing of God or of God's wishes, and that anyone who claims otherwise is simply speculating. Yet Scripture is clear that our God is a God who *speaks* throughout history and into the present, albeit in myriad ways.

3.2.5 The second is that God calls us to *partnership*. God is all-powerful, and could minister and work in mission alone. Yet as Calvin wrote, God "deigns to consecrate the mouths and tongues of men to his service, making his own voice to be heard in them".^[xi] Our God, then, is a *calling* God, one who summons us to be co-workers and ambassadors for Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 3: 9). By extension, this also means that God believes that we have – or will be given – the gifts and skills to do this work, that this work will not end in failure but is both possible and achievable. We will return to this point later.

3.2.6 The third lesson concerns the *authority* of the one who calls. The passage is memorable because of the swiftness by which the first disciples abandon their work and follow the voice of Christ. Their response is immediate and unreflective. This is because the one who calls both them and us has the authority to call. As it says in Mark 1: 22 'They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes', and Jesus says of himself that 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (Matthew 28: 18). People may call us to do all sorts of things, and we are not always obliged to heed that call. Yet Christ has the authority to call us, and can expect us to listen, follow, and obey.

3.2.7 The fourth lesson from this passage – and perhaps the one most important for this report – is that the Church does not exist because we want it to exist, but because *God* wants it to exist, and calls it into being. The calling of the first disciples is reflected in the name of the Church itself. In the New Testament, the usual way of describing the Church is *ekklesia*. This was a common Greek word at the time, and meant ‘an assembly’.^[xii] The etymology of the word is important, however, for *ekklesia* is derived from the two Greek words *ek* (out of/from) and *kaleo* (I call). The Church as *ekklesia*, then, exists because it is called out to exist by God. The Church does not exist out of practical necessity,^[xiii] or because its members have a sense and taste for religion and the infinite,^[xiv] but because of divine invitation and command. We as Christians do not call ourselves into existence, but are called into existence by God. As Jesus says “You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.” (John 15: 16)

3.3 Why Christ Calls the Church

3.3.1 Yet if the Church is called into being by God, we must ask *why* God does this. Church members will appreciate many things about the Church, and will have many different opinions about what our purpose is and what we should be doing. Yet what does *God* want the Church to do?

3.3.2 Jesus himself explains his wishes for his followers in Matthew 11: 29-30:

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

And in John 17: 19:

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

3.3.3 We see in these and related passages that Jesus wishes for his followers to become like him. Only this encompasses the diverse changes in feeling, motivation, thought, and action that Jesus asks of us. His intention for us is that by receiving his Spirit, believing his teaching, learning from his example, and doing as he does, we might have life, and give life to others. This not only relates to what we do in this world, however, but what we will be when the new creation comes. In Romans 8: 29-30 we read:

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

And in 1 John 3: 2-3 we read:

Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he [i.e. Christ] is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

3.3.4 What these and similar passages teach us is that becoming like Christ is not only an ethical ideal – which it is – but is the ultimate purpose and destiny of every human being. Christ is the ‘image of the invisible God’ (Colossians 1: 15), the one who restores the image of God in us that was corrupted by the Fall (cf. Genesis 1: 26-27; 1 Corinthians 15: 49). In him, we become what we were created to be, but cannot be through our own strength. Because it is the purpose of all human beings to become like him, so it is the Church’s role to help people become like Christ (e.g. 2 Corinthians 3: 17-18, Galatians 4: 19, Philippians 2: 5). This work is commonly called discipleship, but it is not something that the Church does alone. Rather, it is the work of the Holy Spirit, which enables us to be ‘born from above’ and begin living in the Kingdom of God (cf. John 3: 3-8).

3.4 What Becoming Like Christ Means

3.4.1 The purpose of the Church’s calling, then, is to become like Christ, and to help others become like him. Yet what does it mean to become like Christ, and how does this relate to the calling of the Church as a whole?

3.4.2 While space precludes a full description of everything Christ is – and therefore everything we are called to be – we can summarise his renewal of the image of God in us under three headings: worshipping the Father, loving and serving God and neighbour, and witnessing to the truth.

3.4.3 First, Jesus worships the Father perfectly. His revelation of himself as Messiah and Son of God is intimately connected with the unique relationship of worship, praise and love that he enjoys with the Father by the Spirit. As the incarnate Son of God, Jesus follows the Father’s will in all things, and is his perfect image. As he says ‘Whoever has seen me has seen the Father’ (John 14: 9). Jesus lives out this life of worship by spending much of his time alone in prayer, worshipping in the Temple, and interceding for his followers (e.g. Mark 1: 35; Luke 2: 49; John 17: 6-26). He has come so that all people might worship the Father in Spirit and in truth (John 4: 23-4), and he invites us to enter into the unique relationship of love and praise and worship that he enjoys with the Father (cf. Luke 11: 1-13).

3.4.4 Second, Jesus loves and serves God and neighbour. In his exchange with a lawyer in Matthew 22: 37-40, Jesus confirms that the greatest commandments – and the summation of the whole Law of Israel – is to love God with all our heart, all our soul, and all our mind, and our neighbour as ourselves. We have already noted how Jesus expresses his love to God. Jesus expresses his love for other people through the pity he feels for those who suffer (e.g. Mark 1: 41; John 11: 34-36), his recognition and valuing of those who are forgotten about or rejected by society (e.g. Mark 2: 13-17; Luke 19: 1-6) and in the care he shows even to those who murdered him (e.g. Luke 23: 34). Jesus lives a life of perfect love, showing the height and depth of mercy, charity and kindness that it is possible for human beings to enjoy.

3.4.5 Jesus not only serves and loves, however, but, third, witnesses to the truth. This includes his teaching, as well as his challenging of the religious authorities (e.g. Matthew 23). The particular truth he came to reveal, however, was the truth of himself, of the Father, and of his unique relationship with him by the Spirit (see e.g. John 3: 31-33 and John 5: 36-7). In seeking to witness to the Father and evangelise, the purpose of Jesus’ teaching and truth-telling is to *change* his listeners. He spoke – literally – so that his hearers would possess the same mind as he did (cf. Philippians 2: 5; 1 Corinthians 2: 16), a change which, in turn, would give rise to changes in their feelings, motivations and actions (cf. Matthew 15: 10-20).

3.4.6 If the Church is called to become like Jesus, then, it is called to worship, love, serve and witness. This is what the Church attempts to do through its work. It worships God each Sunday, and throughout the week. It attempts to create loving, supportive congregations where care is given and friendship enjoyed. It raises funds for charity, runs food banks and pantries, and engages in other forms of service such as hostels for the homeless and drug support services. It witnesses to Christ in the public realm and in everyday life, bringing Christ into conversation, social media, and myriad institutions, clubs, businesses and organisations.

3.4.7 It should not be thought, however, that the Church does this by itself, or in its own strength. While Jesus is no longer physically present, as the Westminster Confession states, he continues to minister as Prophet, Priest and King by his Spirit.^[xvi] This work will continue until the world is fully restored (cf. John 5: 17). He continues to call the Church into existence, and to maintain and perfect it, through the preaching of the Word, the sacraments and discipleship. He continues to challenge us to serve and witness better, that every part of society might be brought within his Kingdom. It is when we worship, love, serve and witness as he does that his Kingdom is manifested, new disciples made, and the world changed. Yet the mission, motivation, means and end are his alone.

3.5 Sending and Abiding

3.5.1 Foundational to the Church's calling, then, is to worship, love, serve and witness to Christ. Yet this is not, as we have noted, for the benefit of the Church alone, but of the world. *All things* will be reconciled and restored by Christ, not only those which belong to the Church (e.g. Colossians 1: 20, Rev 21: 5). Yet this raises a number of related questions that concern the calling of the Church and how it fulfils that calling. What is the Church's role in this cosmic restoration? Are some of the Church's activities more important than others? And if all things are to be restored by Christ, in what order should they be restored?

3.5.2 To help orientate ourselves to these questions, we begin by noting that there is both an *intensive* and *extensive* aspect to Christ's work.^[xvi] The intensive part of this work lies within the Church, and the action of the Spirit in shaping and forming people for ministry and mission. We have already considered part of this work in relation to becoming like Christ, and will consider it again later in relation to individual callings. The extensive aspect of Christ's work, however, is when we are sent out from the Church to serve and witness in the world. This latter movement is most commonly called *mission*.

3.5.3 The English word 'mission' comes from the Latin word *missio*, meaning 'sending'. Before moving on to consider its implications for the calling of the Church, it is crucial to remember that it is Jesus *himself* who is the primary person who is sent in mission, being sent by the Father in the power of the Spirit to redeem the world. Yet Jesus makes it clear both before (John 17: 15-18) and after (John 20: 21) his resurrection that just as he has been sent, so he will send the disciples and their successors to witness to him and make disciples. It is only because Jesus is sent in mission that we are sent in mission.

3.5.4 The 'sending' of the Church in mission is most famously expressed in Matthew 28: 19-20: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

3.5.5 Of central importance to the calling of the Church, therefore, is to make disciples of all people. The word 'disciple' is a translation of the Greek *mathetes*, meaning a learner or student. A disciple, then, is someone who learns from Jesus or, more specifically, someone who is learning from Jesus in order to *become* like Jesus. Jesus' call to make new disciples is a call to help *all* people become like him, something they do by listening to his Word, receiving his sacraments, and being shaped by the life of the congregation. While making disciples in a secular Scotland is harder than it has been for centuries, it is central to Jesus' call upon us, and is a non-negotiable part of the Church's work.

3.5.6 The *order*, however, in which this calling, shaping, and sending is played out is important. Before his Crucifixion, Jesus said this in John 15: 4:

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

3.5.7 Jesus is clear that the disciples cannot hope to make disciples or achieve anything unless they first abide in him and he in them. Being ascended, Jesus cannot 'abide' with us in a physical way, but can do so spiritually. As John 15: 4 suggests, the outcome of abiding in Christ and becoming like him by the Spirit is *fruit*, spiritual fruit, among which are the fruits of mission. Yet fruit grows out of branches, which – in the case of grapes – grow out of the vine and its roots. In the same way, in our – legitimate – desire to engage in mission, we must realise that missional fruit is dependent on abiding in and becoming like Christ through worship, prayer, and discipleship. There is no other way in which it grows.^[xvii]

3.5.8 To use the spatial image of Mike Breen, we can say that it is through our *upward* relationship to God in worship and prayer that the Church is enabled to develop its *inward* discipleship, and growth into the likeness of Jesus. It is through our relationship with God, and the cultivation of the image of Christ in us as individuals and as congregations, that we are then enabled to go *outward* to the world in mission.^[xviii]

3.6 The Relationship Between Ministry and Mission

3.6.1 We see, then, that while the ultimate calling of the Church is to engage in mission – to serve, witness, manifest the Kingdom and make disciples – it is conditional upon becoming like Christ. It only happens through the Holy Spirit in worship, prayer, and the fellowship and discipleship of the congregation. We are shaped within the Church by the Holy Spirit, and then sent out to participate in God's mission.

3.6.2 Yet when we begin to serve, witness, and engage in mission, what are we meant to *do*? If mission is such an essential part of our calling, does this also mean that other aspects of the Church's life – e.g. Sunday worship – are less important, or can be jettisoned?

3.6.3 The first thing to note is that because the Church's calling is only possible through becoming like Christ, we cannot privilege one aspect of his work over others. It is one of the features of Church life that Christians have different interests in relation to ministry and mission. Some are interested in preaching, some in evangelism, some in creation care, and some in acts of service. Yet we do not need to choose between these different activities, because they are all united and coordinated in the person of Jesus Christ. Christ *himself* provides the justification, rationale, and coherence for the Church's activities, which – if they are aligned with God's will – are not only the Church's activities but Christ's by the Spirit. Because our ultimate calling is to become like Christ, we are called to do all of these things, something that safeguards against the reduction of the Christian life to only one interest or type of activity.

3.6.4 It is in this context of prioritisation in ministry and mission that we should consider the Five Marks of Mission. The Five Marks are:

The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth^[xix]

Originating in the Anglican Communion, these have now been adopted by the Church of Scotland in its Faith Action Plan.^[xx] They also form an integral part of the Mission Plan Act, and are used there as criteria by which to create and assess Presbytery Plans.^[xxi]

3.6.5 The Theological Forum has previously welcomed the Five Marks of Mission, and recognised them as an authentic summary of the tasks of mission. The Forum also noted, however, that they do not – and were not intended to – describe everything that the Church is called to do. They do not mention worship, the sacraments or prayer for example, things we might think are important for the Christian Church.^[xxii] Indeed, the absence of worship from the Five Marks of Mission may suggest that worship has no missional relevance, which is, of course, not correct. As such, while they are useful summary of missional activities, they do not exhaust what mission is, nor everything that the Church is called to do and be, and there are perhaps dangers in treating them as such. At its worst, a focus on mission alone runs the risk of *reversing* the order described by Christ in John 15, expecting *fruit* without nurturing the *roots* and *branches*.

3.6.6 This has particular relevance for the Church's calling in light of Presbytery and parish reform. In a time when congregations are asked to become more missional, while simultaneously facing unions, linkages and dissolutions, the Forum considers that there is a very real risk of the order between abiding and sending being reversed or ignored. Mission happens naturally when congregations are healthy, happy, and being conformed to the image of Christ through dynamic worship, discipleship and fellowship. It cannot be forced or commanded. While reforms are necessary, then, without serious thought being given to the health of congregations and office holders, there is real risk of burnout, or even frustration with the very concept of mission.

4. How Are Individuals Called to Fulfil the Calling of the Church?

4.1 The calling of the Church, then, is to become like Christ by the Spirit, that by worshipping, loving, serving and witnessing like him the Kingdom might be manifested, disciples made, and the world changed. Yet how does this calling of the Church relate to the callings of its individual members? And how can something as difficult as the transformation of the world be accomplished by ordinary men, women and children?

4.2 Christ's Priesthood and Ours

4.2.1 We noted earlier that we cannot bear missional fruit without abiding in Christ, and being filled with his Spirit. It is the way in which this happens that brings together the calling of the Church as a whole with the particular callings of individual Church members.

4.2.2 Of great importance to this is the common or corporate priesthood of the Church. At its most basic, to act as a priest is to act as a mediator or link between God and humanity, a reality reflected in the Latin word for priest *pontifex*, which is related to the Latin word for bridge (*pons*). Priesthood in the Old Testament focussed on the sacrifices offered by the Temple priests on behalf of the people to meet the requirements of the Law, and maintain the covenant relationship with God. In the New Testament, however, Jesus himself becomes the mediator between God and humanity, and now exercises the office of Great High Priest (Hebrews 4: 14-16).

4.2.3 Because Christ is Prophet, Priest and King, and because those who are united in him can participate in his ministry, so all Christians, both ordained and non-ordained, can participate in his priesthood. The symbol of this priesthood is baptism, in which our sins are forgiven, we are incorporated into Christ, and begin to be ordered towards him and his ministry. This idea of priesthood is found in 1 Peter 2: 9:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

4.2.4 This text has been a source of controversy in the history of the Church, with some arguing that it authorises Christians to exercise all aspects of ministry, preaching and sacraments without ordination.^[xxiii] While the Church of Scotland does not hold this interpretation^[xxiv] – more on which will be said later – the corporate priesthood of the Church does enable Christians to do two things: to offer praise to God and prayer for the world through Christ (cf. Revelation 1:6), and – as the reference to proclamation in 1 Peter 2 suggests – to act as witnesses in mission.

4.3 Spiritual Giftings

4.3.1 The common priesthood of the Church began at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples. They became spiritually united with the ascended Christ, filled with his Spirit, and empowered to fulfil Christ's calling to go out into the whole world and make disciples. This close connection between the ascended ministry of Christ and the granting of spiritual gifts is referenced in every ordination of the Church of Scotland:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
King and Head of the Church,
who, being ascended on high,
has given gifts
for the building up of the body of Christ...^[xxv]

4.3.2 When individuals are united with Christ by faith, Christ's Spirit begins to sanctify them, making them more like him. This process of sanctification and becoming like Christ includes the granting of spiritual gifts, which enable individuals to serve and witness as Jesus does. Yet crucially, the way in which individuals became like Christ is not uniform but *diverse*. The Church has one common calling, yet this common calling is fulfilled through multiple personal callings which differ from each other.

4.3.3 While we have seen this in practice many times, it is, on one level, surprising. After all, if we are all becoming like Christ, and if we all have the same Spirit, should the way we serve and witness not be identical?

4.3.4 This question is similar to that addressed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12. The Church in Corinth was grappling with a number of disputes, among which was the question of who and what gifts were truly from God or not.^[xxvi] In 1 Corinthians 12: 4-7 Paul says:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

4.3.5 Paul argues here – and in related passages such as Romans 12: 3-8 – that unity in Christ by the Spirit does not mean that everyone will become like Christ in the same way, or will have the same calling. Rather, they will become like Christ in *different* ways because they have different gifts and different callings. These diverse gifts are not for individuals alone, however, but for the good of the whole Body. As Paul elaborates in 1 Corinthians 12: 12:

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

4.3.6 In a similar way to the human body, the Church does not need only one kind of gift in order to fulfil its calling to become like Christ, but a diverse range of gifts. While Christ fulfils his calling perfectly in and of himself, we his followers need each other to fulfil both our common calling *and* our personal callings. This means that the members of Christ's body must first recognise and then share their gifts with each other, using them for the benefit of each individual and the whole. This is not an end in itself, however, but for the good of Christ's mission to the world.

4.3.7 It is the diverse gifts bestowed upon all Christians by the Spirit, and God's call to use and share these gifts for the benefit of all, that lies at the heart of the concept of 'the ministry of all God's people'. This concept is not new in the Church of Scotland. Yet what is not always appreciated is that the ministry of all God's people is not simply an ethical or social ideal – something which those who value equality should champion – but a direct effect of the Spirit's action, and of our corporate priesthood within the one priesthood of Jesus Christ. Because of the countless gifts needed to run a congregation and engage in mission – administration, hospitality, friendliness, discernment, as well as more public-facing gifts such as teaching and leadership – the Spirit intentionally grants a multiplicity of giftings.

4.3.8 This provides an answer to the instruction given to the Theological Forum by the General Assembly of 2022 to investigate the missional implications of Church membership. While hundreds of thousands of people in Scotland are 'members' of the Church of Scotland, it should be clear from the foregoing that 'member' can be used in two distinct – if related – senses. On the one hand, 'church member' can refer to the spiritual reality of being united with Christ by the Spirit and being part of his Body the Church. On the other hand, 'church member' can relate to the institutional reality of being entered into the communion roll of a particular congregation, and included within the membership figures of the Church of Scotland. While the Church can hope that these two senses of 'church member' directly correspond to one another, in practice this may not always be the case. There will be those who are church members in an institutional sense who do not look to Christ as their Lord, and there will be others who follow Christ as Lord but who are not present on the communion roll. To be a true member of the Church, therefore, is to be someone who *wants* to be a disciple, striving day by day to become more like Christ: worshipping the Father, loving God and neighbour, and serving and witnessing to their neighbours. Yet from the foregoing, it should be clear that true membership of the Church necessitates involvement with a Christian community of some kind, and the use of one's gifts for the good of the Church and the world. This is how the phrase 'Body of Christ' is used by Paul, and it is one that the Church must attempt to make real.

4.4 Roles Within the Church

4.4.1 The mutual sharing of gifts described above that constitute the Body of Christ should be organic and unprompted. By abiding in Christ, and becoming like him in the Spirit, Church members should naturally treat each other with respect and self-sacrificial love, using what they have for the good of all. Yet this spontaneous network of relationships – the work of the Spirit of love – exists within a sinful world. We are always forgetting what we are called to be, and day by day we fail to grow into the likeness of Christ (James 1: 22-5).

4.4.2 It is for this reason that the calling of the Church includes a calling to specific roles: The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ (Ephesians 4: 11-13).

4.4.3 We see here that among the gifts given by the Spirit to individuals are those which enable the Church to unite around a common faith in the Son of God, and which help it to grow into his likeness. The importance of these functions within the Church means that Christ creates specific roles in order to ensure that the Church is faithful to Christ and its calling. We see the early Church beginning this process of distinguishing between different roles in Acts 6: 2-4:

And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, 'It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait at tables. Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word.'

4.4.4 Whether the seven men chosen should be understood as Deacons or not,^[xxvii] the Apostles clearly sought to distinguish between different roles within the Church, with different individuals focussing on different tasks. As the Church grew, this process of differentiation, and the granting of authority to particular roles, developed further. Thus we find references to elders (*presbyteros*) and overseers (*episkopoi*) leading congregations, their deployment to such roles sometimes – as in the case of 1 Timothy 4: 14 and 5: 22 – accompanied by the laying on of hands.

4.4.5 While both Protestant and Roman Catholic commentators are clear that Scripture does not present us with a complete account of church offices or ordination,^[xxviii] there is nevertheless broad agreement that roles within the Church differ from each other, and that those roles require different levels of authorisation. It is through these personal callings, recognised and verified by the Church, that the calling of all God's people to worship, love, serve and witness like Christ is fulfilled, and the mission of God advanced.

5. The Calling of the Church of Scotland

5.1 So far, we have examined the calling of the Christian Church in general, rather than any specific denomination. The calling of all Christians is in one sense the same, because all Christians participate in the one Body of Christ, and therefore participate in his one ministry and mission. Our shared salvation and common calling in Christ is the basis for ecumenical cooperation, and is reflected in recent ecumenical statements such as the Columba Declaration, the St Andrew Declaration and, most recently, the St Margaret Declaration. Through its official Ecumenical Policy, the Church of Scotland also recognises the Lund Principle, that churches should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately.^[xxix]

5.2 Yet what of the calling of the Church of Scotland itself? For while there is only one mission of God, mission is always contextual. It takes place in particular ecclesial and social contexts, whose histories, identities, and expectations are all distinct.

5.3 The Church of Scotland is one particular ecclesial culture, shaped by centuries of theological reflection, social and political action, and institutional forms that characterise our participation in the one ministry and mission of Christ. Just as conformity to Christ has certain general elements such as worship, love, service and witness that must become concrete for individuals in particular ways, so the common calling of the Universal Church becomes concrete for diverse denominations in particular ways.

5.4 The way in which the Church of Scotland makes the call of God concrete may be characterised in the following ways:

5.5 Reformed

5.5.1 The Church of Scotland is a product of the Scottish Reformation of 1560. While there had been an earlier Lutheran influence upon Scottish Protestantism, the form of theology that came to hold dominance in the Church of Scotland was Reformed theology. This theology found early expression in the Scots Confession of 1560, and later in the Westminster Confession of Faith. The First Article Declaratory of the Church of Scotland declares that the Church of Scotland 'adheres to the Scottish Reformation', and 'receives the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as its supreme rule of faith and life'.

5.5.2 This Reformed identity should not be placed in opposition to the faith of other denominations, however, but held together with it. The First Article Declaratory makes it clear that the Church of Scotland is part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and affirms 'the fundamental doctrines of the Catholic faith', among which are the Trinity, and the Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ. We are only Reformed because we are Catholic, and share the same basic faith as other Christians. This faith is the foundation not only of our communion within the Church of Scotland, but also of the fellowship and cooperation we enjoy with Christians from across Scotland's denominations.

5.6 Missional

5.6.1 Our Reformed faith tells us that God is a missional God, and that the mission of God has a Church. We are a product of God's mission to the world, and of early saints such as Ninian and Columba who – being obedient to the calling of Christ – brought the faith to our shores. Just as we have been called by Christ, and shaped by disciples who went before us, so we must be obedient to Christ's call today, and – trusting in his Spirit and his abiding presence with us – serve and witness to our neighbours that they too might become disciples. This aspect of the Church of Scotland has grown in prominence in recent years, and finds expression in the Faith Action Plan of the Church, and its adoption of the Five Marks of Mission.

5.7 Presbyterian

5.7.1 Mission is always contextual, however, and part of this context for churches is their form of government. The Second Article Declaratory declares that the Church of Scotland is a Presbyterian church, indicating that it is ruled by Jesus Christ, and governed by courts of presbyters ordained in his name. Presbyterians believe that discernment of God's Word is best done corporately, and that God speaks through a multiplicity of voices. Likewise, we believe that oversight of congregations and the Church as a whole should not be left to a small number of individuals, but is the responsibility of all office-holders.

5.8 National

5.8.1 It is perhaps the last aspect of the Church of Scotland's identity, however, that best characterises its unique calling, its 'national' character. This word encompasses many aspects of its history, ethos, and approach towards ministry and mission, all of which influence its self-understanding and how it is perceived by others. For most of its history, through its ministry, schooling, and role in public life, the Church of Scotland has decisively shaped Scottish culture and character. Indeed, before the mid-20th century, the Church of Scotland was seen as one of the preeminent examples of Scottish identity, with Presbyterianism and Scottishness being closely connected in the eyes of many both within and outwith Scotland.^[xxx]

5.8.2 While its influence on Scottish life has waned in recent decades, the national character of the Church of Scotland is still preserved in the Third Article Declaratory. Here, the Church of Scotland declares itself to be 'a national Church representative of the Christian Faith of the Scottish people'. This 'national' identity has two elements to it. First, through the Church of Scotland Act 1921, the appointment of a Lord High Commissioner by the Monarch at each General Assembly, and by its position in public life, the Church of Scotland receives forms of recognition from society and the state that are different from other denominations. Second, the 'national' element of the Church's identity relates to the form of Christianity it espouses. While we are Reformed and Presbyterian, ours is not a sectarian or closed Church, but one that seeks to embody the maxim of 'in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things love'.

5.8.3 While the recognition we receive from state and society could be viewed as a privilege, it is, in reality, a call to service. As a national church recognised by the state, the Church has an obligation not only to seek the welfare of its own members or of Christians in general but of *all* Scots. This has significant consequences for what the Church does. The Third Article Declaratory acknowledges the Church's 'distinctive call and duty to bring the ordinances of religion to the people in every parish of Scotland through a territorial ministry.' While all churches attempt to bless their communities, the Church of Scotland has legally specified and financially onerous duties to provide 'the ordinances of religion' – worship, baptisms, funerals and weddings – to all Scots in every part of the country.

5.9 The Church of Scotland, then, is Reformed, Missional, Presbyterian and National. This is its unique contribution to the spiritual life of Scotland, and how it seeks to carry out the calling of God. This identity, however – like any other denominational identity – can only ever be relative. Our true identity is in Christ, and our ultimate calling is to become like him in a way appropriate to the age. For this reason, the Church can never be content to rest in its inherited identity, but must always seek to be a Reformed Church that is ever reforming (*ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda*).

5.10 While it is for the Church as a whole to discern God's call in this day and age, from the foregoing, we can describe the outline of what this call might look like. In seeking to maintain its Reformed identity, the Church of Scotland must be orthodox without becoming sectarian, and appreciative of the gifts of other Christian traditions without abandoning its own Reformed distinctives. In seeking to be missional, the Church must never neglect the foundation of this mission, the call to become like Christ by the Spirit. This is done through worship and prayer in the context of congregational discipleship, and the Church must take the health of its congregations and office holders seriously if it is to hope for missional fruit. This is a particular challenge in a context of church closures and amalgamations. In seeking to uphold its Presbyterian government, it is the responsibility of the Church's office holders at local, Presbytery and national level to ensure that law and procedure do not frustrate innovation and growth, and that corporate decision-making does not dilute the Gospel, or make prophetic leadership impossible.^[xxxi] Finally, in seeking to preserve its national character, the Church is not obligated to undertake all aspects of territorial ministry alone, but is free to share this privilege with other denominations. This could take the form of bilateral or multilateral agreements, or – more ambitiously – reunion, something that the Seventh Article Declaratory commits us to wherever possible. In addition, the national character of the Church of Scotland also commits it to continuing – and perhaps increasing – its engagement in the public life of the nation, ensuring that Christ's voice is heard in the political, economic and social issues of the day.

5.11 It is in the context of the Church of Scotland as a distinct denomination, attempting to discern its calling in 21st century Scotland, that we must consider two issues that are currently affecting this calling: confusion over the relationship between different offices in the Church, and situations where different understandings of call result in disagreement. These issues arise directly from our Reformed, Missional, Presbyterian and National identity, and require clarification if the Church is to fulfil its calling, and successfully participate in God's mission.

5.12 Calling and Office

5.12.1 The Theological Forum has been contacted by a number of central committees, office holders and individuals, who – in a context of rapid change – have expressed confusion regarding the way in which church offices are related to each other and to the concept of calling. In particular, there is confusion as to why only Ministers of Word and Sacrament (including Ordained Local Ministers and Auxiliaries) can celebrate the sacraments, and why this is denied to Readers, local worship leaders, and others – for example MDS workers – who regularly preach.

5.12.2 The Church considered aspects of these issues in the 2019 Joint Report of the Sacramental Ministry Working Group. In that report, the Assembly approved the following principles, indicative of our Reformed understanding of ordination, sacraments, and office:

1. Following the example and command of Jesus Christ, the Sacraments are essential for the life and growth of the Church as the people of God;
2. As Reformed Christians, the Sacraments are understood as material signs of the grace of God declared in preaching;
3. For that reason, the Sacraments can never be separated from Word;
4. The calling to preach the Word and celebrate the Sacraments is recognised by the Church and affirmed in the act of ordination;
5. As such, only those who are called and ordained to preach the Word should celebrate the Sacraments.^[xxxii]

5.12.3 In addition, the 2019 Report also made reference to the 2000 Report of the Panel on Doctrine, which noted that: Ordained ministries should be those which are concerned not just for one part of the Church's life and activity, but for the Church as such, for its character as the Church. They are ministries whose concern is to keep the Church faithful to its nature and calling.

And

The fact that such ministries are concerned with the Church's fidelity to its nature and calling means that they are answerable to the Church – the whole Church. They are therefore understood to be ministries of Christ's Church, the Church Catholic, not simply the local Church.^[xxxiii]

5.12.4 Some tasks and offices not only concern the local church, then, but the relation of the office holder and the congregation they serve to the wider Church of Scotland and the Church Catholic. It is for this reason that the Church of Scotland exercises national recruitment processes for offices that can be exercised across Presbyteries or the country as a whole, recognising that such offices and roles must be accountable to the wider Church.

5.12.5 While the Theological Forum supports the principles outlined in the 2019 Sacramental Ministry Report – including its approach to ordination – there are nevertheless a number of outstanding questions relating to call, office, and sacramental ministry within the Church of Scotland that were not fully addressed by that report. First, given the growing use of local worship leaders, some – but not all – of whom have undertaken courses of training, what is the difference between this role and that of the Readership? Second, if the sacraments are as closely connected to the preached Word as the 2019 report suggests, then why do Readers, local worship leaders, and MDS workers who regularly preach not have greater access to ordination to sacramental ministry?

5.12.6 Perhaps recognising the need for further investigation into these matters, the Forum notes that the General Assembly of 2019 issued the following instruction to a number of committees:

Instruct the establishing of a Joint Working Group, comprised of the Ministries Council, the Mission and Discipleship Council, the Theological Forum, the Committee on Ecumenical Relations and the Legal Questions Committee to develop proposals, based on the principles articulated in the Joint Report, for ordination to a form of the ministry of Word and Sacrament shaped by the context of the emerging Church, and to report to the General Assembly of 2020.^[xxxiv]

5.12.7 This instruction was not fulfilled due to the onset of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Yet given outstanding questions regarding sacramental ministries, and the relation of local worship leaders, the Readership, Ordained Local Ministry, and the Ministry of Word and Sacrament, we believe that the spirit of this instruction should be taken up in a new deliverance. This is particularly pressing given the shortage of ministries within our Church, and the need to maintain our Reformed identity while being cognisant of the great missional challenges facing us. As we have reflected in this report, the calling of the Church as a whole is only fulfilled through the callings of particular people, and it is therefore important that greater clarity concerning the relation of church offices to each other, to the sacraments, and to the mission of the Church is achieved.

5.13 Discerning Calling in Times of Change

5.13.1 Callings, then, are how God instructs individuals and the Church as a whole to do God's will. Yet what happens when callings appear to enter into conflict with each other?

5.13.2 The Church of Scotland is currently facing an unprecedented process of Presbytery planning, with church closures and parish amalgamations that are bringing much hurt, confusion, and exhaustion to its office holders and members. While there are many aspects to this – some of which lie outwith the remit of the Theological Forum – there are a number that directly relate to calling as explored in this report:

- The call of a congregation to their minister
- The sense of call that ministers and other office holders have towards a particular congregation or locality
- The discernment of God's will by Presbyteries as they attempt to unite, link, or dissolve congregations

5.13.3 While these challenges have arisen directly from the passing of the 2021 Mission Plan Act, they also arise from the Church's understanding of its calling as expressed in the Third Article Declaratory, which commits the Church to providing the ordinances of religion to every part of Scotland.

5.13.4 The Theological Forum cannot comment on particular cases. We can, however, offer some guidance as to how different types of call should be understood and navigated.

5.13.5 First, there is a distinction between an individual's general sense of God's call on their life – their vocation – and the particular context in which that vocation is exercised. Both are governed by the providence of God, which determines our historical, social, and family situation as well as our inner convictions. A person's vocational call – whether to ministry, to marriage and parenthood, or to a secular occupation – is often closely related to their identity, and may be unlikely to change over time. However, the *context* in which that vocation is lived out is inevitably more flexible, and changes as situations change. Children grow up, workplaces close, traditional skills become redundant. In all these situations, someone's core calling adopts a different shape in response to changed circumstances. Ministers who sense that their useful time is ending in one congregation may move to exercise a similar ministry in a different location, or to another kind of ministry which draws out aspects of their core calling in new ways. Call remains, but the context in which our calling is lived out is less fixed.

5.13.6 Second, the Church as a whole is called to corporately discern God's leading. God's call to the individual minister or congregation is embraced as part of the Church's wider discernment of God's leading, and against the background of the historical context in which God has placed us (a biblical example is Acts 15). All of these, in the providence of God, circumscribe God's will for us. As with the selection of ministers, then, an individual or congregational sense of call is ultimately subject to the discernment and affirmation of the whole Church, as it seeks to fulfil God's call upon it.

5.13.7 The difficulty arises, however, when changes to office holders or congregations are unwanted and feel imposed, raising questions about whether Presbyteries have accurately discerned God's leading. Presbytery planning decisions are not based solely on questions of call but on a range of other contingent factors. Decisions to close or merge individual congregations may be legitimately open to challenge on these other grounds, yet we do not believe that they can be challenged solely because an individual feels called to minister there, or a congregation feels they should continue as they are. Similarly, historical circumstances now require revising a parish minister's traditional role description. Many ministers will find that their core calling is adaptable to this new shape; others may need to find a new niche that fits their call and skills. Again, changing roles in response to changed circumstances might be challenged on other grounds, but not on personal call alone.

5.13.8 While an individual sense of call cannot overrule the discernment of the wider Church, the changes introduced by Presbytery and Parish reform are extensive, and require a great deal of pastoral sensitivity and support. Further, as we reflected above, Presbyterians believe in both corporate discernment and mutual solidarity and care. For this reason, we propose that the Theological Forum work with the Faith Nurture Forum to see if pastoral guidance concerning call can be produced, which addresses situations where the felt call of a minister or congregation conflicts with the discernment of Presbytery. While Presbytery planning is at an advanced stage, it is likely that further Presbytery reform will be necessary in future. As such, we think it important that greater guidance and support is offered to ministers, congregations and Presbyteries as they seek to discern collectively God's call in a changing context.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The calling of the Church, then, is to become like Christ by the Spirit, that by worshipping, serving and witnessing like him the Kingdom might be manifested, disciples made, and the world changed.

6.2 What this looks like in practice, however, will be different for each congregation and context. Just as there are diverse gifts, so there are diverse communities throughout Scotland, and it is for each congregation and worshipping community – in partnership with other Christians – to discern what God is doing in their midst, and to participate in God's mission.

6.3 As we have seen, however, this requires not only the calling and equipping of the ordained but of *all* God's people, who together constitute a corporate priesthood within the one priesthood of Christ.

6.4 As such, in order for the Church and its members to better understand and fulfil their calling, we make the following recommendations:

6.5 Increased Awareness of the Calling and Purpose of the Church

6.5.1 We think it important that the Church ensures that every member understands what the calling and purpose of the Church is. While this can be done in many ways, one approach would be to better publicise and explain the Church's mission statement: to be a Church which seeks to inspire the people of Scotland and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ, through enthusiastic worshipping, witnessing, nurturing and serving communities. The last clause of this vision statement aligns with the theology expressed in this report, in particular, the importance of worshipping and nurturing congregations to the success of the Church's mission.

6.6 Training and Resources for Identifying, Developing, and Deploying Giftings

6.6.1 The phrase 'the ministry of the whole people of God' has been found in General Assembly reports for decades. Yet as we have noted, the corporate ministry of all God's people does not happen by chance, but must be intentionally sought and developed within congregations. We therefore recommend that the Faith Nurture Forum provide training and resources for both recognised ministries and church members to enable the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be identified, developed and deployed, so that all may serve and witness in every walk of life, and the Church can better fulfil its calling to Scotland. These may be existing resources training modules, or those specially suited to our identity as a Reformed, Missional, Presbyterian and National Church.

6.7 Clarity In Relation to Church Office and Sacraments

6.7.1 There is currently confusion regarding offices in our Church, and why only certain offices are permitted to celebrate the sacraments. While supporting the principles contained in the 2019 Report of the Sacramental Ministries Working Group, we believe that further exploration of these issues should be undertaken. In particular, we wish to explore the potential for widening access to ordained sacramental ministry. For this reason, we ask that the Theological Forum, the Faith Nurture Forum, and the Ecumenical Relations Committee be tasked with producing a report on these issues, and proposing reforms to the General Assembly of 2024.

6.8 Guidance on Navigating Callings

6.8.1 Due to Parish and Presbytery Reform, congregations and office holders are experiencing unprecedented levels of uncertainty and change. We propose that the Theological Forum work with the Faith Nurture Forum to investigate whether lessons might be learned from the Mission Planning process, and pastoral guidance be issued to help congregations and Presbyteries hear and fulfil God's call during the planning process. This guidance would have a particular focus on situations where a minister's or congregation's sense of call to a local context is not affirmed by Presbytery.

6.9 This is a time of great challenge for the Church, when much that seemed certain is being overturned and lost. Yet as the calling of Moses from the burning bush shows us, God calls us not only with a still small voice, or from a place of peace, but from the fierceness of fire, a fire that would consume us should the Father not stay his hand. If we seek a maxim for our times, therefore, we should look to the motto of our church: *nec tamen consumebatur*, yet it was not consumed. For if we seek Christ's Kingdom, and not our own, though much else should change or be lost, our calling remains the same, and it is in that calling that we find our purpose and our peace.

References

- [i] Keynote speakers included Very Rev. Principal Stafford Carson (Union Theological College), Professor David Fergusson (University of Edinburgh), Professor Paul T Nimmo (University of Aberdeen) and Professor Amy Plantinga Pauw (Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary). The conference papers have since been published in the journal *Theology in Scotland* and are available in digital format at the following web address: <https://ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.php/TIS/issue/view/188>
- [ii] https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/80303/10-Theological-Forum.pdf
- [iii] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Cmq_tG_mWw
- [iv] https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/93374/theological-forum.pdf
- [v] Free Presbyterian Church, *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 2003), Ch. 3, p. 29.
- [vi] https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/88224/2003-act-08-viii-revised-to-may-2021.pdf
- [vii] https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/95730/2022-act-13-xiii-1.pdf
- [viii] James Kirk, ed., *The Second Book of Discipline* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1980), 178.
- [ix] Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 2000
- [x] Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry* (New York: Harper, 1956).
- [xi] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), IV.1.5.
- [xii] The word is also used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, to describe the congregation and assembly of Israel. The use of this word by the writers of the New Testament is therefore likely to be deliberate, stressing a degree of continuity with God's people of Israel.
- [xiii] H.J. Wotherspoon and J.M. Kirkpatrick, *A Manual of Church Doctrine According to the Church of Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), 75.
- [xiv] Cf. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Speeches on Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 23.
- [xv] Cf. Chapter 8 of the Westminster Confession of Faith.
- [xvi] This distinction is used in Tom Greggs, *Dogmatic Ecclesiology: The Priestly Catholicity of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019).
- [xvii] We are reminded of the words of Mike Breen: 'We don't have a missional problem in the Western Church. We have a discipleship problem'. Cf. Mike Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture*, 3rd ed. (United States: 3DM International, 2017), 5–6.
- [xviii] Cf. Breen, *Discipling*, 91–110.
- [xix] <https://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/marks-of-mission.aspx>
- [xx] Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2020, 7/1–23.
- [xxi] https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/95987/2021-Act-8-Presbytery-Mission-Plan-Act.pdf
- [xxii] https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/69749/Church-of-Scotland-Theological-Forum-Five-Marks-of-Mission.pdf
- [xxiii] This was an important debate during the Reformation. For an introduction, see Timothy J. Wengert, *Priesthood, Pastors, Bishops: Public Ministry for the Reformation & Today* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008).
- [xxiv] It is interesting to note Van Der Borgh's comment that the priesthood of all believers – understood in its radical sense – plays almost no role at all in Reformed thought. See Van Der Borgh, *Theology of Ministry*, 132. Also see The Second Helvetic Confession – approved by the Church of Scotland – which says (Chapter xviii) that the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and the doctrine of ministry are “things far different from one another”. See J.H. Leith, ed., *Creeds of the Churches* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1973), 154.
- [xxv] Ordinal of the Church of Scotland, https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/18575/ordination_booklet.pdf
- [xxvi] See e.g. Anthony C. Thistleton, *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 169–253.
- [xxvii] John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (Oxford: OUP, 1990).
- [xxviii] See e.g. Thomas F. O' Meara, *Theology of Ministry* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1999), 45–98, and Steven Croft, *Ministry in Three Dimensions* (London: Dartman, Longman and Todd (1999), 36–38.
- [xxix] “Local, Universal and Shaped by the Mission of God: An Ecumenical Policy of the Church of Scotland,” <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/connect/ecumenism/ecumenical-policy-for-the-church-of-scotland>
- [xxx] See, e.g., Carol Craig, *The Scots' Crisis of Confidence* (Edinburgh: Big Thinking, 2003), 47.
- [xxxi] https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/80297/04-Special-Commission-on-the-Effectiveness-of-the-Presbyterian-Form-of-Church-Government.pdf
- [xxxii] Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2019, 17/1–2.
- [xxxiii] Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2019, 17/4.
- [xxxiv] Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2019, 17/1.

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE MAY 2023**Proposed Deliverance****The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Amend Standing Orders as detailed in (i) section 2 and Appendix A of this Report, and (ii) section 4 and Appendices B & C of the Report of the Assembly Business Committee (*Section 2 – Amendments to Standing Orders*).
3. Pass the Church Courts Act as set out in Appendix B to this Report (*Section 3 – Draft Church Courts Act*).
4. Pass an Act amending the Ministers and Deacons in Same Sex Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages Act (Act I 2015) as set out in Appendix D to this Report (*Section 4 – Review of Act I 2015*).
5. Approve the principles for Presbytery Review set out in Appendix E to this Report (*Section 6 – Presbytery Review*).
6. Pass an Act amending the Appeals Act (Act I 2014) as set out in Appendix F to this Report (*Section 12 – Appointments to Legal Bodies*).

Report**1. THE COMMITTEE'S REMIT****1.1** This is to:-

- advise on legal questions, whether of Church or civil law, referred to it by the General Assembly, by the Principal Clerk or by any agency of the General Assembly;
- assist in formulating responses to consultations opened by the Scottish and UK Governments and other bodies;
- provide the legislative drafting service for agencies of the General Assembly;
- advise on reform to Church law in terms of practice and procedure;
- report to the General Assembly on proposed amendments to Standing Orders;
- inspect annually records of Agencies of the General Assembly; and
- inspect annually records of Presbyteries.

1.2 The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the normal schedule of inspections of Records of Standing Committees of the General Assembly. Members of the Committee examined the minutes of most Assembly agencies for the calendar years 2020, 2021 and 2022 on Thursday 23rd February and Thursday 2nd March. In general, these were kept to an acceptable standard and specific matters have been brought to the attention of the relevant body. Some minutes were presented in electronic format and it is recommended that standardisation of this be explored with a view to enabling retrieval in the future of authenticated minutes.

1.3 The Committee is also tasked with the annual inspection of Presbytery Records and hopes to initiate this work in the next twelve months.

2. AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

2.1 The Report of the Assembly Business Committee contains various proposals to amend Standing Orders. The details, including the proposed amended text of the amended Orders, are set out in full in there, in section 4 and Appendices B & C to that Report. In line with Standing Order 127, the section of deliverance to amend Standing Orders is, however, contained in the Report of this Committee.

2.2 The Committee was asked by the General Assembly of 2022, in consultation with the Faith Nurture Forum, "to review Standing Order 35 on youth representatives in light of General Assembly Reform and also Presbytery Reform and to bring proposals as to an amended Standing Order 35 to the General Assembly of 2023". A proposed amended Standing Order is set out in Appendix A. The Committee reviewed numbers of youth representatives appointed over the last few years and having consulted as required, proposes that in future the new Scottish Presbyteries each be given the right to appoint up to four youth representatives, with the Presbyteries of England, International Charges and Jerusalem permitted to appoint one each. This would be in line with numbers of recent actual appointments. Provision has been made for an alternative allocation should the Presbyteries in the Highlands and Hebrides not be bringing an Overture as to their amalgamation to the Assembly of 2023. The Committee also proposes that if one Presbytery does not use its full allocation, this be capable of being used by another Presbytery which perhaps can exceed their allocation; the Clerks of Assembly will manage this process. Finally the opportunity has been taken to conform the timeframe for advising the Clerks of Assembly of appointments with that for commissioners in terms of SO4 and the date has thus been brought back to 31 January from 31 March.

3. DRAFT CHURCH COURTS ACT

3.1 The 2022 Assembly invited comments from Presbyteries as part of a consultation on the proposed Church Courts Act and the Committee is grateful for written submissions received and the opportunity to engage in person at a conference held by Forth Valley and Clydesdale Presbytery.

3.2 The proposed Act, amended as a result of consultation, is set out at Appendix B. All suggestions were scrutinised, the majority accepted and amendments to the draft as printed in the 2022 Report are detailed in the Table appearing at Appendix C. This process has permitted a wide range of insights to improve the provisions which now comes to the Assembly.

3.3 Reference to the Articles Declaratory have been moved to form a preamble to the Act. The current emphasis within the Church on the Five Marks of Mission is echoed and these are included within the text, as is a recognition of the concern of a Kirk Session not only for congregation but parish. Language regarding ministry among young people has been widened, clarity is given on the trustees' report, and powers to rescind a delegation of authority are elaborated. Provisions for calling a Kirk Session meeting, the grounds for doing so and notice periods required are substantially amended and conformed as appropriate with the provisions for Presbytery meetings; also clarity is given on the public nature of Kirk Session meetings held wholly online. The understood practice that an Interim Moderator is generally appointed where a minister is absent, or is anticipated to be so, for more than six weeks is added as is clarity on membership of a Kirk Session by all ministerial members of a Team Ministry. Only members of Presbytery (and not Correspondents) carry trustee obligations.

3.4 Guidance to accompany the Act is being developed and this will be made available to Session Clerks and Presbytery Clerks in early course. The intention is for this to expand upon certain issues where the Committee thinks this might be helpful, and to signpost other sources of advice.

3.5 Few critical comments were received regarding substantive matters addressed in the draft Act. Whilst the Committee adheres to its view that the relatively limited alterations to current law and practice do not necessitate remitting the matter to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, consultation having been effected over the past year, this decision is left to the General Assembly. The Committee therefore proposes in the draft deliverance that the Act simply be passed at this Assembly. The alternative is that the Clerks of Assembly shall be prepared to provide a draft Overture and associated section of deliverance to enable such an Overture to be proposed and, if approved, to commence Barrier Act process which may result in the Act returning to the 2024 Assembly.

4. REVIEW OF ACT I 2015

4.1 The Committee was instructed, in consultation with the Faith Nurture Forum and the Theological Forum, to undertake a review of the Ministers and Deacons in Same Sex Marriages and Civil Partnerships Act (Act I 2015) and to report to a future General Assembly. The Committee primarily considered the practical operation of the Act, noting it is largely confined to the appointment of ministers and deacons in parish contexts and consultation was undertaken as instructed.

4.2 With mixed sex civil partnership now being a possibility, clarification is made that the Act applies to ministers and deacons in same sex civil partnerships. Pioneer Ministers and Associate Ministers are now specifically included. The Act is extended to cover the appointment by Presbytery of an Interim Moderator with a process to permit a Kirk Session to request that the appointment does not proceed. The requirement to have more than one vote by the same body now appears superfluous and a single vote, with correspondingly streamlined process, is proposed. In the case of a Team Ministry the requirement to vote, possibly in quick succession on the same matter, is removed by stipulating that a vote to depart or not to depart shall subsist for five years and apply to other appointments to the team made during that time, whilst reserving a Kirk Session's right to ask that the matter be reconsidered where a majority (or significant number) of the Kirk Session requests.

4.3 The proposed amending Act appears in Appendix D.

5. SAME SEX MARRIAGE

5.1 The Office of the General Assembly has been processing applications by ministers and deacons who wish to apply to the Registrar General to be authorised to solemnise same sex marriages, in terms of the Solemnisation of Same Sex Marriages Act (Act VI 2022). Over 100 people have now been authorised and Presbytery Clerks have been notified of the names of those in their Presbytery who are so authorised. Guidance has been prepared and this is available on application to the Presbytery Clerk.

6. PRESBYTERY REVIEW

6.1 The idea of instituting a process of Presbytery Review was first raised on the floor of the General Assembly in 2016 and a number of Presbyteries took part in initial pilots of the scheme during 2017 and 2018. Although the General Assembly of 2019 instructed the Committee to continue the pilots and to prepare legislation, the twin issues of Presbytery Reform and the Covid-19 Pandemic meant that further development was put on hold until the Assembly of 2022 when the Committee was instructed to "*continue with the development of Presbytery Review, bringing the principles of Presbytery Review to the General Assembly of 2023 for Approval before bringing a Presbytery Review Act to the General Assembly of 2024.*"

6.2 The basic principles remain largely unchanged from what has been brought to the Assembly previously. These are rehearsed here but in addition we bring to the Assembly's attention the fact that the process needs to be fit for purpose at a time when the new Presbyteries are just beginning to find their feet.

6.3 In broad terms Presbytery Review concerns the exercise of Assembly oversight over the work of Presbyteries. Specifically, the aims are as follows:

- to review Presbytery life and work in terms of the Functions and Responsibilities of Presbyteries as outlined in the Church Courts Act;
- to assist Presbyteries in supporting the life and mission of the local Church and in participating in the life of the national Church;

- to allow the Assembly to hear about the life of the Presbytery being reviewed and to share good practice across the whole Church;
- to help co-ordinate central resourcing of the wider Church;
- to enable action to be taken where there is conflict or non-compliance with Church or civil law.

6.4 The proposal is to have a cycle of reviews so that each Presbytery is reviewed at least once in every five years with room for the review to be brought forward or to be delayed in the light of any specific circumstances. Generally, the Assembly would receive reports on two or three Presbyteries in any given year.

6.5 There would be a Presbytery Review Committee comprising the following:

- one representative from each Scottish Presbytery;
- a Convener appointed by the Assembly on the nomination of the Nomination Committee;
- the Assembly Clerks *ex officio*.

6.6 Each Presbytery Review would be facilitated by a three-person review group who would support the Presbytery in the following:

- describing and explaining the activities, priorities and methodologies of the Presbytery;
- identifying good practice for sharing with the wider Church;
- outlining future plans;
- identifying areas needing further development.

6.7 The Review Group would check that the Presbytery was complying with Church and civil law and would submit a report to the General Assembly allowing the Assembly to celebrate noteworthy aspects of the Presbytery and to take any action that may be called for by the report.

6.8 There are parallels with the Local Church Review process and in shaping a Presbytery Review Act it may be useful to mirror the Local Church Review Act (Act I 2011) to enable the two processes to complement each other.

6.9 The value of the Presbytery Review will be proven in the extent to which the Presbytery as a whole is involved in engaging with the process. There is a balance to be struck between prescribing how the review is conducted and giving freedom to the Presbytery and the Review Group to explore together how best an honest and rigorous appraisal may be carried out and how the Presbytery may own its responsibilities and its vision for the future. There is an opportunity in the process to go beyond a mere tick-box exercise and to encourage Presbyteries to strive for excellence in the fulfilment of their mission.

6.10 It would be for the Assembly's Presbytery Review Committee to begin to develop good practice in the following:

- enabling thorough and objective oversight of Presbyteries on behalf of the Assembly;
- creating useful and fruitful opportunities for Presbyteries to be self-critical;
- providing an occasion at the General Assembly to celebrate and share good practice for the benefit of the wider Church.

6.11 In Appendix E the Committee offers an outline of the principles undergirding the proposed Presbytery Review process and will bring a Presbytery Review Act to the General Assembly of 2024.

7. REQUESTS FOR REVIEW AND ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN ACT

7.1 A sub-group of the Committee has produced Guidance which is being issued to Kirk Sessions who wish to make a request for review under section 3 of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021). The Office of the General Assembly is processing requests received; at the time of writing there are 25 requests for review across 11 Presbyteries, with two requests in addition from Presbyteries for assistance under section 2.2.4 of the Act.

7.2 The Mission Plan Review Group is now fully appointed with 15 members, and all will be allocated several cases as work progresses on the reviews.

8. READERS SOLEMNISING MARRIAGE

8.1 The Committee received a remit from the Assembly of 2022 as follows:

"Instruct the Committee, in consultation with the Faith Nurture Forum and the Theological Forum to explore whether Readers be permitted to apply for permission to officiate at marriage ceremonies and report to the General Assembly 2023 with proposals as required."

8.2 This was a proposal raised from the floor of the General Assembly by Professor Herbert Kerrigan, an elder in Greyfriars Church. It was accepted by the Convener to allow time for reflection.

8.3 The definition of a Reader in the Readership Act (Act XVII 1992) is:

"A Reader is a person who has been set apart by a Presbytery to an office which qualifies him or her to carry out duties within the Church of Scotland which are principally concerned with the ministry of the Word and the conduct of public worship."

8.4 The Legal Questions sub group charged with this remit consulted with the Faith Nurture Forum and with the Theological Forum. The consultation resulted in the noting of the following points:-

- There is no theological reason which would prevent Readers from solemnising marriage as it is not a sacrament within the Church of Scotland.

- A route already exists under civil law to allow individual Readers to be authorised to solemnise a marriage on a temporary basis. That route is through consultation with the Parish Minister and the Presbytery Clerk and then through certification by the Principal Clerk to the Registrar General that the Reader is a fit and proper person.
- The general need for Readers to solemnise marriages was queried given the context of a diminishing number of marriages being carried out by the Church in Scotland. The number of marriages solemnised by the Church of Scotland has reduced from 7.3% of marriages in 2019 to 4.9% of marriages in 2021.
- Readers are not included in the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017). This Act established a Register of Ministry which lists all individuals who hold status as Ministers of Word and Sacrament or as Deacons and as such are authorised to solemnise marriage. The Register is reviewed every year. At present there is no general system to confirm that Readers are fit and proper persons to solemnise marriage. There is no appraisal process for Readers. Training on solemnising marriage would require to be provided.
- A change would be required to the civil law: to the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977, ideally to section 8(1)(a)(i), to add Readers as persons entitled to solemnise a marriage. This would be a matter for the Scottish Parliament.
- The Office of the General Assembly is already carrying out significant additional work in processing applications for authorisation to conduct same sex marriage. At this time in the life of the Church, steps should be taken to simplify and reduce the administrative procedures required to be carried out by Presbyteries and the Office of the General Assembly and not add to them.

8.5 In light of these points, in particular, of the existing route to temporary authorisation and in the interests of simplicity, good order and in a desire not to add to the work of Presbyteries and the Office of the General Assembly unnecessarily at the present time, the Committee has concluded that no proposals for change should be suggested.

9. HYBRID GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023

9.1 The Committee has worked with the Assembly Business Committee on making arrangements for the hybrid General Assembly 2023.

9.2 The Committee has sought to ensure that good decision-making is maintained and that commissioners can both raise issues and engage effectively with debate. The Committee encourages commissioners to ensure that they are fully informed and understand their role in the decision-making process. The Committee has also been involved in reviewing the standing orders of the GA with regard to a hybrid arrangement.

10. BARRIER ACT ISSUES IN LIGHT OF PRESBYTERY REFORM

10.1 One recognised consequence of approving the Radical Action Plan in 2019 was the need to “*pay ... appropriate attention to the implications for the Barrier Act, including the possible need for transitional arrangements during implementation*”.

10.2 Presbytery Reform continues, but is incomplete. Whilst Presbyteries are of significantly differing sizes each has one vote. The Theological Forum’s proposed Overture, if sent down in 2023, will require returns by 31 December 2023, as is usual, from 9 Presbyteries in total consisting of approximately 1,094 congregations and 267,800 members and also from those 10 Presbyteries which shall not then have united, consisting of approximately 170 congregations and 15,800 members. These 10 are provisionally expected to form the Presbytery of the Highlands and Hebrides, and thus together have one vote, from 1 January 2024. A question of fairness may arise both in the relative weight given to the votes cast in smaller Presbyteries and also in the preferential weighting being enjoyed by Presbyteries who have not yet fulfilled the General Assembly instruction to amalgamate into larger Presbyteries.

10.3 There is also the longer term question of what Presbytery Reform means for the voting by Presbyteries of England and of International Charges. Should ten Scottish Presbyteries of much larger size have merely similar voting weight to that of England and the International Presbytery? (The Presbytery of Jerusalem does not have a Barrier Act vote.)

10.4.1 Assuming the variance in size requires to be addressed, and an argument may be made that it should not, the Committee considered the following approaches.

(1) Counting votes of Presbyters, rather than Presbyteries

This runs counter to the provisions of the Barrier Act: Acts are first to be proposed as Overtures and then be “..... remitted to the consideration of the several Presbyteries of this Church....” and has been discounted.

(2) An electoral college system

An electoral college system, attributing a number of votes to each Presbytery according to its size, might be applied. Within each Presbytery, a successful vote for or against would carry all of that Presbytery’s electoral college votes. The noted three advantages over **counting votes of Presbyters** are that this conforms with the existing terms of the Barrier Act, that any “notes” would still come from Presbytery, clearly from a Presbytery meeting, as opposed to perhaps being perceived to come from individual Presbyters, and issues surrounding the relatively small sizes of the Presbyteries of England and the International Charges can be addressed by giving them a number of electoral college votes.

10.4.2 However, determining the size of a Presbytery is more challenging but essential to inform allocation of electoral college votes. Help was sought from the statisticians in the Office of the Assembly Trustees who supplied a paper, listing various metrics per Presbytery which were considered in detail. These included the number of congregations, number of charges, membership as at 31 December 2021, adherents as at 31 December 2021, number of commissioners to the General Assembly, number of ministries anticipated in for 2025, the 2019 CoS Responsible population and the average weekly physical attendees at worship (together with online attendance figures which were to be treated with great caution). None of these individual measurements nor any combination of them is ideal for determining the size of a Presbytery.

10.4.3 A simpler solution is to attribute 10 Barrier Act votes to each of those Scottish Presbyteries who have united already or who will feature in the new Presbytery structure with 1 vote attributed to each of the remaining un-amalgamated Scottish Presbyteries, the Presbytery of England and the Presbytery of International Charges. This would create an electoral pool of 102 votes with the advantage of assessing the relative sizes of the Scottish Presbyteries but still fairly reflecting overall differences in size.

10.4.4 Upon reflection, an electoral college system was considered an artificial approach, was not clearly justifiable and might not command widespread confidence. Once the large Scottish Presbyteries have all been formed there is, arguably, no issue.

10.5 The Committee is also conscious that an Overture creating a Book of Confessions and making corresponding changes to the vows and subscription of office holders is being brought to the Assembly this year by the Theological Forum. This will be a double Barrier Act process and shall be considered in the first year by 19 current Scottish Presbyteries, the majority of whom have not as yet amalgamated. Whilst it would be possible to postpone consideration of the Overture until Presbytery Reform is complete, the Theological Forum, being aware of the current situation with Presbytery Reform and its effect on Barrier Act votes, has advised the Committee that it is keen to proceed this year with the remit which it has been given.

10.6 Overall the Committee has decided not to propose any reform to the Barrier Act.

11. COVID PROTOCOLS

11.1 At the Commission of Assembly of July 2020 and the General Assemblies of October 2020 and May 2021, various Protocols and arrangements were agreed to facilitate meetings and Church business to continue despite the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. At the General Assembly of 2022 a section of deliverance was passed to continue these on an “as needed” basis. The Committee is now hopeful that these Protocols and arrangements are no longer required.

11.2 One exception to this is that the arrangements for Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and the General Assembly to meet online will be covered in the Church Courts Act should that be passed by this Assembly. A provision has been added to the Act to confirm that Financial Boards too may meet online. Should that Act not be passed at this year’s Assembly, some sections of deliverance covering the relevant matters will be proposed.

12. APPOINTMENTS TO LEGAL BODIES

12.1 The Judicial Panel consists of 20 people being ministers, elders, deacons and members nominated by the Nomination Committee and appointed by the General Assembly. All members of the Judicial Panel shall be qualified to practise as lawyers or shall be experienced in the law and practice of the Church. These persons serve a four year term and are eligible for further four year terms. The Panel supplies members to serve on the Discipline Tribunal and Judicial Commission, and Reviewers for procedural reviews in discipline cases.

12.2 Experience has shown that more than 20 people would be useful and the Assembly is asked to approve a small change to the Appeals Act (Act I 2014) to increase their number to 30. A proposed amending Act can be found in Appendix F.

In the name of the Committee

S GRANT BARCLAY, *Convener*
VICTORIA LINFORD, *Vice-Convener*
FIONA SMITH, *Secretary*

Addendum

The Rev Dr Grant Barclay

The Rev Dr Grant Barclay completes his four year term as Convener of the Committee this year. His sharp mind, unerring focus on the key issues and innovative thinking have been of much benefit to the Committee over his term. A meeting chaired by Grant is never dull and always takes the optimum amount of time to discuss and decide upon any given issue, before moving efficiently on to the next.

He has been instrumental in the drafting of the new Church Courts Act which it is hoped will be of immense practical benefit to all involved in the courts of the Church. He has steered the Committee competently through many complex issues, not least the Presbytery Mission Plan Act and the legislation which the Committee was instructed to bring on the solemnisation of same sex marriage. Of course much of his term required agile responses to the myriad unanticipated problems created by the Covid-19 pandemic and we were fortunate to have someone so clear-sighted at the helm during these difficult times.

Also during his time as Convener he has received the honour of an appointment as a Chaplain-in-Ordinary to His Majesty the King.

Having stepped down, we know that he will not be at a loss for work to occupy him in his “day job” of Clerk to the Presbytery of Glasgow. We hope however that his family, home and garden may benefit from some extra time being available for him to spend there. He leaves with our grateful thanks and best wishes for his future endeavours.

VICTORIA LINFORD, *Vice-Convener*

Encomium

The Procurator, Laura Dunlop KC

Laura Dunlop will step down from her position as Procurator following this Assembly, on 31 May 2023, after serving 18 years in the role. The office of Procurator has a long history and Laura is only the 26th person to occupy the role since its inception in 1638. She also has the distinction of being the longest serving Procurator and the first female in the role.

Laura has been an exceptionally wise and calm source of valuable advice across a vast array of topics, covering both Church and civil law. She has provided superb legal representation to the Church in its occasional forays into litigation in the upper courts and has, at the other end of the scale, been assiduous in her attendance at, and contribution to, the meetings and work of the Legal Questions Committee and its various task groups as they have grappled with difficult legal matters. Her authoritative, incisive and practical legal advice to successive General Assemblies has been invaluable. She has also been a trustee of the Iona Cathedral Trust and has made a significant contribution to the work of the Trust, particularly during the major renovation work to the Library in 2018.

Laura's drafting advice is always accurate and always improves a text. Her sense of humour has lifted many a dry meeting and she has a wonderful store of enlightening and apposite phrases which she produces as required: "It is the difference that makes the difference". She will be distressed by the inclusion of many adjectives – the litigator's foe – in this note! All of her work for the Church has been underpinned by her personal faith, her empathetic understanding of the context in which the work of the Church is carried out and her detailed legal knowledge.

We have been fortunate to have, in Laura, such an outstanding servant of the Church. She will be greatly missed, in particular by those who have worked most closely with her and have most cause to be grateful to her: the Principal and Depute Clerks, the Solicitor and the Convener of the Legal Questions Committee.

At the Bar, Laura's wide-ranging civil practice has been supplemented by service in several public inquiries, including as Senior Counsel to the Penrose Inquiry into viral transmission by blood and blood products, and as a part-time Law Commissioner.

Laura was appointed in October 2019 to be the President of the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland and we wish her well as she continues that demanding work, alongside her position as an elder at Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh.

S GRANT BARCLAY, *Convener*
FIONA SMITH, *Secretary*

Appendix A

Amendments to Standing Orders

Amended SO 35

35. Status

- (i) **Presbyteries shall be entitled to appoint persons to serve as Youth Representatives as follows:**
 - (a) Each Scottish Presbytery may appoint up to four Youth Representatives.**
 - (b) The Presbyteries of England, International Charges and Jerusalem may each appoint one Youth Representative.***
- (ii) Each Youth Representative shall be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five on the opening day of the General Assembly. They shall be involved in the life of a congregation within the bounds of the Presbytery and shall be regularly involved in the life and worship of the Church of Scotland. The minister of the congregation in question shall provide confirmation of this involvement if asked by **the Presbytery of the bounds**.
- (iii) The names of Youth Representatives shall be passed to the Clerks of Assembly by **31 January** each year. **If a Presbytery does not use fully use its entitlement to appoint Youth Representatives in any given year, its unused entitlement may be allocated to another Presbytery or Presbyteries at the discretion of the Clerks of Assembly.**
- (iv) Youth Representatives shall be entitled to speak and move motions but not to vote:
 - during debates on Committee reports, and
 - during debates on Overtures.
- (v) Youth Representatives shall not be entitled to speak, move motions or vote:
 - during debates on Petitions or cases, and
 - during debates on matters affecting General Assembly procedure or Standing Orders.
- (vi) Youth Representatives shall not be members of the Commission of Assembly.

Oversight

- (vii) The Faith Nurture Forum shall take responsibility for Youth Representatives and shall extend to them appropriate hospitality.

***Note: This drafting assumes that an Overture is to be received from the Presbytery of Clèir Eilean Ì: (Highlands & Hebrides) at GA 2023, but if that is not received, these sub-paragraphs should instead, for the following year only, read:**

- (a) Each Scottish Presbytery other than those expected to form the Presbytery of Clèir Eilean Ì: (Highlands & Hebrides) may appoint up to four Youth Representatives.**
- (b) Those Presbyteries expected to form the Presbytery of Clèir Eilean Ì: (Highlands & Hebrides) may together appoint up to four Youth Representatives.**
- (c) The Presbyteries of England, International Charges and Jerusalem may each appoint one Youth Representative.**

Appendix B**Draft Church Courts Act****CHURCH COURTS ACT***Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []*

WHEREAS in terms of the Fourth Article Declaratory, the Church of Scotland as part of the Universal Church wherein the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed a government in the hands of Church office-bearers, receives from him, its Divine King and Head, and from Him alone the right and power subject to no civil authority to legislate, and to adjudicate finally, in all matters of doctrine, worship, government, and discipline in the Church, including the right to determine all questions concerning membership and office in the Church, the constitution and membership of its Courts, and the mode of election of its office-bearers, and to define the boundaries of the spheres of labour of its Ministers and other office-bearers;

Accordingly, in respect of the courts of the Church, the General Assembly hereby enact and ordain as follows:

PART 1 – CHURCH COURTS**1. Broad principle**

1.1 The government of the Church of Scotland is Presbyterian and is exercised through courts, being Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and General Assemblies, as set out in the Articles Declaratory.

PART 2 – KIRK SESSION**2. Broad principle**

2.1 The Kirk Session is the court which is responsible for the life and witness of the Church of Scotland in a parish.

2.2 The Kirk Session shall exercise oversight and leadership over the congregation's participation in Mission within the parish and the congregation's sharing in the wider work of the Church, through Worship, Service, Fellowship, Discipleship and Evangelism^[i]. The Kirk Session shall ensure these facets of church life are held in balance and expressed in ways appropriate to the context.

3. Functions and responsibilities

3.1 In achieving the broad principle above, the Kirk Session shall fulfill the following functions and responsibilities:-

Witness

- (1) **Mission:** Develop the congregation's engagement in Mission in terms of section 2.2.
- (2) **Public Worship and Communion:** Determine the hours of public worship and the times of dispensing the Lord's Supper, the latter in terms of the Sacraments Act (Act V 2000), always subject to determination by Presbytery as part of parish adjustment.
- (3) **Pastoral and spiritual care:** Exercise oversight over the pastoral and spiritual care of the whole congregation, and offer pastoral care as appropriate across the parish, throughout the whole of life.

Congregational Life

- (4) **Office bearers:** Appoint a Clerk and a Safeguarding Coordinator, and where there is no Congregational Board or Deacons' Court, a Treasurer. The Kirk Session may make other appointments as required. The oath *de fideli* shall be administered to a Clerk or Interim Clerk.^[ii] The Clerk need not be a member of the Kirk Session but while in post shall be a charity trustee.
- (5) **Congregational membership and adherence:** Determine issues of membership and adherence in the congregation and be responsible for keeping a Roll of the congregation which is up to date and retained in accordance with data protection law.
- (6) **Session membership:** Manage membership, including by adding to its number and receiving resignations of its members.
- (7) **Discipline:** Maintain good order in the life of the congregation and respond to the misconduct of members and adherents.
- (8) **Baptisms:** Determine in collaboration with the Minister those to whom the sacrament of baptism may be administered and be responsible for the keeping of a Roll of Baptisms, subject to data protection law and in terms of the Sacraments Act (Act V 2000)
- (9) **Finance and Property:** Be responsible for the financial arrangements and the care of the property belonging to the congregation, including maintenance of a Property Register, unless there is a Congregational Board or Deacons' Court^[iii].
- (10) **Church buildings and land:** Exercise rights and responsibilities over Church buildings as set out in section 12 of the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018) and, where buildings or land are vested in the Church of Scotland General Trustees, in accordance with any directions given by them in matters of health and safety.
- (11) **Stewardship:** Bring the resourcing needs and commitments of the congregation and wider Church to the attention of members and adherents on a regular basis and encourage generosity in giving of time, talents and money.
- (12) **Oversight of congregational organisations:** Oversee all Sunday Schools and ministries for children, young people and families, congregational organisations and mission work of the congregation.

- (13) **Appointments:** Appoint appropriate persons to work in the congregation to support the Mission of the congregation; fulfil all responsibilities consequentially arising in terms of the civil law on employment; and unless the congregation has a Congregational Board or Deacons' Court, be responsible for the payment of salaries.
- (14) **Communications:** Be responsible for all publications and communications, including social media, issued in the name of the congregation.

Church Law

- (15) **Compliance:** Carry out the functions and comply with the responsibilities specified in Acts and Regulations of the General Assembly, and comply with instructions of Presbytery and the General Assembly.^[iv]
- (16) **Rolls and records:** Submit annually to Presbytery for examination the rolls, registers, and records of the congregation and submit for attestation by Presbytery the trustees' report and annual congregational accounts^[v].
- (17) **Conflicts of interest:** Adopt and operate a suitable policy which demonstrates conflicts of interest are recognised and managed effectively.

Civil Law

- (18) **Charity law:** ensure that the congregation is registered as a Charity and that it follows civil charity law and good practice, including the timeous submission of accounts for attestation by Presbytery and thereafter to OSCR; also discharge the duties of charity trustees in terms of the civil law on charities, in particular those contained in the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended).
- (19) **Safeguarding:** fulfil all responsibilities placed upon it in terms of civil law and the Safeguarding Act (Act XVI 2018), ensuring that necessary Safeguarding training is undertaken, that records of such training are maintained, and that the Safeguarding Congregational Register and the Safeguarding Audit Checklist are completed annually.
- (20) **Data protection:** be responsible for fulfilling the provisions of civil law on data protection, in accordance with advice and assistance provided by the national Church offices and Church website.
- (21) **Health and safety law, employment law and other civil law:** comply as required.

Co-operation with Presbytery

- (22) **Presbytery Elder:** appoint one of their number to serve as a member of the relevant Presbytery.
- (23) **Mission Planning:** take due part in the creation and annual updating of the Presbytery Mission Plan as set out in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021).
- (24) **Vacancy Procedure:** fulfil the various responsibilities set out in the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003).
- (25) **Superintendence:** co-operate with Presbytery as it exercises its general powers of superintendence and in particular participate in the processes of the Local Church Review Act (Act I 2011).

3.2 Where a Kirk Session is a Services Kirk Session in terms of the H.M. Forces (Kirk Sessions) Act (Act VIII 1952), the terms of this Act shall be interpreted and applied with all necessary adaptations.

4. Delegation of Authority

4.1 The Kirk Session may delegate its authority to make decisions in certain areas of responsibility to individuals or committees on such terms as the Kirk Session may determine. The Kirk Session may include in the delegation a mechanism by which Kirk Session members beyond the group can, before a final decision is made by the delegated group, request that the matter come back to a full meeting of the Kirk Session.

4.2 In delegating, the Kirk Session shall ensure that:

- a) all the members of the Kirk Session are aware that as charity trustees they retain responsibility for the decisions made by the delegated group and decisions made by a delegated group will be open to Dissent and Complaint or Appeal in terms of the Intimation of Appeals Act (Act V 2004).
- b) it identifies at a full meeting of the Kirk Session the individual or the membership of the group to which the powers are to be delegated including lines of accountability.
- c) it sets out in an agreed minute the extent of the delegated powers including if appropriate reference to the relevant Act(s) and/or Regulations of the General Assembly regarding the decisions the group is charged with making, the budget limits within which they must work, and the point at which the group must refer decision-making back to a full meeting of the Kirk Session.
- d) it minutes its acceptance that decisions made by the group are final and cannot be recalled or rescinded by the Kirk Session save where the mechanism permitted by section 4.1 has been included in the scheme of delegation.
- e) no further delegation is possible by the delegated group without the consent of the Kirk Session.

4.3 Delegation, once made, may thereafter be rescinded or amended by the Kirk Session but not on a retrospective basis and such rescission or amendment shall only become effective once intimated to the members of the delegated group.

5. Meetings

5.0 Kirk Session meetings shall normally be held in public but may be held in private for the whole or part of a meeting where the Session so determines for items of business which are personal, disciplinary or are of a pastoral or commercially sensitive nature.

5.1 Calling Meetings

5.1.1 Ordinary Meetings shall be called by the Kirk Session at a previous Ordinary Meeting. The Kirk Session may call one or more such meetings at a time. Normally public notice of at least ten days (and including two Sundays) of a meeting shall be given. Elders may also be notified by hard copy letter, by electronic means, by telephone call, or by a combination of these methods.

5.1.2 A Specific Purpose Meeting shall be called either at an Ordinary Meeting or, where the need arises between Ordinary Meetings, it may be called by the Moderator on the advice of the Clerk. The first item of business at a Specific Purpose Meeting called by the Moderator shall be the approval of the Moderator's decision to call the meeting. No other business beyond the specific purpose previously intimated shall be discussed at such a meeting.

5.1.3 The calling of a Specific Purpose Meeting called by the Moderator shall be in writing with a period of notice of at least fourteen days, provided that in exceptional circumstances a shorter period of notice may be given, and in this event the first item of business shall be approval of the shorter period of notice.

5.1.4 The Moderator must call a Session meeting to be held within ten days on the instruction of the relevant Presbytery.

5.1.5 In addition, the Moderator must call a Session meeting to be held within ten days where he or she is requested in writing to do so by either of the following groups: (1) a majority of the ruling Elders, or (2) where the ruling Elders exceed nine in number, at least one-third with a minimum of five.

5.1.6 In each year, in addition to the regular conduct of business, the Session must:

- a) review and approve the Communion Roll and Supplementary Roll,
- b) approve the trustees' report and accounts of the congregation for the preceding financial year,
- c) review and approve the Safeguarding Register, and
- d) appoint the Presbytery Elder,

all in accordance with Church law.

5.2 Procedure at Meetings

5.2.1 Meetings shall be constituted and closed with prayer.

5.2.2 All meetings shall be minuted, with the minute of each meeting being circulated in draft following the meeting and being subject to approval at the start of the following ordinary meeting. The minute shall record the date, time, and (if in person) place of the meeting, the name of the Moderator, attendees (including apologies) and decisions made and actions taken. Minutes shall be retained as set out in the Guidance.

5.2.3 The minute of a meeting (or part of it) held in private shall be in held in a Record Apart.

5.2.4 Meetings may take place in person, or online, or by a combination of these methods. Where the meeting is online to any extent, the Moderator shall ensure that those attending can participate, debate and vote and that this can be done in private where required.

5.2.5 A person who is not a member of the Kirk Session, whether or not a member of the congregation, may attend a Session meeting (except to the extent that it is being held in private). Where a meeting is held wholly online and a person not a member of the Kirk Session wishes to observe those parts of the meeting not held in private, a web link shall be provided upon request. A person who is not a member of the Kirk Session shall require permission of the Kirk Session to speak on a particular item (or items) of business, which may be a standing permission^[vi]. A request to speak shall be made by submitting it in writing to the Session Clerk, normally at least seven days in advance of the date of the meeting. The request shall then be considered at the meeting of the Kirk Session in question.

5.2.6 The Standing Orders of the General Assembly shall apply as matter of default to Kirk Session meetings, but a Kirk Session may adopt Standing Orders of its own provided these are not incompatible with Church law.

5.3 Moderator and Interim Moderator

5.3.1 Moderator

5.3.1.1 The Minister of the charge shall be the Moderator of the Kirk Session, save where other arrangements are specified in a Basis of Team Ministry. Otherwise the Kirk Session may be moderated by an Interim Moderator as set out below or as set out in the Kirk Session Meetings Act (Act VI 2004).

5.3.1.2 The Moderator of the Kirk Session while in the chair has a casting vote but no deliberative vote. He or she may introduce items of business and may speak to them.

5.3.2 Interim Moderator

5.3.2.1 The Presbytery may appoint an Interim Moderator of the Kirk Session. This shall normally be done when the charge is vacant, or when the Minister is on sick leave or has been granted leave of absence. It may also be done in anticipation of an impending vacancy, while the Minister is still in office, to deal with adjustment and vacancy business. An Interim Moderator shall normally be appointed where the Minister's absence has extended to, or is anticipated to last, for more than six weeks.

5.3.2.2 Where the relevant Presbytery appoints an Interim Moderator, the Interim Moderator shall be either a ministerial member of the Presbytery in terms of this Act or the Presbytery Assessors Act (Act V 2001) or a member of the Presbytery selected from the Presbytery's list of those who have received such preparation for the task as the Faith Nurture Forum shall from time to time recommend or provide.

5.4 Quorum

5.4.1 The quorum of a Kirk Session shall be three, being the Moderator, Interim Moderator or appointee in terms of the Kirk Session Meetings Act (Act VI 2004), plus two ruling Elders.

5.4.2 If there be not a sufficient number of ruling Elders available to make a quorum, or in cases of difficulty at the discretion of the Presbytery, Assessor Elders may be appointed by the Presbytery. When appointing Assessor Elders, Presbytery shall state whether or not the Assessor Elders have a vote in Session business; those appointed with voting rights shall be charity trustees from the date of their appointment until they are discharged. The appointment of Assessor Elders shall be reviewed annually.

6. Membership of the Kirk Session

6.1 The Kirk Session shall consist of the Minister(s) of the parish, any associate Minister or parish Deacon if qualified as set out below, and the ruling Elders of the congregation. All members of the Session shall have the right to vote.

6.2 An associate Minister or parish Deacon introduced in terms of section 32(4) of the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003), shall be a member of the Kirk Session. Where there is a Team Ministry, all Ministers shall be members of the Kirk Session. Any other Minister or Deacon may be associated in the practical work of the Kirk Session of the congregation on the invitation of the Kirk Session, with the right to attend meetings and to speak, but not to vote, and shall not be a member of the Kirk Session.

6.3 Where there is no Congregational Board or Deacons' Court, the Kirk Session shall also appoint a Treasurer who need not be an Elder nor member of the congregation, but who shall, while in post, assume the duties and obligations of charity trusteeship.

6.4 Members of the Kirk Session along with members of the Congregational Board or Deacons' Court, though not Correspondents, shall be charity trustees of the congregation for the purposes of civil charity law. Other persons may be charity trustees for the purposes of civil charity law according to that congregation's constitution.

6.5 The Kirk Session may appoint Correspondents, who shall have the following rights in respect of meetings: to receive papers, to attend and to speak but not to vote. A Correspondent need not be a member of the congregation. A Correspondent shall not be present when business is taken in private.

6.6 A locum in a vacancy shall not be a member of a Kirk Session but if the Kirk Session so decides may be invited to attend Kirk Session meetings and allowed to speak.

6.7 Elders shall be elected, ordained and admitted to the Kirk Session in terms of the Election and Admission of Elders and Deacons Act (Act X 1932). Such Act includes provision for Elders to be admitted to the Kirk Session on the basis of fixed term membership. The minimum age for an Elder is eighteen years. The Kirk Session shall keep the number of ruling Elders under review, for efficient operation.

6.8 An Elder who ceases to be a member of a Kirk Session does not, if he or she transfers to another congregation, thereby become a member of its Kirk Session but may do so upon invitation.

6.9 A Kirk Session may agree to accept a standing apology from a ruling Elder for all meetings occurring between specified dates on cause shown. If agreed to, such an Elder remains a charity trustee and shall continue to be supplied with documents for all Session meetings.

6.10 Where (i) a ruling Elder fails to attend Kirk Session meetings for a period of twelve months without submitting apologies for their absence, or (ii) a Session determines that a ruling Elder is not, whether through infirmity, illness or otherwise, participating sufficiently in Kirk Session business, the Session may, having first invited the person to offer reasons for their absence or lack of participation and assurances regarding their future involvement, remove that person from the membership of the Session. The Session Clerk will write to that person to confirm that they have been removed from the membership of the Session. From the date of their removal they will no longer be a charity trustee^[vii].

7. Relationship with other Church Courts

7.1 A Kirk Session, as the inferior court, is answerable to the Presbytery and, as such, must obey the instructions of the Presbytery and the General Assembly. As such, appeals against decisions of Kirk Sessions shall be heard and disposed of by the Presbytery or those to whom the Presbytery delegates such authority.

7.2 Relationships with other Kirk Sessions may be governed by Bases, such as a Basis of linking or parish grouping, approved by Presbytery in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021). Where decisions are required to be made, two or more Kirk Sessions may meet in conference but they require to meet separately (and this may be in the same place at the same time) to make their own decisions^[viii].

7.3 Where a Kirk Session becomes aware of difficulties in the congregation or Session which it cannot itself resolve, it shall make the Presbytery aware of the situation or where Presbytery itself becomes aware of such circumstances, the Presbytery shall proceed to take appropriate action.

7.4 Whenever a Kirk Session meeting is called by the authority of the Presbytery in terms of the Local Church Review Act (Act I 2011) or the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) or for any other purpose relating to the superintendence of the congregation by the Presbytery, the representative of Presbytery appointed to moderate the meeting shall determine whether on any occasion the Kirk Session shall meet without the presence of the Minister.

8. Appeals

8.1 Decisions of the Kirk Session are subject to appeal, and any such appeal shall be heard by the relevant Presbytery, or those to whom the Presbytery delegates authority. An appeal against a decision of the Kirk Session can be made only by a person described in the Intimation of Appeals Act (Act V 2004) and an appeal must be intimated in accordance with the provisions of that Act.

PART 3 – PRESBYTERY**9. Broad Principle**

9.1 Presbytery is the court which is responsible for the gathered life of the Church of Scotland. This responsibility is both corporate and individual, and rests on members and office-bearers alike. The collective task is the support and oversight of the local church as well as participating in the life of the Church at General Assembly level.

9.2 Each area of Scotland shall be covered by such a Presbytery and each local expression of church belonging to the Church of Scotland shall be subject to the oversight of the relevant Presbytery.

9.3 In addition, there shall be Presbyteries which oversee Church of Scotland congregations furth of Scotland.

10. Functions and Responsibilities

10.1 The Presbytery shall exercise oversight and leadership over the local church's participation in Mission and promote sharing in the wider work of the Church. To that end the Presbytery shall fulfil the following functions and take such other initiatives as the Presbytery see fit (subject always to Church law):-

Support and Oversight of the Local Church

- (1) create, implement and maintain the Presbytery Mission Plan as specified in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021).
- (2) oversee Vacancy Procedure as set out in the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003).
- (3) carry through the process of Local Church Review as set out in the Local Church Review Act (Act I 2011).
- (4) provide pastoral care to parish Ministers and parish Deacons^[ix].
- (5) annually examine and attest rolls, records, minutes, registers, expense claims, and accounts.

Superintendence

- (6) exercise general powers of superintendence.
- (7) exercise discipline over Ministers, Deacons, Elders and local office bearers in terms of the Discipline Act (Act I 2019) and provide pastoral care to those involved in the discipline process.
- (8) operate the Complaints Procedure as approved by the General Assembly.
- (9) hear and dispose of appeals against the decision of a Kirk Session.

Resourcing Congregations

- (10) provide resources or identify access to resources for congregations and other expressions of local church life as set out in Church law or as the Presbytery may determine.
- (11) fulfil its responsibilities in relation to Readers in terms of the Readership Act (Act XVII 1992), to Ordained Local Ministers in terms of the Ordained Local Ministry Act (Act IX 2011) and to Auxiliary Ministers in terms of the Auxiliary Ministers Act (Act XIII 2003).
- (12) select, train and maintain lists of worship leaders in terms of the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018).

Beyond the Church

- (13) order itself in such a way that the local church can gain a collective voice to speak with those representing civil authority, other denominations, other faith groups, the Third Sector, business interests, and cultural life.

General Assembly Processes

- (14) participate in any Presbytery Review process^[x].
- (15) cooperate with agencies and officials of the General Assembly as they fulfil their remits.
- (16) nominate and supervise Candidates for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the Diaconate.
- (17) provide such information regarding statistics, office bearers, and finance as required by Church law.
- (18) respond timeously to General Assembly remits and ensure compliance with the requirements of the Barrier Act.

Good Order

- (19) ensure good order in the conduct of its shared life.
- (20) carryout the functions and comply with the responsibilities specified in Acts and Regulations of the General Assembly, and comply with instructions of the General Assembly.
- (21) elect a Moderator from amongst its number. Such an appointment shall be in terms of the Presbytery's Standing Orders but, for the avoidance of doubt, may be for a period of time of at least one year and of the Presbytery's choosing.
- (22) appoint a Clerk and in the absence of the Clerk from any meeting, appoint an Interim Clerk. The Clerk need not be a member of the Court. The oath *de fidei* shall be administered to a Clerk or Interim Clerk.^[xi]
- (23) ensure that the Roll of Presbytery is kept up to date and retained in accordance with Data Protection law.
- (24) appoint appropriate persons to work in the Presbytery to support the mission of the Presbytery; fulfil all responsibilities consequentially arising in terms of the civil law on employment; and be responsible for the payment of salaries.
- (25) adopt and operate a suitable policy to recognise and manage conflicts of interest effectively and demonstrably.

Civil Law

- (26) ensure that the Presbytery is registered as a Charity and follows civil charity law and good practice, including the timeous submission of Presbytery accounts to OSCR.
- (27) ensure that the duties of charity trustees in terms of the civil law on charities, in particular those contained in the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 (as amended) are discharged.
- (28) attest all congregational trustees' reports and annual accounts prior to their submission to OSCR.
- (29) cooperate with the Assembly Trustees on matters of charity governance.
- (30) fulfil all responsibilities placed upon the Presbytery in terms of civil law and the Safeguarding Act (Act XVI 2018), including the provision of Safeguarding training and maintenance of records of such training, and the annual completion of the Safeguarding Audit Checklist.
- (31) act as the data controller, in terms of the Data Protection Act 2018, for congregations within its bounds and be responsible for registering as such with the Information Commissioner's Office.
- (32) fulfil the provisions of civil law on data protection, in accordance with advice and assistance provided by the national Church offices and Church website.
- (33) comply as required with health and safety law, employment law and other civil law.

11. Delegation of Authority

11.1 The Presbytery may delegate their authority to make decisions in certain areas of responsibility to individuals or committees on such terms as the Presbytery may determine. The Presbytery may include in the delegation a mechanism by which Presbytery members beyond the group can, before a final decision is made by the delegated group, request that the matter come back to an Ordinary Meeting of the Presbytery.

11.2 In delegating, the Presbytery shall ensure that:

- a) all the members of the Presbytery are aware that as charity trustees they retain responsibility for the decisions made by the delegated group and decisions made by a delegated group will be open to Dissent and Complaint or Appeal in terms of the Appeals Act (Act I 2014).
- b) they identify at an Ordinary Meeting the individual or the membership of the group to which the powers are to be delegated including lines of accountability.
- c) they set out in an agreed minute the extent of the delegated powers including if appropriate reference to the relevant Act(s) and/or Regulations of the General Assembly regarding the decisions the group is charged with making, the budget limits within which they must work, and the point at which the group must refer decision-making back to an Ordinary Meeting of the Presbytery.
- d) they minute their acceptance that decisions made by the group are final and cannot be recalled or rescinded by the Presbytery save where the mechanism permitted by section 11.1 has been included in the scheme of delegation.
- e) No further delegation is possible by the delegated group without the consent of the Presbytery.

11.3 Delegation, once made, may thereafter be rescinded or amended by the Presbytery but not on a retrospective basis and such rescission or amendment shall only become effective once intimated to the members of the delegated group.

12. Meetings

12.0.1 Meetings of Presbytery shall be Ordinary Meetings (where any appropriate business may be discussed) or Specific Purpose Meetings (where only previously intimated business may be discussed).

12.0.2 All meetings of Presbytery shall be open to the public except when the Presbytery decides to meet in private for the whole or part of a meeting for items of business which are personal or are of a pastoral, disciplinary or commercially sensitive nature.

12.0.3 Papers for meetings shall normally be circulated in advance.

12.1 Calling meetings

12.1.1 Ordinary Meetings shall be called by the Presbytery at a previous Ordinary Meeting. The Presbytery may call one or more such meetings at a time. Presbyters may be notified by hard copy letter, by electronic means, by telephone call or by a combination of these methods.

12.1.2 A Specific Purpose Meeting shall be called either at an Ordinary Meeting or, where the need arises between Ordinary Meetings, it may be called by the Moderator on the advice of the Clerk. The first item of business at a Specific Purpose Meeting called by the Moderator shall be the approval of the Moderator's decision to call the meeting. No other business beyond the specific purpose previously intimated shall be discussed at such a meeting.

12.1.3 The calling of a Specific Purpose Meeting called by the Moderator shall be in writing with a period of notice of at least fourteen days, provided that in exceptional circumstances a shorter period of notice may be given, and in this event the first item of business shall be approval of the shorter period of notice.

12.2 Procedure at Meetings

12.2.1 Meetings shall be constituted and closed with prayer.

12.2.2 All meetings shall be minuted, with the minute of each meeting being circulated in draft following the meeting and being subject to approval at the start of the following meeting. The minute shall record the date, time, and (if in person) place of the meeting, the name of the Moderator, attendees and decisions made and actions taken. Minutes shall be retained as set out in the Guidance.

12.2.3 The minute of a meeting (or part of it) held in private shall be in held in a Record Apart.

12.2.4 Meetings may take place in person, or online, or by a combination of these methods. Where the meeting is online to any extent, the Moderator shall ensure that those attending can participate, debate and vote and that this can be done in private where required.

12.2.5 The agenda for an Ordinary Meeting shall include the updating of the Roll of Presbytery and the calling of the next Ordinary Meeting.

12.2.6 A person who is not a member of the Presbytery, whether or not a member of a congregation within the relevant Presbytery, may attend a Presbytery meeting (except to the extent that it is being held in private) but shall require permission of the Presbytery to speak on a particular item (or items) of business. A request to speak shall be made by submitting it in writing to the Presbytery Clerk, normally at least seven days in advance of the date of the meeting. The request shall then be considered at the meeting of the Presbytery in question. Nothing in this section precludes other rights to address Presbytery^[xiii].

12.2.7 Meetings shall be conducted in line with the Presbytery's Standing Orders and where there is no such provision the Standing Orders of the General Assembly shall apply as appropriate. Where the Presbytery have Standing Orders they shall be published on the Presbytery's website.

12.3 Moderator

12.3.1 The Moderator of the Presbytery shall be chosen from among the members of the court by free election, on the recommendation of the Business or other Committee of Presbytery, and shall hold office for a year at least and be eligible for re-election.

12.3.2 The Moderator while in the chair has a casting vote but no deliberative vote.

12.4 Quorum

12.4.1 The quorum for a Presbytery meeting shall be three members of the Court, at least one of whom shall be a Minister and one an Elder.

13. Membership of Presbytery

13.0.1 Ministers, Deacons and Elders, and no others, shall be entitled to be members of Presbytery.

13.0.2 Members of the Presbytery, though not Correspondents, shall be charity trustees of the Presbytery for the purposes of civil charity law. Other persons who participate in the general control and management of the administration of the Presbytery may be charity trustees for the purposes of civil charity law.

13.1 Ministers

13.1.1 A Minister shall be a member of the Presbytery where there is situated: -

- a) the charge to which a Minister has been inducted or within which the Minister serves as associate, assistant, or auxiliary, failing which
- b) the office, institution or other place from which a Minister works, failing which
- c) wholly or mainly the area of a Minister's responsibility, provided that, if the area extends over the boundaries of more than one Presbytery, the Presbytery containing the larger or largest part of that area shall be the relevant Presbytery.

13.1.2 A Minister in any of the following categories shall be a member of the relevant Presbytery:

- a) a Minister inducted to a charge,
- b) an associate Minister,
- c) a pioneer Minister,
- d) an interim or transition Minister,
- e) an assistant Minister,
- f) an Ordained Local Minister or an auxiliary Minister in a designated appointment,
- g) a healthcare chaplain,
- h) a prison chaplain,
- i) a workplace chaplain,
- j) a university chaplain, and
- k) a professor or lecturer in an accredited institution as defined in Act X 2004.

13.1.3 A Minister in any of the following categories shall be a member of the relevant Presbytery or, if there is no such Presbytery, of the Presbytery to which he or she belonged at the time of appointment or by which he or she was ordained for the appointment:

- a) a Minister appointed by a Committee of the Church to an overseas post,
- b) a Minister appointed to a Commission as a chaplain to H.M. Forces.

13.1.4 A Minister appointed to a post, other than those in sections 13.1.2 and 13.1.3 above and other than that of *locum* for a parish Minister, within the jurisdiction of the Church and under the direction and control of one of its courts or Committees, shall be a member of the relevant Presbytery or of the Presbytery within which is situated the congregation of which he or she is a member or of the Presbytery within the boundaries of which he or she resides, as he or she may choose.

13.1.5 Any individual who has the status of Minister of the Church of Scotland, and who does not fall into any of the categories listed in sections 13.1.2 to 13.1.4 above, shall be entitled to apply for membership of Presbytery on the basis of being registered in the Register of Ministry (as defined in the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017)) in category O, E or R. Such Minister should be registered with the Presbytery within the boundaries of which is situated the congregation of which the Minister is a member, or the Presbytery within the boundaries of which he or she lives, or (only in the case of any appointment for which the status of ordained Minister is a requirement) the Presbytery within the boundaries of which the appointment is based, as he or she may choose.

13.2 Deacons

13.2.1 A Deacon shall be a member of Presbytery if he or she occupies a parish appointment, or any other post that would entitle a Minister to membership of Presbytery in terms of sections 13.1.2 to 13.1.4 of this Act, and the provisions of those sections shall determine which is the relevant Presbytery. A Deacon who does not occupy such a parish appointment, or other qualifying post, but who is registered on the Register of Ministry in Category E or R, shall be entitled to apply for membership of Presbytery on the same basis as a Minister holding Category E or R registration, being in terms of section 13.1.4 of this Act and the Presbytery shall have power to decide whether or not to register such individual.

13.3 Elders

13.3.1 Each Kirk Session within the boundaries of a Presbytery shall, not later than 30th June in each year, meet, and, with the exception undernoted, elect one of its own members (or, with permission of the Presbytery, a member of another Kirk Session within the relevant Presbytery) to represent it in the Presbytery during the ensuing year.

13.3.2 Commissions in favour of representative Elders shall run from 1st July to 30th June and may be presented to any meeting of Presbytery held after the close of the General Assembly, providing a quorum is present apart from the Elder whose commission is presented. On the commission being declared in order the Elder concerned shall be entitled to take his or her seat.

13.3.3 In the event that a representative Elder becomes unable to serve during the year, the Kirk Session shall elect a replacement Elder and shall notify the Presbytery. The replacement Elder's commission shall run until the following 30th June.

13.3.4 A Presbytery shall elect one Elder (a "balancing Elder") in respect of each Minister who serves in an extra-parochial appointment or who is a member of Presbytery by virtue of section 13.1.5, and may further elect a number of additional Elders not in excess of one-third of the number of congregations within its boundaries. Such Elders shall be:

- a) a member of a Kirk Session within the boundaries of the Presbytery and before taking their seats they shall produce certificates of bona fide eldership from the Kirk Sessions to which they belong, or
- b) an ordained elder who is not currently a member of a Kirk Session but who is a member of a congregation within the boundaries of the Presbytery and can exhibit certification that he/she is in good standing and has not been deprived of the status of elder in a disciplinary process.

The Presbytery shall determine the process for identifying and selecting such Elders.

14. Correspondents

14.1 A Presbytery may elect Correspondents, who shall have the following rights in respect of meetings: to receive papers, to attend and to speak but not to vote. A Correspondent need not be a Minister, Elder or Deacon of the Church of Scotland. A Correspondent shall not be present when business is taken in private.

15. Relationship with other Church Courts

15.1 The Presbytery, as the superior court, has oversight of the Kirk Session and has the power to instruct Kirk Sessions and Financial Boards to act or to refrain from acting always in accordance with the Acts and Regulations of the General Assembly and the common law of the Church.

15.2 The Presbytery shall hear and dispose of appeals against decisions taken by Kirk Sessions.

15.3 The Presbytery, as the inferior court, is answerable to the General Assembly and, as such, must obey the instructions of the General Assembly. Appeals against decisions of Presbytery shall be heard and disposed of by the General Assembly or those to whom the General Assembly delegates such authority.

15.4 The Presbytery shall send Commissioners to the General Assembly. These shall be elected by the Presbytery in accordance with the Standing Orders and Acts of the General Assembly.

15.5 The Presbytery shall cooperate with the General Assembly as they exercise general powers of superintendence and conduct the process of Presbytery Review.

16. Appeals and Reviews

16.1 Decisions of the Presbytery are subject to appeal or review, and such an appeal or review shall be heard by the appropriate appellate body of the General Assembly. Appeals shall be in terms of the Appeals Act (Act I 2014). Presbytery Mission Plan decisions shall be subject to review in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021).

PART 4 – GENERAL ASSEMBLY

17. Broad Principle

17.1 The General Assembly is the supreme court of the Church in matters of Church law, doctrine and practice. It sets a strategy for national agencies of the Church. Its decisions (or those of its delegated bodies) in appeals are final. Its decisions in matters spiritual are not subject to review by any civil court.

18. Functions and Responsibilities

18.1 The General Assembly has legislative, judicial and administrative functions and responsibilities. Amongst other things, the General Assembly shall:

- (1) Meet and debate and decide upon a range of issues brought to it by commissioners, Standing Committees, Presbyteries and other component elements of the Church.
- (2) Appoint and direct its Standing Committees and hold them to account.
- (3) Pass, amend and repeal Acts and Regulations and agree sections of deliverance.
- (4) Exercise oversight of Presbyteries.
- (5) Be the final court of appeal in certain matters, save where that function has been delegated as set out in more detail in section 20.1 below.
- (6) Welcome and converse with delegates from other denominations in the UK and from churches in other countries.

18.2 Through exercising these functions and responsibilities, the General Assembly shall aim to:

- (1) Provide general order to the life of the whole Church of Scotland.
- (2) Create a sense of belonging and occasion for commissioners from across the Church and in doing so provide support, inspiration and information to members.
- (3) Celebrate being a national Church and a part of the Universal Church.
- (4) Provide a platform from which to increase the public profile of the work of the Church.

19. Meetings of the General Assembly

19.0.1 Meetings of the General Assembly may be held in-person, online or in hybrid form, ie with some members present in-person and others simultaneously present online. Each of in-person, online or in hybrid form is referred to as a “format” in this section 19.0.

19.0.2 The Assembly Business Committee shall in its Report propose the date for, meeting place and format of the next General Assembly. The General Assembly shall in its closing session pass an Act appointing the next General Assembly, in terms of the decision made under the Report of the Assembly Business Committee.

19.0.3 Where it subsequently becomes apparent that the date, meeting place and/or format specified by one Assembly for the next Assembly should be reconsidered, the Legal Questions Committee shall call a Commission of Assembly in terms of the Commission of Assembly Act (Act VI 1997) and the Assembly Business Committee shall bring forward alternative proposals regarding date, meeting place and/or format for consideration by the Commission.

19.0.4 The Assembly Business Committee shall be responsible for making the practical arrangements for the holding of a General Assembly, in line with the decisions of the previous Assembly or a subsequent Commission of Assembly.

19.0.5 Where a meeting of the General Assembly is online to any extent, the Moderator shall ensure that those attending can participate, debate and vote as set out in the Standing Orders.

19.0.6 At its closing session, that General Assembly shall be dissolved.

19.1 Procedure at Meetings

19.1.1 The Standing Orders shall make provision for procedure at sessions of the General Assembly.

19.1.2 An Order of Proceedings, containing amongst other things a proposed Order of Business, the Roll of Commissioners and the text of the Standing Orders, shall be sent to Commissioners in advance of the General Assembly, in terms of the Standing Orders.

19.1.3 The Standing Orders shall be published on the Church of Scotland website.

19.1.4 Only the General Assembly may amend the Standing Orders.

19.1.5 The Standing Orders shall apply to Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions, in a form incorporating changes necessary to their circumstances, where such courts have not agreed standing orders of their own. Alternatively, Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions may agree and put in place their own standing orders provided these are not incompatible with Church law.

19.2 Moderator

19.2.1 The Moderator shall be appointed in terms of the Nomination of the Moderator of the General Assembly Regulations (Regs I 2013).

19.2.2 The Moderator of the General Assembly shall hold office from the time of his or her election by the General Assembly until he or she demits office upon the election of his or her successor. In the event of the death or supervening incapacity of the Moderator during his or her year of office, one or more former Moderators shall be invited by the Assembly Business Committee to fulfil the duties of the office until the opening day of the next General Assembly.

19.2.3 The Moderator may appoint Chaplains to provide advice and support throughout his or her term of office.

19.2.4 The Moderator shall be responsible for moderating sessions of the General Assembly and for all acts of worship at the Assembly. The Moderator shall fulfil other duties as set out in the Office of the Moderator of the General Assembly Regulations (Regs II 2013).

19.2.5 The Moderator while in the chair has a casting vote but no deliberative vote.

19.3 Quorum

19.3.1 The quorum of the General Assembly shall be thirty-one, of whom not fewer than sixteen shall be Ministers. Further provision as to quorum shall be set out in the Standing Orders.

20. Continuing Authority of the General Assembly, Delegation of Authority and Method of Accountability

20.1 Notwithstanding the dissolution of a particular gathering of the General Assembly at its closing session, the General Assembly's authority continues, in terms of the Acts, Regulations, decisions and instructions made, and the powers delegated which may include the following:

- a) To certain judicial bodies established by the General Assembly to act as the final arbiter in certain types of appeal^[xiii]. The decisions of these judicial bodies shall be reported to the next General Assembly by the provision of minutes to the General Assembly.
- b) To certain Standing Committees to continue work and make decisions in its name. Activities undertaken and decisions so made shall be reported back to the General Assembly.
- c) To appoint and instruct others such as Special Commissions or Special Committees to carry out work on its behalf. Such delegates shall report back to the General Assembly on their work.
- d) To the Legal Questions Committee, through its Secretary, the Principal Clerk, to ensure compliance with Church law in the periods between meetings of the General Assembly.
- e) Between General Assemblies, to the Commission of Assembly in terms of the Commission of Assembly Act (Act VI 1997). The decisions of the Commission shall be reported to the next General Assembly.

20.2 The Standing Committees of the General Assembly^[xiv] shall be determined from time to time by the General Assembly and listed in the Standing Orders. The delegated authority of Standing Committees may only be amended with the approval of the General Assembly or of a Commission of Assembly.

21. Membership of the General Assembly

21.0.1 The General Assembly shall be composed of Ministers, Deacons and Elders commissioned by Presbyteries to that role, together with other members by virtue of office (*ex officio*). The Standing Orders shall make provision for other attendees at the Assembly, such as delegates, visitors, corresponding members (Correspondents) and youth representatives.

21.0.2 The Commissioners from Presbyteries shall be appointed as follows:

21.1 Ministers

21.1.1 The number of Ministers to be appointed as commissioners by each Presbytery shall be one in every five or part of five of the sum of (a) the total number of charges, whether vacant or not, in the Presbytery and (b) the total number of other Ministers who are members of Presbytery by virtue of being in appointments qualifying them for such membership in terms of this Act, provided that, for the avoidance of doubt, Ministers who are members of Presbytery by virtue of being in category R shall not be included in the above total for the purposes of calculating the number of commissioners, but shall be eligible to be appointed as commissioners. Only Ministers who are members of the appointing Presbytery shall be eligible to hold commissions as Ministers.

21.2 Elders

21.2.1 The number of Elders to be appointed as commissioners by each Presbytery shall be equal to the number of Ministers appointed in terms of section 21.1.1 above. Only Elders who are members of Kirk Sessions or New Charge Core Groups within the boundaries of the appointing Presbytery, or who are elected members of Presbytery, shall be eligible to hold commissions as Elders.

21.3 Deacons

21.3.1 The number of Deacons who may be appointed as commissioners by each Presbytery shall be one in every five, or part of five, of those who are members of Presbytery by virtue of being in appointments qualifying them for such membership in terms of this Act, provided that, for the avoidance of doubt, Deacons who are members of Presbytery by virtue of being in category R shall not be included in the above total for the purposes of calculating the number of commissioners, but shall be eligible to be appointed as commissioners. Only Deacons who are members of the appointing Presbytery shall be eligible to hold commissions as Deacons.

21.4 Failure to Appoint

21.4.1 Each Presbytery shall normally be expected to appoint its full number of commissioners each year; but in the event of failure to do so the Presbytery concerned shall submit to the Clerks of Assembly upon request a statement of the reason for such failure, and the Committee on Commissions may, if not satisfied with the reason given, report accordingly to the General Assembly.

21.5 Office-Holder Members

21.5.1 The General Assembly shall appoint a Principal Clerk, a Depute Clerk (together the Clerks of Assembly), a Procurator and a Law Agent, who upon appointment shall each take the oath *de fidei*^[xv]. In the event of a vacancy in office during a General Assembly, an interim appointment may be made by the General Assembly.

21.5.2 The Clerks of Assembly, Procurator, and Law Agent, together with the Convener and Vice-Convener of the Procedure Committee upon their election, shall be members of the General Assembly by virtue of office (*ex officio*).

21.5.3 The Moderator of the General Assembly shall, upon election, be by virtue of office a member of the General Assembly, and shall also, by virtue of having held that office, be a member of the General Assembly during which his or her demission from office takes place.

21.5.4 The five most recent past Moderators who are (i) eligible to receive a Commission, and (ii) not members of the Assembly by virtue of section 21.5.3 or otherwise members by virtue of office (*ex officio*), shall be members of the General Assembly by virtue of office. They shall be appointed in addition to their Presbytery's number of Commissions in terms of section 21.1 but no equalizing Minister or Elder shall be appointed. Their Presbytery shall remain entitled to give Commissions from amongst their allocation in terms of section 21.1, 21.2 or 21.3 above to any other former Moderators eligible to be commissioned.

21.6 Vacancies between General Assemblies

21.6.1 In the event of the occurrence of a vacancy in the office of Principal Clerk, Depute Clerk, Law Agent or Procurator between General Assemblies, an interim appointment shall be made until the General Assembly next meets.

21.6.2 In the event of the occurrence of a vacancy in the office of Procurator of the Church between General Assemblies and until an interim appointment may be made, the following provisions shall take effect:

- a) All communications which are appropriate to the duties of the Procurator shall be addressed to the Clerks of the General Assembly.
- b) Where by an Act of Assembly, or by custom, any duty falls to be discharged by the Procurator, the Law Agent shall have power to discharge such duty.

22. Relationship with other Church Courts

22.1 The General Assembly:

- a) shall be populated mainly by commissioners sent by Presbyteries in terms of the provisions set out above;
- b) has the power to instruct Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions through its legislation and deliverances; and
- c) shall be the final court of appeal from decisions of Presbyteries (save as provided above).

22.2 The General Assembly shall exercise powers of oversight of Presbyteries and these may be exercised generally, or as specified in legislation.

22.3 Reciprocally, the General Assembly shall hear from Presbyteries on matters of concern to them. A Presbytery which wishes to raise a matter of concern with the General Assembly may do so in the form of the style Overture to be found in Guidance. An Overture from a Presbytery must be submitted to the Clerks of Assembly in accordance with the procedure and timing set out in the Standing Orders.

22.4 At the General Assembly, an Overture may be presented by a member of the Overturing Presbytery, whether or not he or she is a Commissioner. If an Overture is presented by a member of the Presbytery who is not a Commissioner, he or she shall have the right to speak to and to answer questions upon the Overture, in addition to a Commissioner from that Presbytery, but he or she shall not have the right to speak on any other matter or to vote.

PART 5 – DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION**23. Definitions**

23.1 For the purposes of this Act:

- (1) the “boundaries” of a Presbytery shall mean the territorial extent of a Presbytery in Scotland, in terms of its constituent parishes.
- (2) “Church law” shall mean Acts and Regulations of the General Assembly and instructions of the General Assembly.
- (3) “Deacon” shall mean an individual who has been ordained to ministry as defined in the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010).
- (4) “Elder” shall mean a person who has been ordained to the office of elder, who is in good standing and who is currently a member of a Kirk Session or a Presbytery in terms of section 13.3.4(b).^[xvi]
- (5) “Financial Board” shall mean the body responsible for managing the finances of a congregation, and may include a Congregational Board, Deacons’ Court, Committee of Management and/or Kirk Session.
- (6) “format” when referring to a meeting, shall mean in-person, online or in hybrid form, hybrid meaning some people present in-person and some simultaneously online.
- (7) “Minister” shall mean a Minister of Word and Sacrament as defined in section 1(2) of the Parish Ministry Act.
- (8) “Mission” shall mean the mission of Jesus Christ as expressed in the Five Marks of Mission, namely:
 - a) To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom,
 - b) To teach, baptise and nurture new believers,
 - c) To respond to human need by loving service,
 - d) To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation, and
 - e) To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.
- (9) “New Charge Core Group” has the meaning given to it in New Charge Development Act (Act XIII 2000).
- (10) “parish” shall mean a geographical area defined by boundaries set by the Presbytery.
- (11) “the relevant Presbytery” shall mean the Presbytery whose authority extends across all parishes sitting within the boundaries of that Presbytery.
- (12) “Standing Committee(s)” shall mean those set out in the Standing Orders of the General Assembly.
- (13) “Standing Orders” shall mean the framework of decision-making adopted by a court.
- (14) “writing” shall mean in hard copy or electronic form.

24. Interpretation

24.1 A Minister shall be eligible for membership of the courts of the Church only as a Minister.

24.2 A Deacon shall be eligible for membership of the courts of the Church only as a Deacon.

24.3 Being present at a meeting means being physically present, being on a telephone line or having an online connection, whether audio only or audio and video.

24.4 In line with the Appeals Act (Act I 2014), the term “appeals” includes Dissent and Complaint.

24.5 A “court” refers to a gathering, being a Kirk Session, Presbytery or General Assembly, where there is authority to make collective decisions.

24.6 “Moderator” includes an Interim Moderator.

24.7 For the purposes of this Act, the term, “civil law” includes state law derived from sources such as the UK Parliament, Scottish Parliament and common law, and includes criminal law.

PART 6 – GENERAL

25. Provisions Applicable to all Courts

25.1 Minutes of courts shall be signed by the Moderator who occupies the Chair at the time when the Minutes are submitted for approval. They shall also be authenticated by the signature of the Clerk of the court.

25.2 In the case of Committees, the Minutes shall be signed by the Convener and Clerk of the meeting at which they are approved.

25.3 Petitions shall in all cases be presented to the court of first instance-that is to say, to the lowest court which has power to grant the prayer of the Petition.

26. Miscellaneous Provisions

26.1 Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and Standing Committees shall put in place a conflict of interest policy, a bribery and procurement policy and a whistleblowing policy, all in terms of those recommended by the Law Department.

26.2 This Act does not apply to New Charges which shall continue to be subject to the provisions of the New Charge Development Act (Act XIII 2000).

26.3 The provisions of section 5.2.4 as to meetings shall apply, subject to necessary changes, to Financial Boards as they do to Kirk Sessions.

26.4 Lower courts shall not meet at the same time that meetings of higher courts are taking place. A Kirk Session may meet while the General Assembly is in session, provided that none of its members are commissioners. Committees of Kirk Sessions and of Presbyteries may meet while a superior court is in session provided that none of those entitled to attend is a member of, or commissioned to, the superior court.

26.5 This Act shall apply to the Presbytery of International Charges subject to the terms of the International Presbytery Act (Act II 2016) and with such changes to practice as are required by the particular circumstance.

26.6 The Legal Questions Committee shall issue Guidance on the implementation and operation of this Act, which shall be reviewed by it, from time to time.

27. Commencement date, repeal and transitional provisions

27.1 This Act shall come into force on []. The existing Church Courts Act (Act III 2000) shall be repealed as at that date.

27.2 The following Acts of Assembly shall also be repealed as at the date this Act comes into force:

a) Virtual Attendance at Meetings Act (Act VI 2018).

Note: Guidance to accompany the new Act is to be drafted, with sample minutes etc.

References

- [i] These are expanded on in Guidance.
- [ii] The text concerns the faithful administration of the office: “I swear that I will be faithful to the duties of.....”, naming the office concerned.
- [iii] Reference should be made in particular to the Church Finance Act (Act V 1989), the Congregational Finance Regulations (Regulations II 2016), the Care of Ecclesiastical Properties Act (Act VII 2007) and the Work at Ecclesiastical Buildings Regulations (Regulations I 1998).
- [iv] Guidance will highlight particular Acts and Regulations of Assembly of which a Session Clerk should be aware
- [v] This includes the Property Register and Manse Condition Schedule.
- [vi] For example, this might be granted to a treasurer who is not an elder.
- [vii] Although such a person would retain the status of Elder.
- [viii] ie there should be separately minuted decisions and two or more Kirk Sessions may not make joint decisions.
- [ix] The expectation is that those who have their own Minister receive pastoral care from them.
- [x] A Presbytery Review process is under development.
- [xi] The text concerns the faithful administration of the office: “I swear that I will be faithful to the duties of.....”, naming the office concerned.
- [xii] See Guidance for further details.
- [xiii] Currently these are (i) the Appeals Committee of the Commission of Assembly and the Judicial Commission in terms of the Appeals Act (Act I 2014), (ii) the Ministries Appeal Panel in terms of the Ministries Appeal Panel Act (Act VII 2007) and (iii) reviews held under the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021).
- [xiv] These include in practice bodies of different names and functions, such as Forums, Councils, Committees, Panels, Commissions and Trusts.
- [xv] The text concerns the faithful administration of the office: “I swear that I will be faithful to the duties of.....”, naming the office concerned.
- [xvi] Such a person may in daily practice be described as a ruling elder.

Appendix C**Table of amendments made to the draft Church Courts Act****CHANGES MADE TO THE CCA AS A RESULT OF CONSULTATION BETWEEN GA22 AND GA23**

Section number	Change	Notes
Preamble & (what was) 1.2	Wording of 4 th Article Declaratory moved to become a recital and the first sentence repeated in full.	
2.2, 3.1(3) & 10.1	"Oversight" substituted for "supervision".	
2.2 & 3.1(1)	Wording adjusted to reflect that "Mission" as defined means the Five Marks of Mission.	
3.1(3)	Wording added to include the offering of pastoral care as appropriate across the parish.	
3.1(6)	Wording adjusted to cover "managing" of membership.	
3.1(8)	Reference to data protection law added.	
3.1(12)	Wording added as to ministries for children, young people and families.	
3.1(16)	Reference to trustees' report added. Also footnote added to note that rolls and records include the Property Register and Manse Condition Schedule.	
3.1(18)	Charity law section expanded.	
3.1(19)	Safeguarding section expanded.	
4.3 & 11.3	New clause added as to rescission or amendment of delegation.	
5.0 & 12.0.2	Reference to disciplinary matters added.	
5.1 & 12.1	Wording amended in both places to conform the sections on Kirk Session meetings more appropriately to those on Presbytery meetings and to deal better with ordinary vs specific purpose meetings.	
5.1.6	Wording clarified as these are things the Session must do across a year, not all in one meeting.	
5.2.2 & 12.2.2	Deletion of wording as to circulating draft minute promptly to all present.	<i>This should not preclude prompt preparation of a draft minute!</i>
5.2.5	Wording added as to provision of weblink; also that a person who is not a member of the Session may have standing permission to speak.	Eg if a non-elder treasurer.
5.3.2.1	Wording added that an interim moderator shall normally be appointed where the minister is to be absent for more than 6 weeks.	
5.4.2	Wording adjusted to clarify which Assessor Elders are charity trustees and that their appointment shall be reviewed annually.	
6.2	Wording added that in a team ministry, all ministers shall be members of the Kirk Session.	
6.4	Wording added that Correspondents are not charity trustees.	
6.5	Wording on Correspondents conformed with section 14.1.	
10.1(27)	Wording added as to trustees' duties.	
10.1(28)	Reference to trustees' report added.	
10.1(30)	Word "annual" added.	
Also in 10.1	Paragraph on a conflict of interest policy moved to (25).	
12.2.2	Deletion of recording of apologies for Presbytery meetings.	

Section number	Change	Notes
12.2.6	Note added that this section does not preclude other rights to address Presbytery.	Eg in cases.
12.2.7	Wording added that Presbytery Standing Orders if existing to be published on the Presbytery's website.	
13.0.2	Wording added to confirm who are charity trustees of a Presbytery.	
21.5.4	Wording updated to reflect the terms of the Church Courts Overture passed by GA 2022.	
26.1	Reference added to whistleblowing policy.	
26.3	Wording added to confirm that Financial Boards may meet online.	
26.4	Provision added that Committees of Kirk Sessions and of Presbyteries may meet while a superior court is in session provided that none of those entitled to attend is a member of, or commissioned to attend, the superior court.	
26.5	Wording adjusted for the Presbytery of International Charges.	

Appendix D

Act Amending the Ministers and Deacons in Same Sex Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages Act (Act I 2015)

[] ACT AMENDING THE MINISTERS AND DEACONS IN CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS AND SAME SEX MARRIAGES ACT (ACT I 2015) (AS AMENDED)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages Act (Act I 2015), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. *Retitle the Act as the "Ministers and Deacons in Same Sex Civil Partnerships and Same Sex Marriages Act (Act I 2015)".*
2. *In section 1(a), at the end of the fourth sentence add "Pioneer Minister or Associate Minister".*
3. *Delete the existing section 1(c) and substitute:*
"same sex civil partnership" shall mean a civil partnership entered into between persons of the same sex which is recognised in terms of the Civil Partnership Act 2004, section 1."
4. *Throughout the Act for the words "civil partnership" substitute "same sex civil partnership".*
5. *Amend section 1(d) by deleting "Appraisal and Adjustment Act, section 1(b)" and substituting "Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021), section 1.1(f)".*
6. *Amend section 1(f) by deleting "Appraisal and Adjustment Act, section 10" and substituting "Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021), section 7".*
7. *In section 2(3) delete the words "Kirk Sessions in terms of sections 3, 4 and 5 of this Act only" and substitute "(i) Kirk Sessions in terms of section 3 of this Act, and (ii) Presbyteries in terms of section 4A of this Act".*
8. *Delete the existing section 3(5) and (6) and substitute:*
"(5) To be effective, a decision to depart shall require to be taken in respect of each induction or appointment and may only be taken as follows:
 - (a) A meeting of the Kirk Session shall be held to take a vote on the matter. The date and time of such meeting, and its purpose, must be properly intimated to the congregation on at least two Sundays prior to its date.
 - (b) At the Session meeting, a vote shall be taken on whether or not to depart.*(6) A meeting held in terms of section 3(5) shall be constituted in prayer in accordance with the law and practice of the Church. Only those members of the Kirk Session present at the meeting shall be entitled to vote. Voting shall be by secret ballot using voting papers printed in the form of Schedule 1 hereto. Intimation of the meeting shall be in terms of the edict annexed in Schedule 2 hereto."*
9. *Amend section 3(8)(b) by deleting "Appraisal and Adjustment Act, section 11(1)" and substituting "Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) section 8.2".*
10. *Add a new section 3(8)(c):*
"In the case of a Team Ministry, a decision to depart or not to depart, once taken, shall apply to all other posts within the Team Ministry as and when such posts become vacant for the following five years, unless there is a request at an earlier date for the matter to be revisited and a new vote held. Such a request must be signed by a majority of the ruling elders on the Kirk Session, or where the ruling Elders exceed nine in number, at least one-third with a minimum of five."

11. *Delete the last sentence of section 4.*
12. *Add a new section 4A:*
 "Where a Presbytery is considering the appointment of a minister who is in a same sex marriage or same sex civil partnership as Interim Moderator to a charge, written intimation of the proposed appointment shall be given to the Kirk Session(s) of the charge. If, within fourteen days of the date of the sending of the intimation, the Session Clerk sends to the Presbytery Clerk with the approval of a majority of the Session a notice requesting that the appointment does not proceed, no further steps in relation to the appointment shall be taken."
13. *Amend section 5(2) to read:*
 "Once ordained, a minister or deacon who is in a same sex civil partnership or a same sex marriage shall have the same status, rights and responsibilities as any other minister or deacon respectively, except that he or she (i) may not be inducted or appointed to a congregation the Kirk Session of which has not decided to depart in terms of section 3, and (ii) may not be appointed as an Interim Moderator if a notice from the Session has been sent as provided for in section 4A."
14. *Amend the third and fifth paragraphs of the edict in Schedule 2 to read as follows, and delete the fourth paragraph of the edict:*
 "The purpose of the Kirk Session meeting just intimated will be for the Kirk Session to decide whether or not to depart from the Church's practice in relation to human sexuality in order for applications for [**the current vacancy / *the proposed appointment of a [insert title of appointment]*] to be considered from, amongst others, individuals who are in a same sex civil partnership or a same sex marriage.
 The decision will be determined by the votes of a majority of those present and entitled to vote."

Appendix E

Principles for the Presbytery Review Process

On a pro forma devised by the Presbytery Review Committee, the Presbytery will be asked to provide:

- factual and statistical information to allow the Review Group to grasp something of the geography and demographics of the area;
- confirmation that specific requirements laid upon it by Church and civil law have been complied with;
- a description of the life and work of the Presbytery in terms of the Functions and Responsibilities of Presbyteries as outlined in the Church Courts Act, including the ways in which it resources local congregations, acts as the voice of the Church in relation to wider society, and engages with the processes of the General Assembly;
- an outline of the shared vision and guiding principles for the way ahead in the life and work of the Presbytery leading into as detailed as possible an anticipation of what lies ahead and how the Presbytery hopes to meet the specific challenges it faces.

On such visits and meetings as they may consider relevant and over such timescale as may be required, the Presbytery Review Group will enter into conversation with groups and individuals in the Presbytery to explore further any aspects of the life and work of the Presbytery they may wish to in order to learn more about work that is going well or where there may be problems and to help develop the framework for forward planning.

Appendix F

Act amending the Appeals Act (Act I 2014)

[] ACT AMENDING THE APPEALS ACT (ACT I 2014) (AS AMENDED)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that The Appeals Act (Act I 2014), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. *In section 14(2) of the Act, delete "twenty" and substitute "thirty".*

DELEGATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report of the Delegation of the General Assembly and thank it for its work.
2. Continue the appointment of the Delegation with the same powers as hitherto – the Principal Clerk of the General Assembly to be Chair, the Depute Clerk of the General Assembly to be Vice-Chair and the Solicitor of the Church to act as Secretary.

Report

The General Assembly of 2016 instructed that from 1 January 2017 the only form of constitution which congregations may adopt and which may be granted by the Delegation should be the Unitary Constitution, and urged those congregations constituted in terms of the Model Deed and other forms of constitution to adopt the Unitary Constitution. 53 congregations adopted the Unitary Constitution in 2022 compared to 24 in 2021. Since 2004, the Unitary Constitution has been issued to 857 congregations.

The Delegation once again expresses the hope that those congregations who have not yet reviewed their constitution will do so in the course of this year.

In the name and on behalf of the Delegation

FIONA SMITH, *Chair*
MARY E MACLEOD, *Secretary*

FAITH NURTURE FORUM MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to work with Priority Area Congregations and the supplementary network of congregations to ensure their stories, including the learning and experience from their mission are shared with the wider church via the Church's website and other platforms (*Section 2.1*).
3. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to support congregations' and Presbyteries' engagement with response to poverty (*Section 2.1*).
4. Commend the work of the Education and Schools Group and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to support Ministers, paid workers and volunteers in their ministry to schools (*Section 2.3*).
5. Urge Presbyteries to recognise their Local Education Representatives' contributions to Local Authority policy and the welfare and holistic development of young people generally by encouraging networking across the Local Authority boundaries (*Section 2.3*).
6. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to welcome new Gaelic-medium resources for children from Scottish Bible Society and the Gaelic Committee of the Church of Scotland, and urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to be alert to opportunities for mission with Gaelic-speaking communities and schools, and to make use of the Gaelic-medium resources now available (*Section 2.7*).
7. Pass an Act on Ministries for Deaf Congregations as set out in Appendix i (*Section 3.12 and Appendix i*).
8. Pass an Act amending the Ordination of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Deacons Act (Act I 2018) as set out in Appendix ii (*Section 3.13 and Appendix ii*).
9. Approve the allocation of the total number of planned ministry posts among the Presbyteries as contained in Appendix iii for 2024 (*Section 3.2 and Appendix iii*).
10. Note the proposal from the Diaconate Council to use endowment funds to create a part-time Development Worker post to research and shape proposals for the future of the Diaconate and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to bring a report to a future General Assembly (*Section 3.13*).
11. Re-appoint Rev Dorothy U Anderson as a Trustee of the Housing and Loan Fund for Retired Ministers and Widows and Widowers of Ministers, in the capacity of Chair of said Fund.
12. Note the introduction from 1 January 2024 of an integrated support allowance of £250 per year for those in fulltime ministry (*Section 3.17.1*).
13. Pass an Act amending the Act on Selection and Training for Full-time Ministry Act (Act X 2004) as set out in Appendix vi (*Section 4.1 and Appendix vi*).
14. Encourage the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to develop work on an Apprenticeship Route with hope to pilot in 2024, subject to further General Assembly approval (*Section 4.4.1*).

Report

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Governance

Since last year's General Assembly, the Faith Nurture Forum ("the Forum") has continued to work to fulfil the deliverances agreed by previous General Assemblies. In addition, this year we have worked closely with the staff based at the national office to plan our work and governance properly in line with the Assembly Trustees D10 Strategic Planning Team (D10 SPT) (see Section 13.4 of the Report of the Assembly Trustees).

1.2 Staff Structure

In September 2022 the staff who previously worked for individual Forums became one Faith Action Programme staff team and the agenda for the Forum meetings was adjusted to reflect this change under the new Programme Group areas, namely: People and Training; Mission Support (including Presbytery and Partnership Support); Public Life and Social Justice; and Resource and Presence.

1.3 Budgets

In preparation for the expected closing of both Forums to be replaced by a single Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (FAPLT) the individual budgets of both Forums were united in January 2023. As regards both sets of Forum financial accounts, we can report to the General Assembly that net savings were made between both Forums of over £1m (Faith Impact Forum net saving of £384,732 and Faith Nurture Forum net saving (excluding ministries staffing costs) of £722,348).

1.4 Reporting

Recognising the changes made and anticipated to governance, staff structure and budgeting, Commissioners may note changes to where previous work areas sit; these are highlighted in the new Programme Group areas reflecting the movements made in the last year. Please find below a short executive summary to cover the areas of our output over the last year. We hope this means of reporting to the General Assembly will help Commissioners.

The report following this summary will deal directly with the deliverances relating to the Forum, and the strategic plans we have developed with the Assembly Trustees as priorities to deliver the Faith Action Programme over the next 3-5 years.

1.5 We invite the General Assembly to recognise and acknowledge that, with new staff structures, changing committee structures and with a new strategic Faith Action Programme, the immediate capacity for developing or taking on new areas of work this year is limited. With that in mind, it will be hard for Conveners to be willing to accept significant new and unplanned work in the form of additional deliverances. If the Assembly were to insist on new work, we must caution that it may not be possible to fulfil its instruction in a timely manner or to the high standards which would be expected. A stay on instruction of new work would help us all as we move forward into these new governance and staffing arrangements and develop focus on Programme delivery. We do not envisage the same situation to be facing us next year by which time we expect work to be running smoothly, and so we would be prepared to return to normal and discuss significant new deliverances at the 2024 General Assembly.

1.6 Mission Support

Since last year's General Assembly, we have been working hard to deliver programmes and projects to support congregations in their mission. We have also been restructuring; aligning with the D10 report, working initially to bring together four staff teams under one Mission Support Programme Group:

Priority Areas
Congregational Engagement
Mission Development
Digital Ministries

We have outlined a strategy which will allow us to continue to run existing programmes that are well established and successful in supporting the local but also will allow us to develop new areas of work. Our overall objectives are to:

- Establish a programme to develop and support congregations and communities to grow in Christian faith and deliver missional activity throughout the year; alongside establishing 100 new worshipping communities.
- Establish a comprehensive programme of support to equip all those responsible for evolving fresh forms of worship including digitised ministry alongside continued support for developing best practice in existing worship.

Delivery methods will include direct Faith Action Programme staff support, support from external partners, support to access funding streams and access to learning programmes.

All of this will be delivered working in partnership and establishing good respectful relationships with our Presbyteries as they work towards fulfilling Presbytery Mission Planning and Presbytery Reform.

1.7 Presbytery and Partnership Support

Pastoral Support continues quietly and effectively, supporting those in need of this service.

1.7.1 Mission Planning

Four Presbyteries had not submitted a Mission Plan by 31 December 2022. Discussions continue with a further seven Presbyteries, all, save one, now part of a larger Presbytery.

Issues of implementation and review of plans are critical, particularly where ministers have been inducted on a basis of reviewable charge. Phasing reviews of Mission Plans needs to be carefully teased through, especially with most Presbyteries now merged into a larger Presbytery.

Further issues to be resolved include the question of Team Ministry, as in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act, and whether there would be vacancy allowance should a member of a Team Ministry demit, and whether lack of provision would prevent the development of a more flexible form of ministry.

1.8 Resource and Presence

The major area of work ongoing surrounds the Scottish Storytelling Centre and John Knox House, as the Forum considers future work with the Edinburgh City of Literature Trust or indeed reimagining the usage of these historic premises with interesting possibilities for mission and for income generation. Discussions are ongoing to seek the best outcome for all parties, with an emphasis on ensuring that the legacy of John Knox is not lost to the building. The options are either to sell or lease the complex to the Edinburgh City of Literature Trust, or, alternatively, to explore how it might continue to be used, and further developed, as a resource for mission.

The Life and Work team continues to work hard to refresh and renew the magazine, including a new design launch in early 2023. There have been many successes in 2022 both with content and finances, whilst the team is always trying to further improve the offering.

1.9 People & Training

This has been a year of recalibration and of preparation in People & Training. Our Recruitment & Training Teams are working together to support discipleship and leadership in local church. Candidates for our Recognised Ministries have returned to in-person at university as well as the fullness of placement opportunity returning. Familiarisation candidates have, once again, been able to come to the UK to take up their places.

Finishing Probationers and Familiarisation candidates have found roles in Presbyteries, many of which give opportunity for developing new initiatives. The Forum commits to continuing to provide for those completing training until our vacancy process is moving smoothly once more. Development of training for congregations has been focused on the preparation of materials for the Integrated Training Programme, coming later this year. Our Summer Elders' conference 'Rising to the Challenge of Change' was of great help to many.

2. MISSION SUPPORT REPORT

2.1 Mission Support Team

2.1.1 We continued to develop our work with Priority Area congregations and those on our supplementary list as a key priority in response to the deliverance at last year's General Assembly

2.1.2 Connecting

We connected with our congregations on a regular basis; renewing contact, building relationships, offering support, listening for needs and signposting to resources and other agencies.

2.1.3 Learning and Development

We were alert to requests for learning opportunities and accordingly fed these into our learning programme offer of support. These included continued support for missional learning community and asset-based community development learning pieces, and support for congregations to build worship teams. We are working with colleagues in Resourcing Worship to develop a Hymnary Supplement to the Church Hymnary, 4th edition (CH4); ensuring the context of worship in Priority Areas is reflected.

2.1.4 Challenge Poverty Week and Campaigning

During Challenge Poverty Week in October, we ran our first in person event for this campaign. This was an ecumenical event run in partnership with the Xaverian missionaries at Conforti Institute. Called "*Practice, Policy and Prayer*", the conference was framed around some key questions in how we respond to poverty during this economic crisis and what is significant about our Christian witness. We explored how we work in practice with communities and how we engage with policy and how do we bring these areas together so each supports each other.

Open to people with lived experience and/or those with a leadership role with a specific interest in this, we heard about the impact of poverty that we were seeing or experiencing, and understood more in relation to underlying systemic causes. It was a good starting point to develop our work both as part of the campaign but also as a model for learning more about how we could use this collective voice for change.

We connected up with other faith-based campaigning organisations during the year and were pleased to see that Church Action on Poverty produced their most recent report "*Church on the Margins*", looking at the church's presence in low-income communities. They were inspired by the Church of Scotland's model of work in Priority Areas. <https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/news-release-poor-communities-hit-hardest-by-church-closures-study-finds%ef%bf%bc/>

2.1.5 Poverty Alliance and Third Sector

Challenge Poverty Week is a campaign led by the Poverty Alliance. We sit on the Board of Poverty Alliance and work with other faith-based and third sector partners to ensure the injustice of poverty is kept high on the agenda. It is also a place to highlight the work of the Church of Scotland and ensure this is visible to politicians and policy makers.

2.1.6 Peer Support – Wee Conversations

This is about the expertise of Priority Area congregations themselves and our work is to support them to develop as a network so that we can share our learning and practice, get peer support, and encourage the Church in its mission.

As well as our annual network gathering, we ran weekly meetings online throughout the whole of the year. Called the Wee Conversation, it was an opportunity for people to gather on a Friday morning, discuss the widest range of issues and find a place to support each other. People can share good news, get behind the issues of the day, lend support and generally connect with each other. It is also another place to connect with the Priority Areas team; one of the team will always be there on a Friday morning.

2.1.7 Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) Programme; Extending our Work with Young Leaders

The Presbyterian Church (USA) (PCUSA) is our partner in this and we will continue to work with them. This year their recruitment programme did not attract a large number of applicants. We are committed to running the programme in Dundee again in this coming year and we are hopeful that the problems of recruitment have been addressed. These posts will support Priority Areas and the new clusters that are being established as part of mission planning.

At the same time, we are developing a whole new extension to the programme to send young people from Scotland to two YAV sites in the USA, in New Orleans and New York. This fits within our Faith Action Programme strategy, and it is wider than the existing YAV programme. It will link to the Intergenerational Task Group work, support new thinking in recruitment and will also feed into our development around apprenticeships for ministry. It also fits into our clear objectives particularly around engaging young people and renewing the life of the church.

2.1.8 Fife Presbytery Poverty Forum

As part of our work in engaging with Presbyteries about poverty and mission planning, we welcomed the opportunity to be a partner in the Fife Presbytery Poverty Task Force ("the Task Force"). This is a coming together of a range of agencies including third sector and statutory organisations alongside our churches. The Task Force launched the Poverty Forum with a hearing taking place in Wellesley Parish Church Centre, Methil, in November. People from our Priority Areas talked first hand of their experiences and we heard about a range of projects and initiatives that are responding and challenging. Former UK Prime Minister, Gordon Brown attended and spoke about his support for Fife based project, The Big Hoose, in its attempts to scale up its operations in response to the scale of poverty being experienced. We will continue to develop our work as part of the Task Force and support the development of the Poverty Forum.

2.1.9 The Big Conversation

Our gathering of the network in November was our first in-person since the pandemic; drawing together representatives from our congregations and communities across Scotland. Working over two days, our focus was on

how Priority Areas are working with communities in this crisis, and building the strength of our network to challenge inequality.

Through workshop sessions we explored how poverty impacts in multiple layers through fuel poverty, basic unmet needs, addictions, homelessness, food insecurity and more. We concentrated on what congregations were doing in response and how learning from these approaches could benefit communities and encourage involvement in our mission planning.

Our keynote address was on The Hive initiative from its founder, Brian Honey-Morgan. The Hive is a project started in Cornwall, processing surplus food in order to address the critical challenges of food poverty, food waste and climate change. At the Big Conversation, we discussed how this approach to food poverty could translate to our communities in Scotland. We are now continuing to work with The Hive and other partners to develop work in this area.

2.2 Mission Development

2.2.1 Supporting Children, Families, Young People and Young Adults

Throughout the last year the team have continued to develop provision for those involved in children, youth and family ministry.

We offered regular opportunities for those employed by the Church of Scotland as children/youth/family workers to gather online as a community of practice. Through the series of thematic conversations, book groups, prayer gatherings and a conference, participants have been supported and connected.

In December 2022 we hosted a 2-day training event on coaching for Presbytery Children/Youth/Mission/Pioneer Enablers, in partnership with Fresh Expressions UK. Since then, many of the participants have gone on to develop their skills further taking part in an ecumenical coaching hub and we look forward to seeing how this develops further.

In March 2023 we were delighted to return to having an in-person conference, held on Iona in partnership with the Iona Community, which provided some much-needed space for reflection, reconnection with God and time with each other.

2.2.2 Support for volunteers

Support was offered to volunteers by means of our monthly thematic newsletters. Through 2022, we have focussed on the Five Marks of Mission. Sharing of resources and information has also been through the '[Now You're Talking](#)' Facebook group. Work is continuing with our ecumenical partners on re-developing the Core Skills training courses on children's ministry, and developing new material on intergenerational ministry. It is hoped that these courses will be available at the end of 2023.

2.2.3 Webinars

Throughout 2022, 12 ReNew webinars were held covering various topics relating to ministry with children and young people, to encourage a renewed vision and inspire new ways of thinking for our church life and worship. These had good engagement of people ordained or otherwise from across the country. Participants appreciated sharing stories and experiences with each other. The [ReNew](#) recordings on the Church of Scotland YouTube channel have also been well received. A further series is being planned in 2023.

2.2.4 Intergenerational Church

Faith Action staff from the Mission Development and Priority Areas teams have been instrumental in the work of the Intergenerational Church Task Group; a group of the Assembly Trustees tasked with creating a strategy for the whole church to support and enable the vision to be an intergenerational church. See their report for more details. (<https://digital.lifeandwork.org/magazine/reader/246658>)

Of particular note at this time is the book 'Being Intergenerational Church' which is due to be published by St Andrew Press in the autumn. This is designed to provide readers with an exploration of the theological basis for intergenerational church, alongside practical ideas and stories to inspire congregations along the journey to being more intergenerational. A series of articles in Life and Work offers a preview as to some of the content that will be covered.

2.3 Education and Schools

2.3.1 The Church of Scotland has a longstanding commitment to education and all aspects of young people's development. This includes spiritual development and learning about faith and religion, but we have a concern also for their welfare and well-being: that they may grow up in a Scotland free from poverty, discrimination and fear. Our vision is of a future Scotland that is fairer, more equal and more just. This is our tradition, and the opportunity for us to serve our communities and bring hope and life to all parts of Scotland.

2.3.2 The Education and Schools Group aims to increase and improve the Church's mission in schools and on education issues, to support improvements in education across Scotland, and to benefit pupils, staff and the wider school community. From the annual congregational statistics of 2022, it is very encouraging to see that 723 congregations across Scotland support schools, in some way. Many ministers are active as school chaplains. Some congregations have paid staff who connect with schools regularly and others have volunteers who are committed to schools' ministry. Every local authority also has a Church of Scotland Local Authority Representative, who can contribute to and support on areas of policy and quality improvement, particularly in the areas of Religious and Moral Education and Time for Reflection.

2.3.3 We are working to develop a database of people engaged in schools' ministry. We are making plans for a variety of training events in 2023 including schools' ministry roadshows in 11 Presbytery areas, to encourage church involvement and equip those working in schools' ministries.

2.3.4 We also seek to be involved and contribute to areas of Education Policy and held a focus group discussion as part of the recent National Discussion on the future of Scottish Education.

2.4 Pioneering

2.4.1 In 2019, the General Assembly approved the decision to support the formation of 100 New Worshipping Communities by 2031. In the Church Statistical Returns for 2021, 400 congregations indicated they had at least one new worshipping community in some stage of development. A small team have following up with each of them to understand what is actually happening. At the time of writing, initial findings from the returns show:

- About one third report running a Messy Church
- Approximately a quarter have a café church event
- Many churches report a move to digital ministry. We suspect that a good portion of these do not represent a new worshipping community, but the transfer of the activities of the existing congregation to online during COVID
- There will be those who are not yet a New Worshipping Community, but have the potential to become one, and follow up support will be offered.
- Work is continuing to see what further information may be collected via the statistical returns in future years, but we need real investment in the ability to gather and make sense of data in as close to real time as possible in order to make good strategic decisions.

The Pioneer Grant fund was launched and grants totalling £100k have been awarded to congregations. The Pioneering Scotland network which we established in Spring 2022, has almost 300 members online, is an active group, and is managed ecumenically. We delivered a Pioneering Practice tour in conjunction with the Church Missionary Society in May 2022. Our first pilot pioneer community of practice is running in the Highlands and a second, thematic community of practice is in the process of formation around outdoor forms of church.

2.5 Acorn**[1]

2.5.1 After two successive years of deliverances that urged congregations to adopt the practice of 'Acorn', it is pleasing to note the significant increase in its activity across Scotland. In 2022, two Roadshows were held – one in the Spring, at four venues, covering the east side of the country and one in the Autumn, at three venues in the west and north. Together, approximately 150 people attended, with over a third taking part in pilot Acorn groups. Furthermore, a short promotional video was produced over the Summer. In October, Paul Haringman took up a self-funded post of National Co-ordinator for Acorn in Scotland. This has proved a welcome development, as Paul is based in Scotland and is now working closely with the Mission Development Team to highlight Acorn to an even wider audience within Scotland, as well as providing training for current leaders of Acorn groups.

2.6 Workplace Chaplaincy Scotland

In October 2022 the charity Workplace Chaplaincy Scotland sadly had to make the decision to cease operations. Their staff were made redundant and the charity officially ceased in March 2023.

The work of 100 volunteer chaplains in workplaces across Scotland is invaluable however, and so the Mission Development Team began the work of transferring support for the volunteer chaplains to the Church of Scotland, under the banner 'Scottish Workplace Chaplaincy'. The new, ecumenical agency was officially launched in February 2023 and is continuing to develop the workplace chaplaincy network along with the support of its dedicated volunteers.

2.7 Gaelic Committee

2.7.1 Over the last year the Gaelic Committee have been working to develop mission and outreach in Gaelic-speaking Communities with particular focus on the following areas of work:

- Nurture of the faith of children and young people within our churches.
- Supporting parents and families to nurture the faith of children within the home.
- The support of those who work with children, families and young people in Gaelic-speaking communities.
- Engaging missionally with those outwith the orbit of our churches, in Gaelic-speaking communities.

2.7.2 To this end, the Committee have formed productive relationships with the Intergenerational Church Task Group, the Education and Schools Group, Scottish Bible Society and others and have been engaged in the translation and distribution of a Lego movie which tells the Christmas story. The work was achieved in a very short timescale, and despite only being distributed on 16th December, it is estimated to have been viewed by 41,000 – over 8,000 of these in schools. The Group were able to negotiate not only distribution in Gaelic, but a re-recording in English with a Scottish accent, and both were made freely available to users within Scotland. It was issued as 'A Gift for the Children of Scotland from the Church of Scotland' and was sent to ministers, children's and youth workers, our ecumenical partners and education authorities.

2.8 Resourcing Worship

2.8.1 The Resourcing Worship team continue to facilitate the production of worship materials for every Sunday of the year. This is the result of work and contributions from a large number of individuals and agencies throughout the year. It is noticeable, however, that many regular contributors are feeling the pressure of the demands of other work, for example the Presbytery Mission Planning process, and so the Team are both actively seeking new contributors and adapting how the material is developed to accommodate the changing patterns of availability.

The development of a supplement to CH4 is a joint project of the Resourcing Worship Team and Priority Areas, working with a dedicated working group. The call for songs written in the last 20 years and the congregational survey issued to the church last year resulted in a huge number of submissions. The group have since been working towards a final selection. The resource is on target for launch at the 2024 General Assembly.

2.8.2 At the General Assembly 2022 the Forum was instructed:

Following the General Assembly calling the Church to pray, "to produce prayer resources to encourage and equip people to pray for the future well-being, peace and revival of the Church." (FNF 7)

Resourcing Worship team are taking the lead role in coordinating, commissioning, and disseminating this resource. The resource will 'encourage and equip' people to pray, but also seeks to be representative of the different voices within the Church of Scotland and to provide different styles of prayer and reflection for use in public worship, personal prayer rhythms, gatherings and meetings of the Church family and decision-making bodies.

"to commission a video series resource, telling the stories of churches who are thriving in the area of making new disciples, in an effort to provide 'real-life role models' of how congregations in different parish contexts can grow." (FNF 21):

Throughout our church there are many examples of the Great Commission in action, where people are beginning, or continuing a journey of discipleship. We have been capturing some of these stories of lives transformed, of communities blessed and of Christians deepening and maturing in faith. They are stories of personal relationships, supportive congregations, and churches adapting to the challenge of making disciples in a changed and changing context. Eventually it is hoped that "Insite", the newly created intranet for Church of Scotland ministers will host resources of this nature.

2.9 Digital Ministry

2.9.1 The Faith Action Programme has begun to discuss a digital strategy for the church that acknowledges different strands of digital expression that already exist within the Church of Scotland. Each have their own audience and so unique outputs and key performance indicators but all deliver aspects of the Faith Action Programme functioning diversely and harmoniously.

We would like to highlight the particular contribution of Sanctuary First. Sanctuary First, www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk, is a digital expression of the Church Without Walls Report which was enthusiastically received and endorsed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2001. It is the organic expression of the local church, working with Presbytery to create a world-leading digital ministry. In 2022 Sanctuary First was incorporated into the Faith Action Programme and was granted charitable status. Through this developing ministry it is hoped that the Church of Scotland will develop an integrated digital platform reaching out to become a global digital ministry inspired by the Church Without Walls Report's ethos and theology.

3. PRESBYTERY PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORT REPORT

3.1 Presbytery Mission Planning

3.1.1 Presbytery Mission Planning has been an exercise unlike any other in the living memory of the Kirk. It has touched every Parish within Scotland and beyond. Mission is now embedded at the heart of the Church's thinking and acting. The instruction of the General Assembly of 2021 required that Presbytery Mission Plans were to be submitted by 31st December 2022 to the Faith Nurture Forum and the General Trustees. This radical rethinking of Mission for the 21st century, outlining the vision for the configuration of ministries and buildings within Presbyteries, has proved to be vital in addressing buildings that are not fit for purpose, releasing Elders from responsibilities which have become too much and releasing energy for new and different challenges, so that the work of the Church moves into the future in hope. This has required a huge commitment and trust by everyone involved and the Forum's thanks go to many people.

3.1.2 The Forum gathered a group of people from within the Forum and from the Church who committed to supporting Presbyteries as they developed their Plans and to deliver the instruction. The Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group (PMPIG) have given of their knowledge, as well as vast amounts of hours to this task. The Church owes them their thanks.

3.1.3 One of the consequences of beginning this exercise in a pandemic is that most of the work of PMPIG has been completed online, which in hindsight has aided the speed required by the General Assembly to comply with the instructions given.

3.1.4 The Forum wishes to express its gratitude to all at Presbytery level who have worked tirelessly in producing Presbytery Mission Plans – Clerks, Conveners, those who served on Committees and project groups, those who consulted and met local congregations, and those who facilitated discussions which were often fraught and challenging. In the deliberations of PMPIG, one member commented that Presbytery Mission Plans needed to focus on three different but complementary themes – creativity, comfort and challenge. The Forum is of the view that the best of the Church's Presbytery Mission Plans succeed in this and would like to pay tribute to the hard work which has gone into this exercise.

3.1.5 At the time of writing (February 2023), only four Presbyteries have still to submit a Presbytery Mission Plan and, of these, two had presented a version to their Presbytery which the Presbytery subsequently voted down. These four Presbyteries are Clyde; Forth Valley and Clydesdale; Caithness; and Uist.

3.1.6 The Forum would also like to celebrate the close working relationship which has been developed with the General Trustees. It is important in this new season in which the Church finds itself that closer working at every level becomes part of what we are as a people of faith. This deep bond which has developed has led to a creative synergy in responding to Presbytery Mission Plans and a hopeful sign for continued future working.

3.1.7 Moving forward towards the implementation of Plans, PMPIG will continue to support Presbyteries in all aspects of their approved Plans. Guidance for implementation will be produced at the earliest opportunity and PMPIG and the General Trustees will ensure that the Annual Review reflects the creative and organic nature of Mission in the Plans which does not stand still as the Church moves into the future.

3.2 Ministries Numbers

3.2.1 The Presbytery Mission Plan Act at section 2.4.1 requires that the Forum presents, annually, to the General Assembly, for approval, the proposed total number of ministry posts to be funded by the Parish Staffing Fund, allocated among the Presbyteries, in each of the next five years, so that there is a five-year rolling plan for such allocations. Discussions with the Assembly Trustees indicate that the figures presented to the General Assembly of 2022, and agreed for 2023, will similarly apply for 2024 and through to the end of 2025 and thereafter, with any amendments coming to subsequent General Assemblies.

3.2.2 These numbers, as outlined in Appendix iii, will form the shape of the Church's ministry over the next five years. The question of the finances available to the Church is one where the Forum takes its lead from the Assembly Trustees, and questions on any adjustment to ministries numbers are for the Assembly Trustees and not the Forum.

3.2.3 This work takes place against the background of Presbytery Reform, and the General Assembly of 2022 instructed Presbyteries to ensure that, in the period up to the General Assembly of 2025, where a weighting of resources is allocated to part or parts of the area of a Presbytery, the allocation of ministry in the Presbytery Mission Plan is demonstrably distributed so as to fulfil the spirit and purpose of the weighting; and instructed the Forum to take this principle into account in approving Presbytery Mission Plans.

3.2.4 Since the General Assembly of 2022, significant change has taken place in many of the Scottish Presbyteries in the Church of Scotland, and this is reported on elsewhere in the Report of the Assembly Business Committee to this year's General Assembly.

3.2.5 The inclusion of the former Presbytery of Falkirk into what is now the Presbytery of Forth Valley and Clydesdale; the creation of the Presbytery of the South West on 1st October 2022; and the creation of the three Presbyteries of Lothian and the Borders; Perth; and the North East and the Northern Isles on 1 January 2023 are significant developments in the life of the Church.

3.2.6 The Forum has sought to follow the aforementioned instruction to it in approving Presbytery Mission Plans, and the numbers shown at Appendix iii represent the aggregate of weightings previously reported to the General Assembly and allocated across the 21 Presbyteries currently in existence.

3.2.7 The Presbytery of Gordon and its Ministry Allocation

3.2.7.1 The General Assembly of 2022 instructed its Selection Committee to appoint three persons, to mediate a meeting with Gordon Presbytery, Faith Nurture Forum and the Assembly Trustees to:

- i. Verify, according to the principles applied across all other Presbyteries, the appropriate weighting and allocation of ministries to Gordon Presbytery;
- ii. In the light of the outcome of section (i) above assist (if required) the Presbytery of Gordon to complete their Presbytery Mission Plan; and
- iii. Advise, where appropriate, on opportunities that might exist in:
 - a. Local ecumenical collaboration,
 - b. The shape of ministry allocation within the proposed new Presbytery, and
 - c. Initiatives that might qualify for funding under the newly create Seeds for Growth Fund;

and report the outcome of their work to the General Assembly of 2023.

3.2.7.2 The membership of this group was agreed as Rev Richard Baxter; Ms Sheena MacFarlane OBE, and Mr David Watt, both Elders, in Port Glasgow; New and Airdrie; New Wellwynd respectively. This group met and conferred appropriately with those identified in the original section of deliverance, and met with both the Forum and representatives of the Presbytery in the fulfilment of the task set by the General Assembly.

3.2.7.3 The group concluded that changes in the allocation system, the factors considered and the consequences of changes on both the overall system and on individual presbyteries, had not been well understood or communicated at a number of stages by the then Ministries Council and the Forum. The group recognised that the Presbytery had not been provided with up-to-date and accurate information at an early enough stage, and that had hampered the work of the Presbytery of Gordon in compiling its Mission Plan.

3.2.7.4 In its review and reworking of the statistics, however, the group concluded that both the current weighting factor of 1.5 as an Urban-Rural Presbytery, and the current planning figure of 16.5 posts for Gordon were correct. The Presbytery by this stage had completed its Presbytery Mission Plan and submitted it to the Faith Nurture Forum for approval, which approval was duly issued.

3.3 From Planning to Implementation

3.3.1 Now the hard work of implementation begins; compiling a Presbytery Mission Plan is but the first step in the exercise. PMPIG has been much involved in the work of compiling guidance, and has uploaded information relating to Local Mission Church, and Team Ministry, on to the Church of Scotland website and also on to Insite. These resources can be found at this link: <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/presbytery-planning>.

3.3.2 This guidance will be of value to the wider Church, and to all Presbyteries, as the time comes for annual reviews of Presbytery Mission Plans to take place. The first tranche of Presbytery Mission Plans to be approved, in July 2022, were those from Wigtown and Stranraer; Ardrossan; Argyll; and Lochaber. Of these Presbyteries, two have now been absorbed into the Presbytery of the South West. At the time of writing the Presbytery Mission Plan for the former Presbytery of Dumfries and Kirkcudbright is still the subject of conversation and negotiation among the Forum, the General Trustees and the Presbytery of the South West. It would not make sense for the aggregated plan of the Presbytery of the South West, once all components have been agreed and any involvement of the Presbytery Mission

Plan Review process had been disposed of, to be reviewed as a whole, given that some parts of that Presbytery will have had a longer timeframe in which to implement than others. The same considerations apply for all the newly created Presbyteries, and for already existing Presbyteries such as Edinburgh and West Lothian, Glasgow, and Fife.

3.3.3 The Forum wishes to encourage all Presbyteries, no matter when they came into existence, to be awake to the possibilities of working across boundaries, whether those be internal legacy boundaries from previous Presbyteries or boundaries with neighbouring Presbyteries. Equally, in seeking to have an overview of the Presbytery Mission Plans which have been submitted, it is clear that the ecumenical dimension of Presbytery Mission Planning is one where there is still scope for further work. The Forum's successor body will continue to work collaboratively with the General Trustees and with Presbytery Clerks and Conveners engaging in a conversation as to how best to phase annual reviews in a meaningful way, while still seeking an integrated approach, without causing an undue burden. It is clear that larger Presbyteries are able to operate at a more strategic level, and the Presbytery of Fife in its anti-poverty work is working fruitfully with the local authority and other agencies. The Forum would also seek to encourage inviting peer review of Presbytery Mission Plans by involving colleagues, not just from neighbouring Presbyteries, but from those where there are other similarities.

3.4 Team Ministries

3.4.1 The Forum has been involved in conversations with Presbyteries where there is significant interest in Team Ministries and has produced guidance notes to support the implementation of such creative and challenging models of ministry in this time of change. Places as diverse as Aberdeen, Shetland, Orkney, St Andrews and Irvine are exploring what might be possible and model Bases of Union and Bases of Team Ministry are available for use. What might be called mixed-mode Team Ministry is being developed, in situations where ministers who have already been working together along with their congregations, are moving into closer relationship, serving both the congregations to which they had been historically inducted, along with committing to other spheres of ministry. The content of these Bases of Union and Team Ministry are for local parties and the Presbytery to discern together, drawing from the Mission Narratives contained in the Presbytery Mission Plans, and reflecting them in more detail within the wording of such Bases.

3.4.2 A Basis of Team Ministry will also reflect the requirement of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act that there be a single named Moderator in a Team Ministry. It will not be possible for another member of the Team Ministry who might normally be eligible to serve as Interim Moderator to take on such a role, to avoid conflicts of interest, and to be consistent with requirements in the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII, 2003) or any succeeding legislation.

3.4.3 Presbyteries are advised that there is a need for a Team Coordinator in such Team Ministries, who may or may not be the Interim Moderator. These can be complementary roles, and they are about role and function. The Team Coordinator should be clearly named, with a set of terms of reference for what the expectations of the role will be, and his or her identity should be recorded in Kirk Session and Presbytery Minutes.

3.4.4 This model of ministry marks a significant shift in our ministry culture and will be an ongoing learning arena for some time to come.

3.5 Local Mission Church

3.5.1 There has been a number of expressions of interest and we are pleased to report that a Basis of Local Mission Church has now been drafted and agreed and we anticipate this being applied in Presbyteries in the near future. As this represents a new model of ministry in terms of congregational relationships, it is anticipated that there will be ongoing learning as each Local Mission Church takes shape.

3.6 Consultation with Presbytery Clerks

3.6.1 In passing the Presbytery Mission Plan Act in 2021, one of the helpful sections of deliverance was to require consultation with the Presbytery Clerks' Forum in compiling guidance. With the advent of nine full time clerks, and the coming together of Presbyteries in the Highlands and Hebrides, the Forum asks that future consultation might take place with the body of full-time and other clerks.

3.7 Vacancy Procedure Act

3.7.1 Invitations were offered to those who were interested to submit comment on the workings of the Vacancy Procedure Act to the mailbox at VacancyAct@churchofscotland.org.uk. With the dearth of vacancies being advertised because of the sist on proceedings as a result of Presbytery Mission Plan work, no responses have come in. This piece of work will continue into the life of the FAPLT.

3.8 Capability Process

3.8.1 At the General Assembly of 2022, an outline for a capability process was presented. Given the amount of flux in the life of the Church at this time, it has not been possible to progress this work. Regretfully, the Forum also feels that while this is something to which the Church should return, it is not a priority for the work of the FAPLT in the next year and asks the General Assembly to note that this project will be revisited when resources allow. The work to date has been valuable and allows for a sound foundation on which to build.

3.9 Ministries Development Staff (MDS)

3.9.1 The Forum has sought to maintain regular contact with Presbyteries, and with individual MDS, over these last months, offering guidance and consultation on new ways of working, planning and change management. Staff, and external support, have offered individual and group sessions for MDS and line managers on Presbytery Mission Plan implications and change management policy and practice.

3.9.2 Place for Hope Workshops – Journeying Through Change & Transition – have been running since June 2022 and will continue running through 2023. These workshops focus on the personal experiences and understanding of change and transition.

3.9.3 Forum staff, together with colleagues in the Church's Human Resources Department, continue to meet regularly with the formally constituted Joint Consultative Group comprising MDS Representatives.

3.10 Interim and Transition Ministries

3.10.1 A number of Interim and Transition Ministries came to a successful end in 2022, releasing resources for new applications in 2023. As predicted, enquiries and applications are already underway, with a noticeable shift towards Transition Ministry to support and deliver some of the radical changes expressed in Presbytery Mission Plans. This suggests a positive direction where Presbyteries are seeking this specialist ministry to press on and work on their recently articulated plans and commit to achieving them.

3.10.2 These ministries are focused on clear objectives and outcomes, usually over a five-year period, where there is a committed input and support to deliver these objectives by Kirk Sessions and congregations, Presbytery representatives and the national interim ministry team. Whilst it is true that many, if not all, ministries include elements of transition, these ministries deliver against set objectives, shared accountabilities and within a fixed term. The Interim Ministry team continues to operate and support in more acute placements of conflict and change across the country where shorter term interventions are required and with the intention to steady and focus local ministry for longer term goals.

3.10.3 It may be that there is more demand than budget currently exists, and the Forum, and its successor, the FAPLT, will keep this under review.

3.11 Pilot Pioneer Ministries

3.11.1 Following the submission of the Church Army Research on the Church of Scotland Pioneer Ministry project to the GA 2021, the Pioneer Pilot officially came to an end in December 2022. At the time of writing, two Presbyteries have indicated that they wish the posts to continue into the Presbytery Mission Plan; the posts in Ayr and Glasgow will feature in the future mission strategy in these contexts. The Faith Nurture Forum would like to thank the five pilot ministries for their contributions and insights over the six-year programme.

New Charge Development (NCD)

3.11.2 The Faith Nurture Forum would like to thank the Reverend Daniel Frank and the ministry team for their long-term dedication and commitment to Wallacewell NCD Congregation, Glasgow. The ten-year review reported clear evidence of community engagement and highly commended this. Wallacewell NCD will be handed back to the Presbytery of Glasgow in the first half of 2023, and the formalities around this are still to be concluded.

3.11.3 This marks the last NCD congregation, and whilst there are no plans to begin any new NCD congregations, there are recognised learnings from the numerous and varied NCDs over the past twenty-three years since the passing of the NCD Act (Act 13 2000), and thanks are given to all who have contributed.

3.12 Deaf Ministry and Congregations

3.12.1 A commitment was made at a previous General Assembly to update and revise the existing legislation and regulation pertaining to Ministry for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. A new Act has now been drafted that will replace the existing Act and harmonise with the regulation. (Appendix i)

3.12.2 Further conversation, particularly with regard to recruitment for ministry with Albany Congregation in Edinburgh, is ongoing in consultation with the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian.

3.13 The Diaconate

3.13.1 The Forum reported to the General Assembly of 2022 on progress following the instruction of the previous year's General Assembly to it "together with Diaconate Council and others, to review the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010) and to bring to the General Assembly of 2022 a revised or, if appropriate, a new Act on Diaconal Ministry within the Church of Scotland.", advising that discussion had taken place with Diaconate Executive Committee, and Forum officials, and at that stage, conversations were continuing and that a report on this would come to a future General Assembly.

3.13.2 A conversation took place in January 2023, with the Executive Committee of Diaconate Council, and representatives of the Forum; the Legal Questions Committee; and the Principal Clerk's Office.

3.13.3 The meeting identified fundamental issues in relation to the current context of Diaconal Ministry within the Church of Scotland. It was felt that these issues had to be addressed by the Church before a meaningful review of the Act could be undertaken. Issues identified included:

- Work being undertaken by the Theological Forum on "call and vocation"
- The role of MDS staff (Diaconal and non-diaconal)
- Structure of the Church going forward and the role of Presbyteries
- Current Diaconal training and formation

3.13.4 At its meeting in January, the Diaconate Council agreed to pursue how these issues might be addressed prior to any revision of the Act. In the light of significant legacies left to the Diaconate in recent years, Diaconate Council agreed to use a proportion of these endowments to fund a Development Worker to work with key stakeholders (including Council, Forums and key individuals). The General Assembly is asked to note this and to encourage engagement with relevant stakeholders at this critical stage in the life of the Diaconate in the Church of Scotland, where there are more retired Deacons than active Deacons; and where the number of Deacons directly employed within the Church is shrinking.

3.14 Manses

3.14.1 The Presbytery and Partnership Support Manager, the Reverend Angus R. Mathieson, serves on the General Trustees' Manse Committee. There is considerable regret on the part of the General Trustees and the Forum, not to mention anger and hurt in Manse families, that some Presbyteries have seen fit to regard some Manses as acceptable

which would not pass the tolerable accommodation standard seen as good practice by local authorities and social housing, never mind Private Residential Tenancies. The General Trustees comment on this in their Report to this year's General Assembly. The Forum is mindful of the need to bring forward a more detailed report to a subsequent General Assembly once Presbytery Mission Planning has come to the end of this first stage and greater clarity exists about the extent of the Manse estate which is to be retained.

3.15 Ministries Support

3.15 The Support Team

3.15.1 While primary pastoral support for those serving in the Recognised Ministries of the Church lies within each Presbytery structure, Faith Nurture provides further dedicated support.

3.15.2 The Support Team can offer confidential conversations and facilitate support interventions. Access to support for ill-health management, counselling, hardship and support grants, retreats, and a variety of advice relevant to the lifecycle of ministry [vocational advice, pre-retirement planning, insurance provisions etc] are the day-to-day work of the Team.

3.15.3 The Support Team also oversees ill-health matters and absence management, receiving and recording Fit Notes and liaising with Presbyteries accordingly. Requests for Compassionate Leave are also made through the Support Team, and claims for pulpit supply or locum costs in cases of illness are also handled by the Team.

3.15.4 The Team also support Presbyteries in their provisions of local support, and are always willing to be contacted to shape best practice together.

3.15.5 The Team can be contacted via pastoralsupport@churchofscotland.org.uk

3.16 Developing Support Services Under Ascend

3.16.1 While early aspirations for the Ascend programme focussed on supporting those in the first years of ministry, the greater aspiration was to have these support services available to every minister. Since 2018/2019 through the re-organisation of the Ministries Benevolent Fund, full-time ministers can access an allowance of £240 per year towards Pastoral Supervision. This also applies to Probationers, and Deacons in Deacon-specific MDS posts.

3.16.2 While Spiritual Accompaniment has remained only available to those in Probation/First Five Years, and Coaching has been free to all at point of access [due to the Coaching model inherited initially out of the Priority Areas Coaching Team], from 2024, a new integrated Support Allowance will be available.

3.17 New Integrated Support Allowance

3.17.1 From January 2024 a Support Allowance of £250 per calendar year will enable access to any [or all] of the above services, as best fits the individual's support needs at any one time. The Support Allowance will be available to full-time stipendiary ministers, Probationers, those in Familiarisation, and Ordained Deacons in Deacon-specific MDS posts.

3.17.2 The Support Allowance will be able to be used for personal or group pastoral supervision, for coaching [either from existing Ascend provision or paid externally], or for spiritual accompaniment [all subject to agreed invoicing arrangements and appropriate qualifications/credentials for each support provision]. The Ascend website will be updated in due course to reflect these changes from 2024.

3.17.3 The changes are being brought forward, out of the learning of the last years, to enable the fullest benefit to be received. We understand the value in having the widest choice of support, as well as the pragmatism of expanding resource, knowing people are trained, accredited and able to offer their services, practising under the appropriate professional body.

3.18 Funded Retreats

3.18.1 Further, the launch of funded Retreats, up to £250 per year, through the Todd Endowment Trust [Scotland] since April 2022 has been a welcome addition to the support provisions, and ministers and deacons with at least 2 years' service are already benefitting from this opportunity.

3.19 Additional Support

3.19.1 Access to Counselling remains in addition to the Support Allowance/Retreat Allowance, as does the ability to benefit from hardship and support grants.

3.19.2 Some support provisions are also able to be accessed by Ordained Local Ministers (OLMs), Readers and MDS, but due to the nature of policy decisions, employment terms, and/or Trust Fund terms, we recommend either speaking first with a Line Manager or contacting pastoralsupport@churchofscotland.org.uk We do not seek to minimise the contribution of any who serve in the variety of ministries of the Church, but we also do not want to mislead inappropriately by generalising here.

3.19.3 Review

All Support provisions and funding arrangements remain under ongoing review as would be expected for good governance and sustainability, but the Forum is committed to offering the best support it can to those serving in ministry into the future.

3.20 Access through ascend <https://ascend.churchofscotland.org.uk>

3.20.1 Access to the full variety of support provisions outlined, alongside the development provisions of Ascend [Study Leave, Ministerial Development Conversations, Postgraduate Funding] means that ministers have/will have access to much that could only have been hoped for in the past.

3.21 Time Away for Rest and Restoration

3.21.1 The Forum also reminds stipendiary ministers of their Pulpit Supply provisions for rest and recuperation throughout the year and hardship funds where there is need. Congregations are encouraged to exercise their duty of care role in supporting Office Holders to take time off, for physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

3.22 Partnership with Place for Hope – Living Peace

3.22.1 The Forum has entered into an exciting new Partnership with Place for Hope from 2023-2027 as part of the Faith Action Programme.

3.22.2 Place for Hope was born out of the Report on Congregational Conflict that was presented to the General Assembly in 2008.

"5.11.3 The challenge then, is to resource the church with peacemakers; women and men of spiritual stature who can lead the church from the troubleshooting model to the healing model of ministry.... This is the gift that the church can give to those who are in deep dispute with one another, and this is the example that the church should be setting before the community it serves."

3.22.3 Since 2009, Place for Hope has risen to this challenge through the provision of mediation, facilitation, and coaching support to Church of Scotland leaders and congregations in times of change and conflict, and training to understand conflict, live well with difference and equip people and congregations to realise their potential as peacemakers.

3.22.4 This next phase in the relationship between the Church of Scotland and Place for Hope offers a collaborative and mutually beneficial programme of work, intended to release the spirit of conflict transformation and reconciliation in the culture, systems, mission, and ministry of the Church of Scotland as was hoped for in that 2008 General Assembly Report on Congregational Conflict.

3.22.5 To reflect the hopes and intent of this new agreement to transform conflict and change as well as strengthen peace and hope in these challenging times, we have named this joint programme of work: Living Peace.

3.22.6 The programme uses a capacity development approach to:

- systematically embed the awareness, understanding and skills towards equipping and supporting the Church of Scotland to be a people of peace and reconciliation
- support individual Presbyteries and Kirks to be places of hope, peace and reconciliation in their communities during a time of great change and challenge
- provide tailored understanding and skills in peace and reconciliation appropriate for the wide spectrum of needs, challenges and capacity of the different congregations and ministries.

3.22.7 The five-year window allows the approach to start to embed peace and reconciliation throughout the Church, and build up the understanding and skills for peace, conflict transformation and reconciliation (across key ministry groups as well as more generally across the church).

3.22.8 Living Peace is a responsibility shared by all serving in ministry, and every member, congregation, Kirk Session and Presbytery of the Church of Scotland. It is not only the call of Christ to live peacefully, but a mark of the Church, to be a people of peace, grace, forgiveness and reconciliation.

4. PEOPLE AND TRAINING REPORT

4.1 Revision of Act X 2004 (As Amended). Selection and Training for Full-Time Ministry Act

4.1.1 The proposed changes to Act X 2004 (as amended), detailed in Appendix vi are being made for two main reasons:

- To standardise the appraisal process from the beginning of candidature to completing probation, giving decision-making powers to the panel at every stage of training.
- To bring Forum / FAPLT input into the appraisal process for everyone during their probationary period; meaning there will be Presbytery, Forum / FAPLT and Training Team representation on all pre-, interim and final probation appraisals. It is during probation, when both the hours and the expectations increase, that greater care must be taken in assessing, directing and deciding next steps for our people in training.

4.2 Changes to Placement Supervisor Selection, Training and Development

4.2.1 Time spent on placement is so valuable for our recognised ministry candidates, allowing them to experience all aspects of ministry, enabling them to ground their theological learning in ministry practice, encouraging them to grow in character and formation for ministry and sharing with them the experience of leadership in local church. In taking on the role of Supervisor, individuals are responding to a call by God and play a crucial role in developing our church for the future.

4.2.2 It is time to bring in some further developments so this crucial provision continues to meet the needs of the Church going forward.

4.2.3 A summary of these developments is as follows:

- *Application:* to enable a more consistent selection process, a short but focused application form will be required to be completed by a prospective Supervisor and signed off by the Presbytery.
- *Training & assessment:* whilst prospective Supervisors would be expected to come with some of the abilities, knowledge, experience and willingness referred to above, training will be provided in order to meet the full competence requirements, before being fully deployed as a Supervisor. Existing Supervisor training will be further developed and an appropriately rigorous assessment element will be introduced.

- *Ongoing learning & development:* Supervisors are expected to continue their own ongoing formation. More opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) will be provided. The Forum will apply a more rigorous approach to ensuring that serving Supervisors are engaging with CPD to be able to remain in the role of Supervisor.

4.3 Recruitment

4.3.1 We experienced lower numbers applying for Discernment during Covid times and were unable to set up Discernment placements during lockdowns. Admissions numbers, of ministers coming from outside the Church of Scotland, have been impacted by our new process, as we can now assess up to 20 in the new two-stage process.

Overall, we suspect that interest in training for our recognised ministries has been limited by uncertainty attributed to Presbytery Mission Planning as well as visa issues for some potential Admissions candidates.

4.3.2 The table below provides statistics relating to Enquirers and Applicants at different stages in the Discernment and Assessment processes. [Discernment Conversations replaced Vocations Information Days in 2019 and the table reflects this change.] However, it should be understood that an Enquirer might not choose to apply for/enter Discernment until a subsequent year.

Year	2018	2019	2020	Jan-Dec 2021	Jan- Dec 2022
Enquirers		170	124	95	85
Discernment Conversations		93	65	36	36
Applicants for Ministry (all types)	49	74	50	28	29
Entered Local Assessment	43	62	52	31	35
Chose to Withdraw (locally)	6	5	3	3	7
Readership (Applicants)	4	2	1	6	1
Readership Accepted	3	2	0	6	1

4.3.3 The table below reflects the Assessment Year with a cycle of Assessment Conferences taking place across a year e.g., those accepted as noted in 2022 would be eligible to begin training in that same year, but may choose to defer to a later date.

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Completed Local Assessment	37	29	37	45	20
Attended Assessment Conference	37	29	36	39	13
Full-time Ministry (Applicants)	21	17	25	26	7
Full-time Ministry Accepted	16	15	17	15	5
Ordained Local Ministry (Applicants)	14	11	9	12	6
Ordained Local Ministry Accepted	10	8	7	9	3
Deacons (Applicants)	2	1	2	1	0
Deacons Accepted	1	0	1	1	0
First Time Applicants	31	25	30	31	8
Accepted	21	19	21	21	4
Returning Applicants	6	4	6	8	5
Accepted	6	4	4	4	4

4.3.4 Admissions

Numbers of attendees at Admissions Conference.

YEAR	ATTENDEES	ACCEPT	NON-ACCEPT
2018	24	17	7
2019	23	13	10
2020	27	15	12
2021	27	12	15
2022	18	2*	16

*A new process was implemented in 2022 and the impact of this is being monitored.

4.4 Review of Initial Ministerial Training:

4.4.1 Following the approval of our Vision Statement at GA22, the Forum have identified as a priority the development of an apprenticeship training route. This could extend access to all our recognised ministries, while utilising the skills and life experience of those who may in the future or presently work for a church, while studying and being supported by training.

A development day where Forum members came together with representatives of our Church Colleges has provided much optimism for further exploration to determine the infrastructure and curriculum for ministry formation.

<i>Candidates who started training in August 2022</i>	
Full Time Word and Sacrament (FTWAS)	6
Ordained Local Ministry (OLM)	4
Diaconal	0
<i>Total across categories</i>	10
<i>Candidates accepted for entry for August 2022 but deferred entry</i>	
FTWAS	0
OLM	0
<i>Deferred training total</i>	0
<i>Candidates across all years prior to probation as at August 2022 including those who have deferred</i>	
FTWAS	39
OLM	15
Diaconal	2
<i>Total across all categories</i>	56
<i>FTWAS candidates studying at recognised providers 2022-23</i>	
Aberdeen campus based	0
Aberdeen distance learning	2
Glasgow campus based	12
Edinburgh campus based	9
Highland Theological College campus based	2
Highland Theological College distance learning	9
St Andrews campus based	1
<i>OLM candidates studying at recognised providers 2022-23</i>	
Aberdeen distance learning	7
Highland Theological College distance learning	5
<i>Diaconal candidates studying at recognised providers 2022-23</i>	
Aberdeen campus based	1
Highland Theological College distance learning	1
<i>Number of probationers completing training in 2022/early 2023</i>	
FTWAS	25
OLM	8
Diaconal	1
<i>Total</i>	34
<i>Probationers beginning summer 2022</i>	
FTWAS	7
OLM	5
Diaconal	0
<i>Late Starts 2022/early 2023</i>	
FTWAS	1
OLM	0
Diaconal	0
<i>Total</i>	0
<i>Readers</i>	
Readers in training in 2022	11
Readers set apart in 2022	2

4.5 Integrated Training Programme

4.5.1 Church of Scotland Learning will launch in August, offering in the first instance a suite of materials to be accessed by individuals, local congregations and Presbyteries in the areas of Sharing Faith, Theological Reflection, Discipleship, Violence Against Women and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. In response to last year's deliverance, there will be materials for congregations and those in ministry to learn more about the confessional position of the Church and the vows office holders make.

4.5.2 A leadership course, modules for Elders and pastoral carers, further discipleship materials and equipping for funeral ministry are in the development stages, with many being piloted in partnership with Presbyteries and specific constituencies.

4.6 Finishing Probationers and Familiarisation Candidates

4.6.1 Over the last year, 35 Probationers (25 FTWS, 8 OLMs, 1 Diaconal) and 15 Familiarisation Candidates have completed training. Many are now deployed as Assistant Ministers, working with Presbyteries to develop new ministries, caring for congregations and progressing partnerships at local level. Provision continues to be made for those completing Probation and Familiarisation and this will be reviewed every six months until we have a settled vacancy scene.

4.7 Eldership Training

4.7.1 Following the success of Elders Training run by some Presbyteries and at a national level, a greater degree of collaboration was desirable. The Training Team are supporting all Presbyteries who wish to develop their training for Elders and the Integrated Training Programme will provide materials for this purpose in the time to come.

4.7.2 The Forum have considered the Caleb Stream, recommended at the General Assembly of 2022. It is felt that this is a season for the strengthening of our existing recognised ministries. In the coming months, we will begin discussions with the Church of England to explore future possibilities for Elders.

5. RESOURCE AND PRESENCE

5.1 Life and Work

5.1.1 Life and Work has again played a key part in keeping congregations connected over the last year as the Church moves forward. This is best expressed by our readers:

- "I look forward every month to Life and Work. It is an incredible publication"
- "Life and Work has been the only way of keeping connected with the church and what is going on"
- "I am writing this personal letter to you and your team (not for publication, unless you wish!) in appreciation of your imaginative editorship of the 'Life and Work'".

5.1.2 The year was not without challenge. However, as new ways of working and new revenue streams opened up through reader offers, official updates and paid partnerships, the magazine has been placed on a firmer financial footing.

5.1.3 Much work has taken place to reposition the magazine and a draft five-year business plan has been developed – which is under continual review – to ensure the long-term sustainability and service of the magazine of the Church of Scotland in connecting the people in the pews. New partnerships within the Church are emerging as part of this work.

5.1.4 The magazine was redesigned and repositioned for 2023 to reflect the new way forward.

5.1.5 During 2022, the team faced up to the challenges of the year – including increased costs beyond our control relating to paper, energy and fuel – and were again committed to deliver the magazine to our loyal readers every month – and to them (and our team of promoters) we again owe a huge debt of gratitude.

5.1.6 The Life and Work Advisory Committee met on two occasions in 2022 via TEAMS and the Editor remains thankful for the support of this valuable and helpful group and its collective wisdom.

5.1.7 To help shape and resource commissioners and followers of the General Assembly, digital access to the May issue of Life and Work is available here <https://digital.lifeandwork.org/magazine/reader/246658>.

5.2 Scottish Storytelling Centre and John Knox House

5.2.1 The work of the Scottish Storytelling Centre continues, and has largely recovered from the enforced closure over the months of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is not immune, however, from financial pressures and work continues to discern where its future lies.

5.2.2 The Forum has engaged with the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust, to explore the future of the Scottish Storytelling Centre and John Knox House. It is hoped that, during the course of 2023, an agreement will be reached between the Church and the Edinburgh City of Literature Trust, which will secure the future of the Storytelling Centre and the House, either through a long-term lease, or a sale of the property.

5.3 Saint Andrew Press

5.3.1 Summary

In the publishing year that ended 30 September 2022, Saint Andrew Press (SAP) published two titles: *The Church of Scotland Year Book 2022-3* and *Assist Our Song* by Douglas Galbraith.

The pandemic was not a fruitful time for commissioning new titles because of other urgent priorities in the Church of Scotland, and so in the current financial year, just two new titles are expected: the next edition of the *Year Book*, and *The Intergenerational Church* by Suzi Farrant and Darren Philip.

It is encouraging that conversations with authors have rekindled and a number of new titles for 2023-24 are scheduled. These include:

Finding Our Voice by Neil Glover

Scottish Religious Poetry, a completely new edition edited by Alison Jack, Linden Bicket and Emma Dymock

A Narrative of Generosity by Pauline Wilson

In addition, work is advancing on a supplement to CH4, led by Phill Mellstrom and Iain McLarty.

5.3.2 Sales

Financial year October 2021 to September 2022

Budget £78000

Actual £67229

Variance -£10771

Financial year October 2022 to September 2023

Budget £76000

Year to date (Oct to Jan) budget £37000

Actual £30800

Church of Scotland Yearbook 2022-2023 sold all 1600 copies including despatch to all ministers in Church of Scotland; set up as print on demand title to ensure continued availability.

Assist our Song

sold 200 copies/850 stock.

5.3.3 Marketing work

Hymns Ancient and Modern have supported new titles with a mix of launch and online event support, press and PR, web and e-newsletter work and advertising in Life and Work. SAP ran a General Assembly online bookshop offer – April/ May 2022.

SAP continued to offer print, Kindle and epub editions of all new books and many backlist titles.

SAP continued to focus on website sales/email and social media communication. Decline in stock-holding religious book trade accelerated.

SAP improved its presentation and availability via multiple ebook platforms in 2022.

SAP also improved availability on backlist (older titles) by continued programme of moving out of stock older titles to the print on demand programme and enable worldwide availability.

In the name of the Faith Nurture Forum

REV ROSEMARY FREW, Convener

REV ALAN HAMILTON, Vice Convener

REV DR SCOTT SHACKLETON, Head of Faith Action Programme

ADDENDUM

Rev Rosemary Frew

The Forum records its appreciation of the Rev Rosemary Frew – Rosie – whose term as Convener ends with the advent of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team. Rosie began as Convener of the Ministries Council, at the General Assembly of 2019, and then took on the Convenership of the Faith Nurture Forum in January 2020. She has led the work of the Forum with grace and firmness, alongside serving as parish minister of Bowden and Melrose in the Scottish Borders. In the midst of the challenges of parish ministry, Rosie has brought a concern for the mission of the Church, a pastoral concern for ministers, and the lived experience of church life and a sense of what needs to be prioritised in the life of the Church at this season. The Forum is grateful to her for her wisdom, insight, and all that she has brought to the role of Convener.

Rev Alan Hamilton

Alan Hamilton has served on the Faith Nurture Forum from its inception and was instrumental in helping shape a new Forum and a new way of working. In everything he does he is driven by a real passion for mission. He became Vice Convener in May 2022. Throughout all this time I have greatly appreciated Alan's friendship and support, his sharp mind and attention to detail. He's never afraid to ask the difficult or searching question; to help tease out possibilities and assist with decision making. Staff and Forum members are most grateful to him.

REV DR SCOTT SHACKLETON, Head of Faith Action Programme

Appendix i

[ZZ] MINISTRIES FOR DEAF CONGREGATIONS ACT (ACT ZZ 2023)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly enact and ordain as follows:

Congregations of Deaf People

1. There shall be Church of Scotland fellowships of Deaf People in the following regions:
 - Aberdeen and the North;
 - Edinburgh and the South East; and
 - Glasgow and the South West.
2. These fellowships shall individually be referred to in this Act as a “congregation” and together as the “congregations”. For the avoidance of doubt, there may be more than one fellowship within each region.
3. These congregations will not fall within the planning provisions of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021).

Ministry for the congregations

4. In respect of each congregation, the Presbytery and the Faith Nurture Forum shall confer in making the appointment of a person to minister to the congregation (the “Ministry Appointee”). The Ministry Appointee shall be employed by the Faith Nurture Forum and shall be introduced by the Presbytery.
5. Persons eligible to be a Ministry Appointee shall be as follows:
 - (A) If a Minister, a person who:
 - (a) is a Minister as defined in the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017) in good standing, or who would be eligible to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility under the Admission and Readmission of Ministers Act (Act XIII 2022); and
 - (b) has fulfilled as a minimum the requirements for academic study specified in sections 12 to 14 of the Selection and Training for Full-Time Ministry Act (Act X 2004);

OR

- (B) If a Deacon, a person who:
 - (c) is a Deacon as defined in the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017) in good standing, or who would be eligible to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility under the Admission and Readmission of Ministers Act (Act XIII 2022); and
 - (d) has fulfilled as a minimum the requirements for academic study specified in section 4 of the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010);

OR

- (C) If an Ordained Local Minister or an Auxiliary Minister, a person who:
 - (e) is an Ordained Local Minister or an Auxiliary Minister as defined in the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017) in good standing, or a person who would be eligible to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility under the Admission and Readmission of Ministers Act (Act XIII 2022); and
 - (f) has fulfilled as a minimum the requirements for academic study specified in sections 10 and 11 of the Ordained Local Ministry Act (Act IX 2011);

OR

- (D) If a person who is not ordained (but subject to section 6 below), a person who:
 - (g) is a member of the Church of Scotland in full communion or a member in good standing of a denomination mentioned in sub-sections 1(2), 1(3) or 1(4) of the Sacraments Act (Act V 2000);
 - (h) has fulfilled as a minimum academic study equivalent to that specified in sections 10 and 11 of the Ordained Local Ministry Act (Act IX 2011);
 - (i) has experience in participating in and leading worship in different congregational settings; and
 - (j) has the ability to carry out effective and empathetic pastoral care;

AND, in all cases:

- (k) they shall possess communication skills to a level described by the National Occupational Standard CFALANG4.6, i.e. to “Understand Complex Signed Language in a Wide Range of Work Situations”, failing which they shall be a person who has attained communication skills to a level CFALANG4.5, i.e. to “Understand Extended Signed Language in a Wide Range of Familiar or Work Situations”, in which latter case they shall be appointed subject to a condition of working to improve signed language skills up to CFALANG4.6 within a specified timescale, the appropriate course or method being funded by the Faith Nurture Forum; and
 - (l) they shall be able to demonstrate substantial and relevant recent experience of working with the deaf community.
6. If the Ministry Appointee is a person who is not ordained and who is thus unable to administer the sacraments, they shall ensure that suitable alternative arrangements are in place.
7. For the avoidance of doubt, a Ministry Appointee in terms of this Act shall be restricted to that ministry, unless they are otherwise qualified to undertake other forms of ministry consistent with the Registration of Ministry Act (Act II 2017).

8. Each Ministry Appointee shall be entitled to the appropriate membership of the relevant Presbytery and shall, if one exists and they are entitled to do so in terms of the Kirk Session Meetings Act (Act VI 2004), moderate the Kirk Session.

Presbytery membership

9. Each congregation shall be entitled to appoint a representative elder to the Presbytery within whose bounds the congregation is situated. Each Ministry Appointee who is eligible shall be a member of, and be subject to, the supervision of one Presbytery only. If not a member, the Ministry Appointee may be a Correspondent of the relevant Presbytery.

Presbytery Mission Initiative or Local Mission Church

10. It shall be open to the congregations to apply to the Presbytery of the bounds to be a Presbytery Mission Initiative in terms of the Presbytery Mission Initiatives Act (Act V 2015) or a Local Mission Church in terms of the Local Mission Church Regulations (Regs II 2021).

Deaf interpretation at Presbytery meetings

11. Presbyteries which have among them members from the congregations shall employ a suitably qualified interpreter as required at Presbytery meetings and shall not rely on the Ministry Appointee being themselves a member of Presbytery to fulfil this additional function. The cost of the interpreter shall be met by the Presbytery.

Congregational Finance

12. The salary of the Ministry Appointee shall be met from the budget of the Faith Nurture Forum. Otherwise, each congregation shall be responsible for its own expenses. Where the congregation is not able to meet its expenses, it may seek support from the Presbytery in the first instance failing which the Faith Nurture Forum.

Superintendence of Presbytery and Church law and practice

13. The congregation shall be subject to the superintendence of the Presbytery and the law and practice of the Church of Scotland.

Repeals

14. The Ministry and Deaf Congregations Act (Act IX 2017) and the Congregations of Deaf People Regulations (Regs II 2017) are hereby repealed.

Appendix ii

[] ACT AMENDING THE ORDINATION OF MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT AND DEACONS ACT (ACT I 2018)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Ordination of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Deacons Act (Act I 2018), shall be amended as follows:

1. *In section 2(3) add a new subsection (x):*
“(x) in connection with introduction as a Minister to a congregation of deaf people in terms of the Ministries for Deaf Congregations (Act ZZ 2023)”

Appendix iii**Ministries Numbers for 2024**

Presbytery Number	Name	Allocation	New Presbytery Number	New Presbytery	Allocation
1.	Edinburgh & West Lothian	65.5	1	n/a	65.5
2.	Lothian	25	3	Lothian and the Borders	44
3.	Melrose and Peebles	9			
4.	Duns	4.5			
5.	Jedburgh	5.5			
		44			
6.	Annandale and Eskdale	8.5	7	South West	78
7.	Dumfries and Kirkcudbright	12.5			
8.	Wigtown and Stranraer	6			
9.	Ayr	24			
10.	Irvine and Kilmarnock	13.5			
11.	Ardrossan	13.5			
	South West Total	78			
14.	Clyde	40	14		40
16.	Glasgow (inc. Cumbernauld)	84	16	n/a	84
17.	Forth Valley and Clydesdale	44	17	FVC inc Falkirk	59.5
19.	Argyll	18	19	n/a	18
22.	Falkirk (excl. Cumbernauld)	15.5			
24.	Fife	44.5	24	n/a	44.5
23.	Stirling	21.5	28	Perth	78
25.	Dunkeld and Meikle	6.5			
26.	Perth	16.5			
27.	Dundee	18			
28.	Angus	15.5			
		78			
31.	Aberdeen and Shetland	28	31	North East and the Northern Isles	87
32.	Kincardine and Deeside	10.5			
33.	Gordon	16			
34.	Buchan	14			
35.	Moray	11.5			
45.	Orkney	7			
		87			
36.	Abernethy	4.5		n/a	4.5
37.	Inverness	16.5		n/a	16.5
38.	Lochaber	5.5		n/a	5.5
39.	Ross	10		n/a	10
40.	Sutherland	4		n/a	4
41.	Caithness	5.5		n/a	5.5
42.	Lochcarron-Skye	5		n/a	5
43.	Uist	2		n/a	2
44.	Lewis	5		n/a	5
47.	England	4		n/a	4
	International	5		n/a	5
		665.5			665.5

Appendix iv

Stats as per s.12 of GA Deliverance 2022 on FNF Report

Minister numbers: In order to reduce the uncertainty and anxiety for existing probationers, ministry students, potential ministry candidates and those in familiarisation and reviewable tenure, the Faith Nurture Forum will publish by September 2022 full ministries numbers and projections of expected vacancies during the latter half of 2022 and 2023; full ministries numbers would entail

- ministers of FTWS currently in charges,
- number of MDS staff counted towards the 600 fulltime ministries target figure by end of 2025,
- number of ministers in reviewable tenures,
- number of ministers in familiarisation,
- number of probationers (already normally included in the Faith Nurture Forum Report), and
- number of ministers expected to retire that year;

with similar ministries numbers and vacancy projections to be included in subsequent Faith Nurture Forum (or its successor) **Reports to the General Assembly.**

The information is:

Minister numbers (FTE)	593 ministers in a parish
Interim / Transition Ministers (FTE)	8
Ministers inducted on basis of reviewable charge	56
Pioneer ministers	3
Probationers	10
Familiarisations	7
MDS numbers (FTE)	91
Fixed term assistant minister contracts	34
Actual retired in 2022	38
Actual demitted in 2022	23
Expected retirements and demissions in 2023	58

Appendix v

FINANCIAL INFORMATION AND ALLOWANCES

X.1 Stipends and Salaries

The Assembly Trustees approved the recommendation of the Faith Nurture Forum that stipend & salary scales be increased by 5% for 2023.

Stipend Scale (including Associate Ministers) 2023

Point 1 £30,135
 Point 2 £32,106
 Point 3 £34,076
 Point 4 £36,048
 Point 5 £37,032

Ministries Development Staff Scales 2023

MDS General Scale
 Point 1 £27,443
 Point 2 £28,341
 Point 3 £29,235
 Point 4 £30,133
 Point 5 £31,024

Team Leader Scale

Point 1 £33,412
 Point 2 £34,158
 Point 3 £34,903
 Point 4 £35,650
 Point 5 £36,395

Deacon Scale (Genuine Occupational Requirement)

Point 1 £29,235
 Point 2 £30,133
 Point 3 £31,024
 Point 4 £31,920
 Point 5 £32,815

Island Allowance

Island allowances increase for 2023 to bring into line with stipend increases.

Outer Island Allowance: £1,964 pa

Inner Island Allowance: £772 pa

Travel Expenses 2023

Travel expenses payable remain as:

Rates for those providing their own car:

- a) reimbursed to ministers and MDS providing their own car for pastoral duties:

45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles

25p per mile for all additional mileage

Ministers also receive capital reimbursement of £80 per month.

- b) reimbursement of travel expenses for students, probationers, OLMs, auxiliary ministers and locums:

45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles

25p per mile for all additional mileage

- c) reimbursed to ministers and MDS providing their own motor bike for pastoral duties:

24p per mile travelled per annum

- d) reimbursed to ministers and MDS providing their own pedal bike for pastoral duties:

20p per mile travelled per annum

X.2 Recommended Pulpit Supply Fee and Expenses

In Charges where there is only one diet of worship, the Pulpit Supply Fee shall be a Standard Fee of £60. In Charges where there are additional diets of worship on a Sunday, the person fulfilling the Supply shall be paid £30 for each additional service.

In all cases, Travelling Expenses shall be paid. Where there is no convenient public conveyance, the use of a private car shall be paid for at the standard rate of 45p per mile.

X.3 Removal and Disturbance Allowance

When a Minister is called to a Charge, the congregation(s) to which the Minister is called shall meet the removal costs incurred in transporting the minister's personal effects into the manse of the Charge. In addition, a manse disturbance allowance of up to £1,740 can be paid on production of appropriate receipts.

If a Charge has an average income base of less than £60,000, application may be made to the Faith Nurture Forum for assistance in meeting removal costs. This assistance may take the form of a grant or loan or a combination of both.

When a minister retires on account of age or infirmity, and in the case of a widow(er) of a Minister who dies in service, the Faith Nurture Forum will meet the cost of removal expenses.

x.4 Funerals

Where a congregation calls upon the services of a minister not already in receipt of a stipend, or other suitably qualified person, to conduct a funeral, a fee of £60 may be paid by the congregation. On no account should such a fee be charged to the family of the deceased.

For the avoidance of doubt, no fee may be offered to or received by a serving Parish Minister for the conduct of a funeral service, whether in their own or another parish.

x.5 Vacancy Allowance

For 2023 the Vacancy Allowance remains at £933 per month and £1,082 for linked charges. This is sufficient to cover pulpit supply and two days per week pastoral cover at the rate of £315 per month for each day of pastoral cover per week should a vacant congregation choose to engage a locum. The Vacancy Allowance is deducted directly from each vacant charge's 'Giving to Grow' Allocation. The vacancy allowance and rate of locum pay are currently under review.

x.6 Guardianship Allowance

For 2023 the Guardianship Allowance also remains at £933 per month in line with the vacancy allowance.

Appendix vi**[] ACT AMENDING THE SELECTION AND TRAINING FOR FULL-TIME MINISTRY ACT (ACT X 2004) (AS AMENDED)**
Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Selection and Training for Full-Time Ministry Act (Act X 2004), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. *Delete section 1(a) (Definition of the Forum) and substitute:*
“(a) “The FAPLT” is the General Assembly’s Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.”
and throughout the Act where “Forum” appears, substitute “FAPLT”.
2. *In section 1(i) delete “persons” and substitute “Candidates”.*
3. *Add a new definition in section 1 (Definitions):*
““Candidature” means the whole time during which a person is a Candidate (including the period during which they are a Probationer).”
4. *In section 2(1) delete “Recruitment Team” and substitute “People and Training Team”.*
5. *Throughout the Act for “he or she” substitute “they” and for “his or her” substitute “their”.*
6. *In sections 12(1)(b) and (e) amend “shall consist of” to “shall normally consist of”.*
7. *In section 13(a)(v) delete “Church, Ministry” and substitute “Ministry and Mission”.*
8. *In section 17 (Placements):*
 - (a) *In sub-section (1) after “Church requirements” add “in section 13”.*
 - (b) *Add a new sub-section (2) as follows and renumber thereafter:*
“At the beginning of each placement a Learning Covenant will be agreed by the supervising minister and the Candidate on placement.”
 - (c) *Make the last sentence of the existing sub-section (1) a new sub-section (3) and at the beginning add “Without the consent of the FAPLT,” and between “full-time” and “placement” add “probationary”.*
 - (d) *In the existing sub-section (4), between “final” and “placement” add “probationary”.*
9. *Rename section 18 “Presbytery Supervision during Course”.*
10. *Rename section 20 “Initial Course Preparations” and delete the existing sub-sections (1) and (2), substituting the following:*
 - (1) *At the outset of the Candidate’s training an Initial Course Meeting shall be held, attended by the Candidate and whichever member of staff of the FAPLT has been allocated responsibility for the care of the Candidate.*
 - (2) *At the Initial Course Meeting the Candidate and the staff member will discuss a personalised training plan, training policies (including the performance review policy) and the Expectations and Responsibilities document. Academic, practical and personal goals for the first year of training will also be discussed. In due course all of these documents will be agreed.*
11. *Delete the existing sections 21 and 22 and substitute the following, including part of the existing section 22 as a new section 22A:*

“Appraisal during Candidature

21. (1) *An Appraisal Meeting shall take place at the end of each academic year in which training has been undertaken, whether or not a Candidate has undertaken academic study during that year, and shall be carried out in terms of this section except during the final fifteen month probationary placement when the provisions of section 22 shall apply in supplement of this section 21.*
- (2) *The functions of each Appraisal Meeting shall be to confirm whether or not there is satisfactory progress, to set formation and learning goals through a facilitated conversation and discussion, and to implement the performance review policy if applicable. Other tasks of the Appraisal Meeting shall be as determined from time to time by the FAPLT.*
- (3) *The member of staff of the FAPLT who has been allocated responsibility for the Appraisal Meeting shall receive written reports from the Candidate, the supervising minister (if any) and the College (if academic study has been undertaken during the year); and shall use them along with any other written reports which the staff member obtains and the Formation Framework to prepare a Pre-Appraisal Form, to be circulated to all those attending the Appraisal Meeting, containing a satisfactory or unsatisfactory recommendation regarding the Candidate’s progress.*
- (4) *A satisfactory recommendation on the Candidate’s progress shall mean that one of the following conclusions may be reached after the Appraisal Meeting:*
 - (a) *that progress is satisfactory; or*
 - (b) *that pieces of work require to be completed, or areas of work require to be improved, within a period of time to be specified in the report.*
- (5) *An unsatisfactory recommendation on the Candidate’s progress shall mean that one of the following conclusions may be reached after the Appraisal Meeting:*
 - (a) *that progress is satisfactory; or*
 - (b) *that pieces of work require to be completed, or areas of work require to be improved, within a period of*

- time to be specified in the Report; or
- (c) that an extension of training requires to be arranged by the FAPLT and a further, final Appraisal Meeting conducted; or
- (d) that the Candidature should be terminated.
- (6) At the Appraisal Meeting the following shall apply:
 - (i) Any person who acts as a representative of Presbytery or the FAPLT shall receive appropriate training as shall be determined and provided by the FAPLT.
 - (ii) The representatives appointed by the Presbytery and the FAPLT shall each be appointed with powers to make decisions on behalf of the Presbytery and the FAPLT respectively; if a member or representative of the FAPLT is not present, it shall be the member of staff who has powers to make decisions on behalf of the FAPLT.
 - (iii) In the case of a Pre-Appraisal Form containing a satisfactory recommendation, in attendance shall be the Candidate, the member of staff of the FAPLT who has been allocated responsibility for the Appraisal and a representative of Presbytery.
 - (iv) In the case of a Pre-Appraisal Form containing an unsatisfactory recommendation, in attendance shall be the Candidate, the member of staff of the FAPLT who has been allocated responsibility for the Appraisal, a member or representative of the FAPLT and a representative of Presbytery. In this situation, the Candidate shall be notified prior to the Appraisal Meeting that there are concerns regarding their performance and that a member or representative of the FAPLT shall be present.
 - (v) In addition, at the final Appraisal Meeting which takes place before the final (fifteen month) probationary placement is due to commence, and whether the Pre-Appraisal Form for that Appraisal Meeting contains a satisfactory or unsatisfactory recommendation, a member or representative of the FAPLT shall attend in addition to the member of staff of the FAPLT.
 - (vi) The Meeting shall be co-convened on behalf of the FAPLT and the Presbytery.
- (7) Following the Appraisal Meeting, an Appraisal Report will be prepared by the member of staff of the FAPLT who has been allocated responsibility for the Appraisal and circulated within 3 working days of the Meeting to all those who attended the Meeting. If the Candidate dissents from the Report or any part thereof, their dissent and the reasons for it shall be recorded in the Report, but shall not alter the status of the Report for the purposes of this Act.
- (8) The Appraisal Report shall contain one of the following decisions:
 - (a) that progress is entirely satisfactory; or
 - (b) that pieces of work require to be completed, or areas of work require to be improved, within a period of time specified in the Report.
 - (c) that an extension of training requires to be arranged by the FAPLT and a further, final Appraisal Meeting conducted (this option may be exercised only once in any academic year); or
 - (d) that the Candidature should be terminated.
- (9) The Candidate may appeal to the Ministries Appeal Panel against a decision in terms of sub-sections 21(8) (c) or (d) on one or more of the following grounds: (a) that in the course of the Appraisal Meeting there were irregularities in the process, (b) that the final decision was influenced by incorrect material fact, or (c) that the Appraisal Meeting was conducted contrary to the principles of natural justice. Notification of the intention to appeal shall be made to the FAPLT and to the Principal Clerk within 14 days of the date upon which the Appraisal Report was intimated to the Candidate. At the Appeal Hearing the Candidate shall be entitled to appear in person and the representative of Presbytery who co-convened the Appraisal Meeting shall appear to present the case for the Appraisal decision. The Candidate may be accompanied by a companion, who shall not be entitled to speak to the Panel but who may confer with the Candidate.
- (10) Notwithstanding the above provisions, at any time during Candidature, and including in terms of section 22, an Appraisal Meeting with full powers may be held.

Appraisal while a Probationer and sustaining the course

- 22. The Appraisal process during the final (fifteen month) probationary placement shall be as follows:
 - (1) The normal process shall be Interim Appraisal after six months and Final Appraisal after twelve months. Alternatively, in the discretion of the FAPLT, the FAPLT may determine that a pattern of three-monthly Appraisal Meetings, or such other pattern as may seem appropriate to the FAPLT in its discretion, may apply throughout the probationary placement, until Final Appraisal. A third possibility is that where the FAPLT has prescribed, under section 17(7) above, a part-time equivalent to the requirement of a fifteen month full-time probationary placement, the FAPLT may prescribe equivalent milestones for Appraisal Meetings, including the Final Appraisal, as are appropriate to the arrangements agreed for the part-time probationary placement.
 - (2) At all Appraisal Meetings held during the final probationary placement, including the Final Appraisal, the following shall apply:
 - (i) The procedure set out in section 21 shall be followed.
 - (ii) The full range of decisions in terms of section 21(8) shall be possible, in addition to a decision at Final Appraisal in terms of sub-section (3) below.
 - (iii) In attendance shall be the Candidate, the supervising minister (for the first part of the Meeting only), a representative of the Presbytery, a member or representative of the FAPLT and the member of staff of the FAPLT allocated responsibility for the Appraisal.

- (iv) Decisions shall be taken jointly on behalf of the Presbytery and the FAPLT.
- (3) At the Final Appraisal, in addition to any decision reached in terms of sub-section 21(8), it shall be decided whether the final placement can be sustained and whether the Candidate is fit to be ordained in due course. The Presbytery representative and the member or representative of the FAPLT shall each be appointed in such a way as to have powers to indicate the final approval of the Presbytery and of the FAPLT respectively to these matters at this stage.

Issue of Exit Certificate/Graduate Candidate Certificate

- 22A. (1) Where final approval on behalf of the Presbytery and the FAPLT has been given in terms of section 22, and the FAPLT is satisfied that the requirements of sections 12-17 have been fulfilled, including all academic requirements, the FAPLT shall thereafter have the power to issue an Exit Certificate upon completion of the probationary placement. At that point the Candidate shall become a Graduate Candidate and shall then remain under the supervision of the Presbytery within whose bounds the final placement was undertaken, pending ordination to a charge or appointment.
- (2) The Presbytery shall in each calendar year assess in terms of the criteria set out in section 9 above, the general suitability of each Graduate Candidate and, if satisfied, shall issue a Graduate Candidate's Certificate confirming continuing approval, and shall advise the FAPLT by 31 December. Candidates will have a right of appeal in terms of sub-section (3) below in the event of the Presbytery declining to issue a Certificate.
- (3) The Graduate Candidate may appeal to the Ministries Appeal Panel against a decision in terms of section 22A(2) on one or more of the following grounds: (a) that in the course of the Presbytery's decision there were irregularities in the process, (b) that the Presbytery's decision was influenced by incorrect material fact, or (c) that the Presbytery's decision was conducted contrary to the principles of natural justice. Notification of the intention to appeal shall be made to the Presbytery and to the Principal Clerk within 14 days of the date upon which the Presbytery's decision was intimated to the Graduate Candidate. At the Appeal Hearing the Graduate Candidate shall be entitled to appear in person and a representative of the Presbytery shall appear to present the case for the Presbytery's decision. The Graduate Candidate may be accompanied by a companion, who shall not be entitled to speak to the Panel but who may confer with the Graduate Candidate.
- (4) A Presbytery must obtain a current Graduate Candidate's Certificate for any Graduate Candidate whose call or appointment is to be sustained by that Presbytery after 31 December of the year in which their Exit Certificate was awarded.
- (5) A Presbytery may issue a Graduate Candidate's Certificate on up to three occasions only. Thereafter, in order to obtain a Graduate Candidate's Certificate, the Graduate Candidate must apply for such a Certificate to the Registration of Ministries Committee, following an application procedure equivalent mutatis mutandis to that set out in section 27 of the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017) (Application for Category O registration)."
12. *In section 23 (Complaints Procedure) add a new sub-section (d):*
 "(d) where circumstances come to the attention of the FAPLT or Presbytery which give cause for concern about the Candidate's conduct during training."
and delete the existing final paragraph and substitute new wording as follows:
 "Any such claim, complaint or circumstances shall be intimated by lodging with the senior staff member of the FAPLT dealing with matters of People and Training, a written statement providing specific details thereof. The senior staff member shall intimate the statement to the Candidate, the Convener of the FAPLT and the Presbytery."
13. *In section 24:*
 (a) *In sub-section (1) delete "one of the Forum's staff" and substitute "a staff member of the FAPLT" and delete "claim or complaint" and substitute "claim, complaint or circumstances".*
 (b) *In sub-section (2) delete "any party to the document or covenant" and substitute "any of the parties mentioned in section 23".*
 (c) *In sub-section (3) delete "each of the parties to the document or covenant" and substitute "each party".*
14. *In section 25:*
 (a) *Delete the existing sub-section (3) and substitute:*
 "The Hearing shall be held as soon as is reasonably practicable. At such a Hearing the Candidate shall be present and may be accompanied by a companion who shall not be entitled to speak to the panel but who may confer with the Candidate. The panel for the Hearing, in addition to the Convener, shall comprise two representatives of Presbytery and two representatives of the FAPLT, none of whom shall have had prior personal involvement with the claim, complaint or circumstances giving rise to the Hearing. The two representatives appointed by the Presbytery and the FAPLT shall each be appointed with powers to make decisions on behalf of the Presbytery and the FAPLT respectively. A FAPLT staff member shall attend as an adviser."
 (b) *Delete the existing sub-section (4) and re-number thereafter.*
 (c) *In the existing sub-section (5) delete the third and fourth sentences and substitute:*
 "Such a decision shall be final and binding on all parties, subject only to appeal to the Ministries Appeal Panel in terms of Act VI 2007 on the following grounds: (a) that in the course of the Hearing there were irregularities in the process, (b) that the final decision taken at conclusion of the Hearing was influenced by incorrect material fact, or (c) that in the course of the Hearing there was a breach of the principles of natural justice. The intention to appeal shall be intimated to the FAPLT and to the Principal Clerk within 14 days of the panel's decision."

References

- [i] Acorn is a movement that seeks to connect Christians with the work God is doing in others through caring conversation. Acorn does this through missional discipleship, sending out to try the acronym A-C-O-R-N (Ask-Call-Obey-Report-Notice);

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON GORDON PRESBYTERY MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Record appreciation of the full and generous assistance given in addressing the matter referred to the Special Committee.
3. Acknowledge that communication of information from the (former) Ministries Council could have been handled more effectively, for which the Convener of the Faith Nurture Forum has apologised, and acknowledge the consequent difficulties borne by the Presbytery of Gordon in respect of decision making and staff redundancies.
4. Agree that any future changes in the basis of on which ministries weightings are determined should be reported to the General Assembly and clearly communicated to any Presbyteries for whom specific changes are envisaged.
5. Thank and discharge the Special Committee.

Report

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The General Assembly of 2022 approved the following section of deliverance under consideration of the Report from the Faith Nurture Forum:

“Notwithstanding any past errors, instruct the Selection Committee to appoint three persons, to mediate a meeting with Gordon Presbytery, Faith Nurture Forum and the Assembly Trustees to:

- (i) Verify, according to the principles applied across all other Presbyteries, the appropriate weighting and allocation of ministries to Gordon Presbytery;
 - (ii) In the light of the outcome of section (i) above assist (if required) the Presbytery of Gordon to complete their Presbytery Mission Plan; and
 - (iii) Advise, where appropriate, on opportunities that might exist in:
 - (a) Local ecumenical collaboration,
 - (b) The shape of ministry allocation within the proposed new Presbytery, and
 - (c) Initiatives that might qualify for funding under the newly create Seeds for Growth Fund;
- and report the outcome of their work to the General Assembly of 2023.”

1.2 Rev Richard Baxter, David Watt and Sheena MacFarlane were appointed and co-opted Jennifer Boag to provide specialist statistical experience. Key issues related to the change in category for the purposes of ministry allocation as it related to the Presbytery of Gordon (“the Presbytery”), whether those changes were appropriate, and the communication of those changes.

1.3 The Special Committee gathered detailed documentation and correspondence from all parties, met with representatives of the Presbytery and with members and staff from the Faith Nurture Forum (as successor to the Ministries Council.) The Assembly Trustees confirmed that they did not hold documentation relevant to our enquiry. All parties were helpful and fully co-operative throughout.

2. REPORT

2.1 In earlier versions of ministries allocation (2004-5, 2010-11), the Presbytery was treated as a Rural-Urban presbytery with a weighting of 2.0, and from 2017-18 it was treated as Urban-Rural, with a weighting of 1.5. This difference or revision was based on statistical analysis of population densities. For the Presbytery, this meant a difference of around five posts in their ministries allocation.

2.2 This change in 2017/18 was not directly communicated to the Presbytery, or the other two Presbyteries whose weightings changed at that time, Jedburgh and Lothian. The Presbytery first recognised the implications in connection with the 2022 allocation of posts, and the need to create the Presbytery’s Mission Plan. The Presbytery explained to us that it felt it had been deprived of the opportunity to question, challenge or appeal this change in weighting.

2.3 Detailed work was carried out to check the statistical basis on which the Presbytery was categorised as Urban-Rural in 2017. The Special Committee concluded that the calculations were correct, and that the Presbytery had been properly categorised as Urban-Rural. Neither its population density nor any of the possible alternative factors which could have been considered pointed towards a Rural-Urban designation. The Special Committee did not have access to materials showing the reasons behind the original weighting basis prior to 2017. However, by 2017, and subsequently, the Special Committee concluded the only appropriate weighting was Urban-Rural. The Presbytery was not a statistical outlier and fell squarely in the middle of the Urban-Rural range when presbyteries were listed by population density. The Special Committee were not satisfied that there were other factors specific to the Presbytery and absent elsewhere which gave any reasonable grounds to adopt a weighting other than 1.5 for Urban-Rural presbyteries.

2.4 In 2017 three presbyteries saw their categorisations altered – Jedburgh and Gordon reduced to a 1.5 weighting and Lothian which was a statistical outlier moved to a new weighting of 1.25 (applied to them alone).

2.5 Information on the potential ministries allocations for presbyteries was set out in the Ministries Council's report to the General Assembly of 2018, accompanied by a link to the underlying methodology. The General Assembly noted these numbers as 'advisory'. While the information and the associated methodology was publicly available, and it is understood that the Ministries Council was seeking to support and assist presbyteries through conferences, the consequences of the weighting change do not appear to have been directly communicated to the Presbytery (or, as far as we are aware, to the other affected presbyteries).

2.6 At the time when the weightings changed (October 2017), the key issue occupying the minds of Ministries Council members and staff was likely to have been not the changes in weightings, but the broader question of whether weightings were advisory or mandatory. The statistical calculations were presented to the Ministries Council and its various planning fora. The changes to the weightings of Gordon, Jedburgh and Lothian Presbyteries were clearly flagged up in the reports but there is no evidence of any discussion about the impact on the presbyteries whose weightings were altered, or recognition of the potential effect on posts.

2.7 In consequence there was no direct communication with these presbyteries to alert them to the impact of the change. The Faith Nurture Forum have recognised that direct discussion should have taken place and the Convener apologised at the General Assembly of 2022 for that communication failure. At the time, the pressure on staff and Council members was such that this was a matter of oversight, not error. The Special Committee is satisfied that no individual or individuals bear direct responsibility for the communication failures and that this was an institutional failure at a time of intense pressure and change.

2.8 The Principal Clerk has confirmed that where the original basis of calculating weightings had been presented to and agreed by a General Assembly, alterations to that basis should have been similarly treated. The Ministries Council should have taken that step.

2.9 Despite coming late to the awareness of their lower allocation of posts, the Presbytery has managed to successfully complete its Presbytery Mission Plan in a timely and effective manner, in line with the number allocated on an Urban-Rural weighting. Nevertheless, better communication at an earlier stage would have assisted their processes and removed uncertainties. The Presbytery did not require further support to complete their plan and had fully considered the range of options referred to in the remit.

2.10 Much of the work carried out by the Special Committee is essentially historical, given the structural changes in the Church over the last few years. In the context of fewer, larger presbyteries differences in weightings may be of reduced importance in future. However, we recommend that in future all changes in weightings should be directly reported to General Assembly and clearly communicated to any presbyteries for whom specific changes are envisaged.

In the name of the Committee

RICHARD BAXTER, *Convener*

REPORT OF THE SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL (KNOWN AS CROSSREACH BOARD) MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.

National Care Service

2. Note the report which has been published by the Archbishop's Commission and instruct the Social Care Council, in partnership with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, to continue to engage with the Scottish Government in the development of a National Care Service, and urge the Scottish Government to respect the views of care service providers and service users and their families for the implementation and delivery of a National Care Service which:
 - a. Promotes co-design and co-production of services between commissioners, service providers and service users.
 - b. Makes Scottish Government ministerial accountability clear and transparent.
 - c. Makes sure that the principles of a National Care Service are based on values which protect and uphold human rights and dignity.
 - d. Respects the Fair Work Convention recommendation for Fair Pay across the whole sector.

Drug Deaths

3. Welcome the investment in residential rehabilitation services and note the excellent progress made in the recovery volunteers programme, recognising the importance of this in reducing stigma and opening up opportunities for those affected by alcohol and drug use.
4. Instruct CrossReach to work alongside the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and give advice on the information being developed to support the work of local congregations in order to reduce stigma in relation to those affected by alcohol and drug use.

Dementia Strategy

5. Endorse the roll out of the Heart for Art groups and recognise the potential for further collaborative working between CrossReach and local congregations in order to support those living with dementia and their carers.

Workforce Matters

6. Note the huge challenges in recruiting to posts in social care, commend the existing workforce for their dedication and commitment so that supported people of all ages can continue to live life to the full and encourage Presbyteries to engage in this issue as a matter of urgency by using their networks to distribute CrossReach recruitment resources.

Presbytery Promise And Support From Congregations

7. Encourage Presbyteries to explore the many opportunities which exist within the 'Share the Love' initiative and to share these with congregations in order to find areas of mutual interest and raise vital funds for both CrossReach and congregations as part of their commitment to the Presbytery Promise.

Report

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In January 2023, the Archbishop's Commission of the Church of England¹ published a report entitled 'Care and Support Re-Imagined'. While the recommendations are directed towards the future of social care in England, many of the challenges it examines resonate with the current situation in Scotland. It talks of the true nature of social care being misunderstood, a system where those receiving care and those working to support them are undervalued, an uneven access to care along with a growing number of people in need of it, and inequity in the way in which it is funded.

1.2 It is, however, clear about the need for the Church to support change in the social care system. The Commission's report states that it is *"underpinned by several theological considerations, but there are two which have heavily influenced our conclusions. One is the belief that every one of us has been created in the Image of God (Genesis 1. 27); which means that we are all a 'gift', valued for who we are not what we produce. The other is a command (which recurs in Scripture) to love one another. The ultimate expression of this is Jesus Christ, who serves both as model and guide for how we should live and care for others."*

1.3 It goes on to talk about good quality social care, founded on supportive relationships "being a way to ensure human flourishing; or, to use the language of the bible 'Life in all its fullness'."

1.4 It also stresses the importance of valuing those who provide care, paid and unpaid.

1.5 This year, the report of the Social Care Council (CrossReach Board) explains the changes that are happening now, within Scotland's own social care system and how the Church here can get involved in helping to shape the future. It will then go on to outline how CrossReach already works in a variety of settings to promote fullness of life and reduce stigma across the life course, supporting the Church of Scotland to fulfil the third mark of mission through responding to human need by loving service. It will explore the importance of and investment in resources, including the workforce, buildings, and wider infrastructure as enablers to doing care and support well. Finally, it will outline the financial situation and the steps being taken to improve this and secure services so that those in vulnerable situations can continue to access the support they need for the future.

2. A NATIONAL CARE SERVICE FOR SCOTLAND

2.1 Here, in Scotland, where is wrestling with many of the challenges outlined above, The National Care Service (Scotland) Bill has already been laid down in Parliament. This has the intention of bringing about a National Care Service which will put care services under the same ministerial accountability as the NHS. The Bill intends to drive positive change for supported people and for the workforce but there are a number of concerns about the Bill as presented, not least about the cost of the restructure, the impacts on supported people, and the potential loss of local control. Whilst recognising that much change is necessary, CrossReach, along with other third sector providers of social care, holds reservations about the Bill as it stands. Many of the concerning issues have been shared widely by the third sector representative body, the Coalition of Care Providers Scotland (CCPS). CrossReach has been accepted on to the NCS Stakeholder Register and is working with employees and supported people to ensure that their views are represented as the exact provisions in the legislation are worked through. The Faith Impact Forum have also been active in this area, supporting CrossReach and the wider Church to have their voice heard during the consultation phases of the Bill passing through Parliament. It is not yet clear what impact the National Care Service will have on CrossReach, or the social care activities run by many churches up and down the country, but what is clear is that there are a number of important principles which must be evidenced if this legislation is to bring around a change in the way social care is funded, accessed and delivered. It is here that the Church, its congregations, and the communities in which it is active, can exert influence to ensure that this Bill allows people to 'live the full life for which we were created'.

2.2 The Bill should include provision for:

- A human rights based approach where promoting choice and control for individuals receiving support is at the centre of a new National Care Service.
- A provision for Fair Work to be extended to all employees working in social care operating directly under or commissioned by the National Care Service.
- A clear understanding of the position of third-party providers in a National Care Service and how they relate to what is being proposed.
- Clear and transparent accountability for the good running of the service, within legislation which recognises that the National Care Service is overseen directly by Scottish Parliament ministers.

2.3 Collaboration with the Faith Impact Forum and other social care providers will continue throughout the next year on this wide reaching piece of legislation which promises the biggest shake up in services since the NHS, should the Bill be passed.

3 FULLNESS OF LIFE

3.1 Making a difference

3.1.1 CrossReach, meanwhile, continues to offer services to those in need of care and support across the life course. From early years to older age, it serves thousands of people in vulnerable situations every year in both residential and community settings. A list of services, with the geographical areas covered, is at Appendix 1. Specialisms include work with older people (including dementia specific support) and work with adults affected by mental health, homelessness, criminal justice, learning disability, and substance use. Services within the children and families division include small houses for children in care, an education campus for children who struggle with mainstream schooling, early years and family outreach services and counselling services, both generic and also with a specific focus such as perinatal mental health and substance use.

3.2 Quality services

3.2.1 Many of the services are registered with the Care Inspectorate who grade services depending on a number of quality indicators which are underpinned by a set of standards:

1. I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.
2. I am fully involved in all decisions about my care and support.
3. I have confidence in the people who support and care for me.
4. I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support.
5. I experience a high quality environment if the organisation provides the premises.

3.2.2 Services are graded as to how well they do on a scale of 1 (unsatisfactory) to 6 (excellent) and although scores do vary between our 55 registered services the overall average is:

Quality Indicator	Wellbeing	Leadership and Management	Staffing	Setting	Care and Support Planned
Grade	4.1	4.3	4.3	3.7	4.2

3.3 Having a voice

3.3.1 As well as being subject to external scrutiny, CrossReach has a number of ways in which it asks for feedback on services in order to ensure that people's rights are being protected and that they (or a nominated carer) are at the heart of making decisions about their own support. This also helps improve services and shape them for the future.

3.3.2 The most recent service user survey key findings indicated that:

- 92.4% of the people who responded strongly agreed or agreed with the question "I can control my own care and support if this is what I want."
- 97.8% strongly agreed or agreed "I am supported and encouraged to be as independent as I can be."

- 96.5% strongly agreed or agreed “I am supported to understand and uphold my rights.”
- 90.1% strongly agreed or agreed “I am supported to communicate in a way that is right for me, at my own pace, by people who are sensitive to me and my needs.”

Comments included:

- “Overall, we find all the staff devote their time and attention to (person’s) needs above and beyond their brief.”
- “The support I get in here is with the upmost respect.”
- “I feel that the support I need is always at hand and anytime I have an issue or problem that I don’t understand the staff are always there to help.”

3.3.3 In addition to the service user survey, a number of forums are in place to ensure the voices of our supported people are heard directly.

3.3.4 The CrossReach National Learning Disability Forum, is the largest of these forums bringing people who use the learning disability services from Stonehaven, down to Hamilton, together in one place. 2022 saw people coming back together physically, rather than online, and was hosted by Gorgie, Stenhouse and Dalry Parish Church. The National Learning Disability Forum is customer organised and led by staff lending a helping hand where called upon to do so. The Moderator opened the event which was a genuine celebration of achievements and a real illustration of how many of the customers of that service are living life to the fullest possible, with the appropriate support.

3.3.5 2022 also saw the first of our ‘World Café’ events where supported people from different services came together to share their views of the care and support they receive from CrossReach indicating what would make it better for them. It provided good insight into the culture of the organisation as a whole. Recommendations from the day have been shared by those attending and will inform decision making for the future.

3.4 Measuring the change

3.4.1 The CrossReach Impact Report gives more information about CrossReach services and the positive change it makes for service users <https://www.crossreach.org.uk/impact2023>. Three areas in which the organisation has been particularly active over the past year, are around drugs deaths, Scotland’s National Dementia Strategy and The Promise, which are outlined further in sections 4, 5 and 6.

4. DRUGS DEATHS

4.1 The situation around the high level of drugs deaths in Scotland has been highlighted in the report of the Faith Impact Forum. CrossReach fully supports the notion that people can recover, that all lives are worth living and recognises that for many, the roots of adult drug and alcohol use lie in adverse childhood experiences. The organisation remains very active in this area, providing direct services to people who wish to tackle their substance use, and also early intervention initiatives for children affected by parental substance use at the Sunflower Garden Project. For adults, there are two routes to getting support through CrossReach services, either by moving towards total abstinence or by deciding to adopt an approach which sees the harms of drug and alcohol use reduced by changing behaviours. Some 178 people accessed the specialist residential rehabilitation programmes at CrossReach Recovery Services (Rainbow House) in Glasgow or Beechwood House in Inverness over the past year, many of whom then went on to take up a supported tenancy at the Move On services; Whiteinch (Glasgow) or Cale House (Inverness). There, people are supported to live independently and rebuild a life where substance use is not at the centre, by paying attention to relationships and the activities they get involved in. The success of these programmes has been recognised by Scottish Government who have awarded CrossReach £2.4 million to extend capacity at Beechwood House under the new Residential Rehab Rapid Capacity Programme which will allow around 22 more placements, 36% added capacity, to be offered from late 2024 onwards.

4.2 The Recovery Volunteers Programme, which sees people who have been through one of the services being trained and equipped to support others, continues to go from strength to strength. Angela Constance MSP (Minister for Drugs Policy) was the keynote speaker at the 14th recovery volunteers graduation ceremony which saw 35 people recognised for completing the training course, many accompanied by family and friends. They will now go on to mentor others at the beginning of their recovery journey either in one of our own services or further afield. Some of our past graduates are now employees with one going on to help lead the peer volunteer training course. It is always humbling to hear from those who have tackled their substance use and who are looking forward to a brighter future filled with hope.

4.3 *“CrossReach is a brilliant organisation who make you feel part of something and when you leave their Service they still keep in touch with you and continue to support you. I was in a very bad place abusing drugs on a regular basis for number of years, I don’t want to use an old cliché but if I can do it anyone can do it.”*

4.4 A family member spoke movingly at the event about how they had thought their daughter was lost to them, but how proud they were of her achievements and their own hope, as a family, for the future.

4.5 One of the graduates, who has been through both residential rehabilitation and move on services in Glasgow and is now a staff member, was also recognised for his skills in supporting and motivating others by reaching the finals of the Scottish Social Services Awards 2022 in the Bright Spark Category.

4.6 *“I got treated with love and compassion and respect and all those things when I was here. It’s just great to be on the other side of the table and to be able to give that to somebody else and hopefully they find their own path in life. That’s what it’s all about and I love the fact that it’s called ‘Move On’ because that’s what it’s all about. You want to inspire people to live independently and move on with their life.”*

5. SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL DEMENTIA STRATEGY AND CONSULTATION

5.1 CrossReach remains an active partner in the Scottish Government dementia strategy and is recognised for its skills and expertise in this area. The current strategy is in the process of being rewritten and responses are being sought by way of a wide consultation to which CrossReach will respond.² CrossReach runs 6 specialist dementia care homes in Ayr, Johnstone, Polmont, Edinburgh, Inverness and Glasgow and has rolled out a dementia ambassadors programme in each of its other 9 care homes with all staff undertaking skills for excellence training in dementia. One of the innovations, Heart for Art which was initially supported by Guild Funding and went on to attract Life Changes Trust funding, is well established. There is now a successful model of collaboration with a number of churches who have generously offered up premises, funding and volunteers to minister to their own communities through this therapeutic arts based initiative designed for people living with dementia and their carers. The latest groups are based in Dunfermline Abbey and Morningside Parish Church, bringing the total to 18 groups and supporting around 300 participants every year.

5.2 In November 2022, CrossReach Heart for Art reached the finals of the LUMINATE Scotland Creative Ageing Awards in the social care and creativity category and were represented at a ceremony in Scottish Parliament. One of the individual artists, who is also registered blind, was nominated in the outstanding older artists category and made the final three. He has acknowledged that Heart for Art has been able to rekindle a passion for art after thinking he would never paint again saying, *"I was able to discover new ways of approaching painting which has been enlightening and life changing."*

5.3 There is also a clear benefit for carers. A wife of one of the artists commented:

"On my own, I can't provide the stimulation and activities Norrie needs and his art class meets so many needs. I know he's engaged and happy; he comes back with a bounce in his step and a feeling of worth."

6. KEEPING THE PROMISE

6.1 CrossReach continues to lead the way in #KeepThePromise which is a national commitment to children and young people in vulnerable situations to give them the best start in life possible. This includes improving family support where families are struggling, and ultimately working to reduce the numbers of children who are looked after out with their own families. Where children are living in a care setting it makes several recommendations for those delivering the care to ensure that they build a positive experience for children so that they can feel loved and move on with confidence to a future bright with potential.

6.2 One of the ways in which CrossReach has responded is to offer trauma informed training to the children's workforce across all services. These include the Prison Visitors Centres at HMPYOI Polmont and HMP Perth which support families visiting loved ones held in these establishments and in the Daisy Chain Project in Govanhill which is an early years project supporting marginalised families in an area of urban deprivation. The staff report feeling more confident in working with families in these settings, more able to start difficult conversations and signpost to the right sort of help as needed. At the heart lies the ability to make relationships and to really listen. The service leader at Daisy Chain reports: *"Being trauma informed allowed us to understand the importance of allowing space for our children to express their feelings in a group, without repercussions of shame or consequence. We endeavour to provide them with loving boundaries for them to feel safe and held, visible, and important"*. It is not all about talking though, for example, at the Visitors Centres, a number of practical steps have been taken to provide toys and furniture which can help children to manage difficult emotions before or after a prison visit.

6.3 CrossReach looks after up to 25 children and young people in 7 small community houses and operates a small school in Erskine for up to 30 children who find mainstream schooling particularly challenging. An increasing number of children are day pupils placed from neighbouring Local Authorities. It is in these settings where CrossReach becomes an alternative family for these children and young people. Much work has been undertaken to ensure that children have the best experiences possible and understand that their voices are important in telling staff what works for them and improving services so that they have the best chance to thrive.

6.4 This work has led to the creation of a sector-leading practice model, one of the first of its type, outlining the Care and Education Services relational model of care to support children and young people, which will be formally launched later this year.

6.5 The Care Inspectorate have noticed the great practice in these settings and on a recent inspection at two of the children's houses awarded a 5 (Very Good) for quality of care and commented particularly positively on the quality of relationships between children and staff members which evidenced humour, affection, respect and love.

7. WORKFORCE MATTERS

7.1 None of the work that is undertaken by CrossReach can be done without a competent, experienced and caring workforce. Individual staff members are registered with the appropriate professional body, the majority being registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). The SSSC dictates the level of qualification needed for each role and puts a time limit on staff to achieve these qualifications. It requires commitment, dedication and expertise to work through each module and meet the professional standards laid down.

7.2 However, the past year has seen existing staff teams under immense strain due to the well-publicised difficulties in recruitment across the whole social care sector and beyond. As a result, there is a heavy reliance on agency staffing in some service areas, which impacts on both the continuity of relationships with supported people, as well as hitting the finances hard.

As of February 2023, the employment picture showed:

- Number of Employees overall 1497 full time equivalent (FTE).
- Number of employees on relief contracts, in accordance with employee choice 369.
- Current Vacancies over all sections 215 (FTE).

7.3 The staffing deficit has inevitably had an impact on services, and in some areas, services have been reduced, closed or temporarily unable to offer support to new service users until contingency plans have been put in place.

7.4 The current level of vacancies is a matter of extreme concern to the Corporate Management Team and Board of CrossReach and will take significant efforts to continue to address the gaps in staff teams. There are a number of initiatives in place to retain existing staff as well as recruit to vacancies, but given market competition within the sector, the fact that Local Authority terms and conditions are superior, and that there are competing sectors such as retail and hospitality, this is now extremely challenging.

7.5 The support of Presbyteries and the wider Church to help advertise vacancies widely across their networks is asked for at this General Assembly. Information to help those willing to do so will be made available.

7.6 The existing managers and staff teams are to be highly commended for their willingness to cover for vacancies, wherever possible, whilst keeping quality up at this challenging time.

7.7 Despite the challenges for the workforce one of the highlights of the last year was the Employee Awards event which took place in October 2022. Master of Ceremonies Jason Leitch, joined with the Moderator in praising the dedication, commitment and achievements of the CrossReach staff teams who were recognised in a number of ways including gaining qualifications, excellent practice, innovation and long service.

7.8 *"I want to say a huge congratulations to all of you. As I shared at the virtual event there were over 100 nominations received so the fact that you have been selected as finalists is a huge achievement...It's fantastic to see people who are so dedicated to developing not only their own practice but sharing that passion and support to develop others."*

8. FAIR PAY AND LIVING WAGE

8.1 One of the challenges to recruitment is the issue of Fair Pay. While the National Care Service could make a difference to the way in which the sector is recognised in the future, for now the issue of Fair Work and Fair Pay in the sector remains contentious.

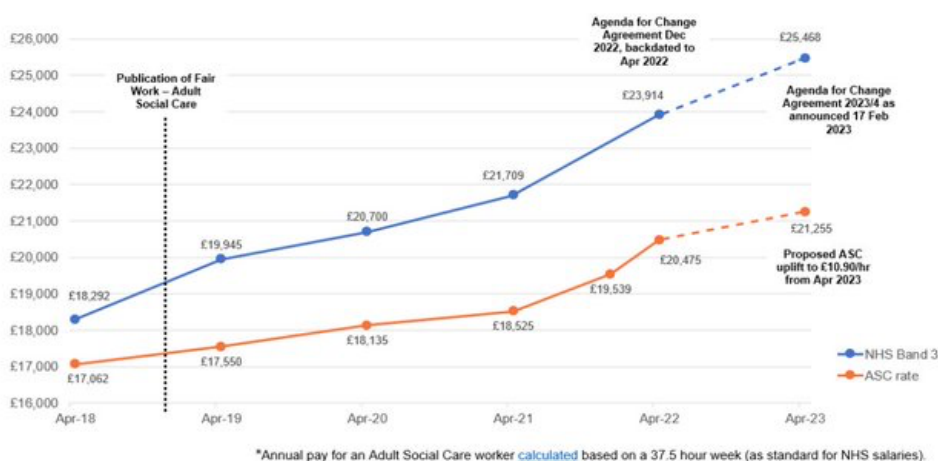
8.2 In June 2022, the CrossReach Board made the decision to ensure that every member of staff was paid at least the Real Living Wage (RLW) as part of its own response to the pressures around terms and conditions for the workforce. Despite the ambition of the Board to consolidate RLW, this was agreed as a temporary arrangement until the next uplift was announced, and the risks of consolidating could be reassessed. The financing of this move was made possible by a combination of Government funding through contracts, charitable funding and support from the Assembly Trustees. This has been a long-held ambition for CrossReach and was warmly welcomed by staff.

8.3 Since then, the situation has changed and the early announcement of the Real Living Wage to help combat the cost of living crisis has not yet been fully matched by Government funding for the social care workforce. There is no provision made for a number of our services including the entire children and families division. This seems fundamentally unfair and the case for parity of pay across the sector continues to be made by CrossReach and wider representative bodies.

8.4 It is anticipated that in June 2023, the CrossReach Board will be able to consider again its position on RLW as the settlements from Local Authorities, under which CrossReach operates the majority of its contracts, are announced for the year April 2023 – March 2024.

8.5 It is increasingly clear that the currently proposed 3.8% uplift for social care staff, which falls well behind NHS and other service sectors, will have a profound impact on people making career choices for the future. The gap between social care staff in the voluntary and independent sectors against the NHS equivalent grades is illustrated by the following graph.

New worker salaries: NHS Band 3 and Adult Social Care Funded Rate
(updated 17 February 2023)



8.6 The social care pay gap issue is further illustrated by the Community Integrated Care supplementary report which clearly demonstrates the disadvantage in pay to those working in the social care sector. <https://www.unfairtocare.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Unfair-to-Care-Scotland-Supplementary-Publication-Final.pdf>.

8.7 The Chief Executive Officer remains very active around the wider issue of Fair Work in Social Care and has made direct representation on this issue to the Scottish Government outlining the challenges for CrossReach and the sector as a whole in collaboration with colleagues from CCPS and Scottish Care.

9. OCCUPATIONAL REQUIREMENT

9.1 CrossReach continues to operate with an Occupational Requirement, under the provisions of the Equality Act 2018, which allows it to recruit only Christian applicants for certain posts. Over the past year, the Board have asked a small working group to look at how this was being applied in order to ensure that it continued to be appropriate, proportionate and that it was couched in accessible language. Recommendations will be put before the Board in June 2023.

9.2 One of the areas the working group has been looking into is wellbeing of staff, specifically how spiritual wellbeing might be incorporated into the wider health and wellbeing initiatives being applied across the workforce. Discussions are now taking place with the Faith Action Forum around a model of chaplaincy which might provide a helpful way forward.

10. BUILDINGS

10.1 Fullness of life can only be enhanced if the environments in which people live, work and receive support are fit for purpose.

10.2 Over the past few years, CrossReach has made significant inroads into assessing its buildings and making strategic investment where necessary and as appropriate. This has seen the children's services benefit from the building of a new school and the purchase or lease of small houses for children to call home for as long as needed.

10.3 In Adult Care, a programme of refurbishment over the past year has seen a transformed Cunningham House in the Grassmarket in Edinburgh so that those who are homeless can enjoy a safe space and take time to get life back on track. A recent application to the General Trustees for a loan will see Gaberston House in Alloa, home to 14 people with severe and enduring mental illness, rebuilt into self-contained flats where they can enjoy a greater degree of independence while being well supported.

10.4 In our homes for older people, a programme of refurbishment is being carried out to enhance the experience of residents and ensure that the homes meet current care standards and are fit for purpose for the future.

10.5 Attention to the physical environment will remain a key priority for the organisation over the next year, with a number of other initiatives for building investment under active consideration.

11. NET CARBON ZERO

11.1 While not restricted to buildings, the aspiration to reach the Net Carbon Zero target for 2030 will partly depend on how we manage our properties and the infrastructure that surrounds them. The Board have commissioned an assessment of six properties in the early part of 2023 with a view to understanding more about CrossReach's current carbon footprint, and the steps that can be taken to reduce this. Action has already been taken to reduce travel and to introduce energy efficiency measures. The results of the work being undertaken will be fed into the wider Net Zero strategy group but there is concern that without significant investment of time and resources, CrossReach will fall short of reaching the 2030 target. This remains work in progress.

12. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

12.1 The Board is working to a clear and well thought through IT strategy which addresses issues of cyber security and data management as well as supporting technology enabled care. One of the major achievements for 2022 was introducing a Care Management System into each of CrossReach's care homes for older people. This reduces the administrative burden for staff, allows better visibility of care plans, and keeps track of various measures of frailty, allowing fast action to be taken as necessary. This has been a huge undertaking for both the IT team and older people service staff but has been declared a significant success in both the way it was implemented and its ongoing benefit to all.

13. PRESBYTERY PROMISE AND SUPPORT FROM CONGREGATIONS

13.1 CrossReach acknowledges that this is a hugely difficult time across every part of the Church and would wish to record thanks for the generosity which continues to be shown to the organisation by Presbyteries, congregations, and the national church offices. Now that the Presbytery planning programme is well underway, work to engage in the most appropriate manner will be taken forward.

13.2 One of the new initiatives, launched by CrossReach in January 2023, is the 'Share the Love' campaign, a loving partnership with mutual benefit tackling areas of identified need. The campaign outlines ways in which churches can collaborate with CrossReach in fundraising for local initiatives as well as for CrossReach services. With over 30 partner churches and groups so far, feedback has been positive supporting renewed relationships between churches and CrossReach Services all over Scotland. The CrossReach Board would want to encourage Presbyteries to promote this initiative to their congregations: <https://www.crossreach.org.uk/love>

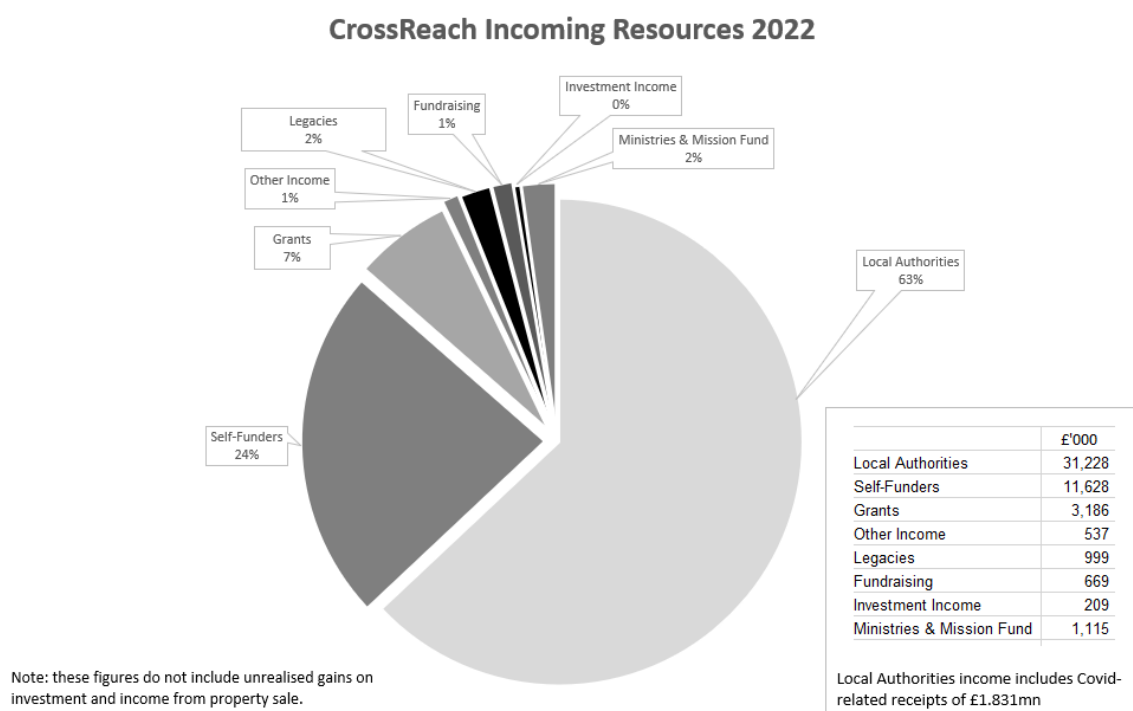
13.3 Take up of the opportunity to pray with CrossReach and for our services has been good since the launch of the prayer app in 2022 and this has been appreciated throughout the organisation.

13.4 CrossReach would also wish to extend thanks to the Right Rev Iain Greenshields, during his time as Moderator, for his support and encouragement over the course of the year and for his sensitive and appropriate engagement with both the services and the wider political issues around social care.

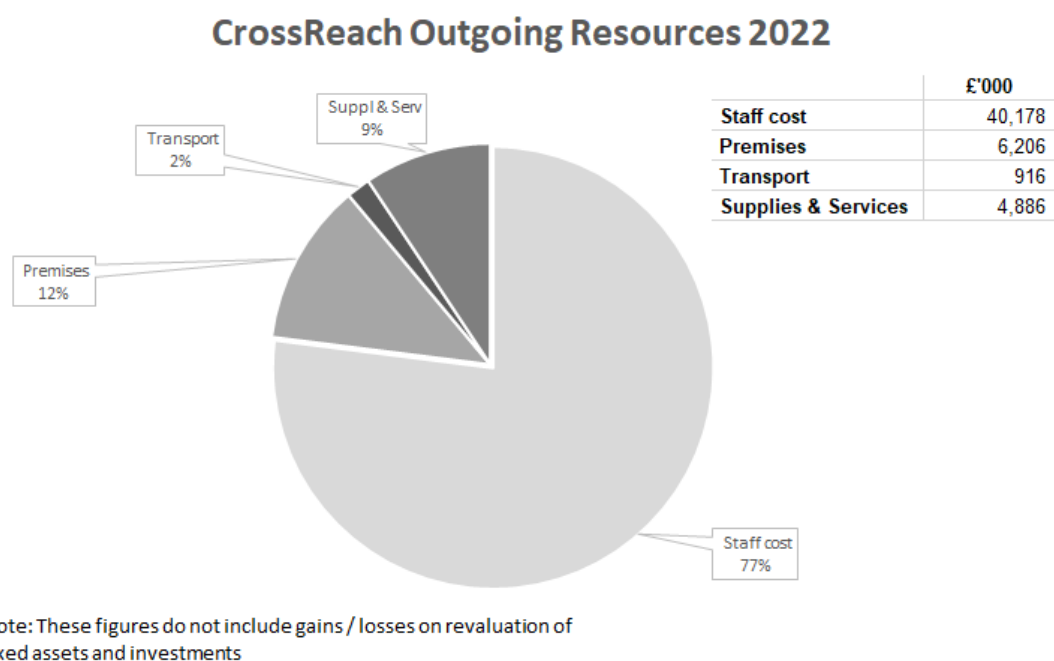
14. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2022

14.1 The graphs below show the profile of income and expenditure in 2022.

Graph A: Incoming Resources for 2022



Graph B: Outgoing Resources for 2022



14.2 2022 was a financially challenging year for CrossReach with Service Delivery costs up by 7.5%, whereas income from Charitable Activities only rose by 3.6%. The primary cause of this was the welcome pay increase for frontline staff in adult social care services which was announced by Scottish Government. An exceptional award was made in December 2021, followed by the more customary uplift in April 2022. However, these uplifts were only partly funded through Government and Local Authority contracts. The partial funding offered meant that provisions had to be made to cover some element of differentials in adult care services and for staff in children's services but did allow a final push to achieving Living Wage for all CrossReach staff by June 2022. This Government pay policy has been challenging for the whole third sector with the impact on the wage bill for CrossReach being in the region of some £800K.

14.3 The difficulties in recruitment have meant that there has been a higher than average reliance on agency staff in 2022 with costs there rising by 63%.

14.4 In addition, Support Costs increased by 9.1% which is mainly due to the significant increase in utility costs.

14.5 A number of significant investments were made over the course of the year, notably in IT infrastructure (£88k) and to maintain buildings (£330k).

14.6 These increases meant that the net income of CrossReach, before property disposals, and gains on investments, and property impairments, increased from a deficit of £(345)k in 2021 to a deficit of £(2,745)k in 2022.

14.7 After property disposals (2021: £2,259k and 2022: £204k) and gains/(losses) on investments (2021: £976k and 2022: £(1,149)k) and property impairment (2021: £nil and 2022: £(716)k), the overall net income went from a surplus of £2,890k in 2021 to a deficit of £(3,690)k in 2022.

14.8 This deficit, together with the previously mentioned level of necessary investment, led to pressure on cashflow throughout 2022. In spite of careful monitoring of outstanding debt, the overdraft from the General Treasurer increased by £1,894k during the course of 2022.

15. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: THE ISSUE OF SUSTAINABILITY

15.1 2022 was a difficult year with a number of pressures affecting the budget and the finances. There was a slow build up of occupancy in services most affected by Covid-19 which affected the financial outturn. However, the finance group were pleased to note the overall progress in this area by the end of the year which was the consequence of strenuous effort in the Older People Services teams. The price of energy had an impact as did the inflationary rise in most cost centres, including food. The biggest financial impact, however, was the cost of agency staff as a result of the recruitment challenge and this remains a huge cause for concern.

15.2 The Board have set the Corporate Management Team the task of bringing forward a number of route maps to tackle each area in which there is a significant overspend and to bring each of these areas to balance. That may mean that decisions have to be taken about restructuring, resizing or even closing services where no other way forward can be found. Work to reduce agency costs is being undertaken as is work to boost income. The financial projection for 2023 continues to show a significant deficit of £(2,326)k, including both property and IT investments. A number of mitigating factors have been identified which will improve the current forecast and support cash flow.

15.3 The route maps will also help identify areas of potential investment or change in focus. The need for services based on current demographic information remains high and is set to grow as a result of a number of factors including people living longer, Covid-19 recovery and the current cost of living crisis. The recent report 'Leave no one behind'³ is the most recent exploration of health inequalities in Scotland and contains stark information about drugs deaths, child poverty and suicide rates in young men specifically.

- Scotland's population is projected to age. The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to grow by 29.7% by mid 2045, from 1.06 million to 1.37 million. 90,000 people in Scotland currently live with dementia at any one time and this is also projected to rise. Those with dementia are more likely to need the support of a care home as their illness progresses compared to the general population of older people.
- The estimated number of individuals with problem drug use in Scotland is 57,300 – almost 1 in 60 of the population aged between 15 and 64. There were 1,092 suspected drug deaths between January and December 2022.
- 1 in every 4 people in Scotland are likely to experience a mental health problem at some point in their life with suicide, alcohol and drugs currently showing as the leading causes of death for men aged 15 – 44 years old, accounting for two-thirds of absolute inequalities in total mortality at that age. Socioeconomic trends also point to younger men being at greater risk of poor future health through reduced earnings potential.
- Child poverty in Scotland is on the increase. The health and experiences of infants and children in their early years show that relative and absolute inequalities have widened for infant immunisation uptake and risk of obesity at the start of primary school. Absolute inequalities widened in low birth weight, relative inequalities have widened in infant mortality and development concerns at age 27–30 months. Meanwhile there has been no significant improvement in the poverty-related attainment gap for primary school and secondary age pupils.

15.4 The results of the current work being done to bring services to balance and invest in new initiatives will be taken forward into the detailed budget preparation for 2024.

16 ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES TASK GROUP ON CROSSREACH

16.1 Information and support has been offered to the task group throughout the past year and the recommendations of that group are still under consideration, by the Trustees. Since 2019, and the recommendations of the Special Commission in that year, the future of CrossReach in terms of the relationship with the Church of Scotland has been uncertain. It has been good to see progress made in this area. Settling this issue is necessary to help the CrossReach Board to plan for the future with some degree of certainty. The focussed attention of the group has been welcome and the Board will discuss any impact on the operations of CrossReach with the Trustees, once the recommendations are known.

17. REFERENCES

- 17.1** 1 – <https://bit.ly/3mGXa6V>
- 17.2** 2 – <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-conversation-inform-new-dementia-strategy-discussion-paper/>
- 17.3** 3 – <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/leave-no-one-behind>

18. ADDENDUM

18.1 Sarah Wood has served with the Social Care Council since 2017, taking up the role as Vice Convener in 2020 just as the Council was taking steps to bring in a much more streamlined and targeted governance process and structure. She has been an invaluable member of the Council (CrossReach Board) bringing with her extensive experience of senior management positions within Local Authorities in both Scotland and England and from the voluntary sector as chairperson of Turning Point (England). Sarah served on the Finance Committee as well as the CrossReach 150 years working group, most recently chairing the HR and Quality Group. She was a great support to the organisation throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and has been a passionate advocate in championing staff wellbeing. Sarah is known for her sharp observations, incisive questions and her good humoured support of the Convener and all at CrossReach. We owe her a huge debt of gratitude and wish her well for the future.

In the name of the Social Care Council (known as CrossReach Board)

THOM RIDDELL, Convener
SARAH WOOD, Vice Convener
VIV DICKENSON, Chief Executive Officer

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Appendix 1 – List of CrossReach Services**Adult Services****Justice Services**

- Dick Stewart Service (Glasgow)

Homelessness

- Cale House (Inverness)
- Cunningham House (Edinburgh)
- Kirkhaven Project (Glasgow)

Learning Disabilities

- Eskmills (Edinburgh)
- The Bungalow (Stonehaven)
- Threshold Edinburgh
- Threshold Glasgow
- Threshold Support Services (South Lanarkshire)
- Threshold Housing and Residential Services (South Lanarkshire)

Mental Health

- Allartion (Glasgow)
- Gaberston House (Alloa)
- Morven Day Services (Kilmarnock)
- Lewis Street (Stornoway)
- The Umbrella (Irvine)

Substance Use Services

- Beechwood House (Inverness)
- Dochas Housing Support (Stornoway)
- CrossReach Abstinence Recovery Service (Glasgow)
- Rankeillor Initiative (Edinburgh)
- Tayside Support Service (Dundee)
- Whiteinch Move on Service (Glasgow)

Children and Family Services**Looked After Children (7 small residential houses)**

- Carraig View (Port Glasgow)
- Dumbrook House (Strathblane)
- Finniescroft Farm (Lennoxton)
- Millmuir Farm (Gargunnock)
- Mount Pleasant (Dalry)
- Rockwood House (Beith)
- The Old Lodge (Stirlingshire)
- Erskine Waterfront Campus

Children With Disabilities

- The Mallard, The Garratt & GO2 (Glasgow)

Community Services / Early Intervention

- Daisy Chain Early Years Project (Glasgow)
- Perth Prison Visitors Support and Advice Centre
- Polmont Prison Visitor Centre

Counselling, Support & Training

- Specialities: Perinatal; Children and Young People; General Adult; Addiction Recovery and Workplace Counselling.
- Counselling & Recovery (Edinburgh)
- Perinatal East (Edinburgh)
- Confidential Conversations (Nationwide)
- Sunflower Garden (Edinburgh)
- Tom Allan Service (Glasgow)
- Bluebell Perinatal (Glasgow)
- Moray Counselling (Moray)
- Inverness Counselling (Inverness)

Older People Services

- Adams House (Elderslie) – Dementia & Heart for Art in the Care Home
- Balmedie House (Balmedie)
- Bellfield (Banchory)
- Cameron House (Inverness) – Dementia
- Clashfarquhar House (Stonehaven)
- Cumnor Hall (Ayr) – Dementia & Heart for Art in the Care Home
- Glasgow Day Opportunities
- Heart for Art, Bankfoot
- Heart for Art, Broughty Ferry
- Heart for Art, Carluke
- Heart for Art, Carluke – Carers
- Heart for Art, Edinburgh (Morningside)
- Heart for Art, Edinburgh (Charteris Centre)
- Heart for Art, Galashiels
- Heart for Art, Garelochhead
- Heart for Art, Glasgow (Broomhill)
- Heart for Art, Kirkcudbright
- Heart for Art, Musselburgh
- Heart for Art, Stonehaven
- Heart for Art, Dunfermline
- Morlich House (Edinburgh)
- Oversteps (Dornoch)
- Queen's Bay Lodge (Edinburgh)
- South Beach House (Ardrossan)
- St Margaret's House (Polmont) – Dementia & Heart For Art in the Care Home
- The Elms Care Home (Edinburgh) – Dementia & Heart for Art in the Care Home
- The Oasis Bankfoot
- The Oasis Garelochhead
- The Tryst Day Care Centre (Pitlochry)
- Walter & Joan Gray Care Home (Shetland)
- Walter & Joan Gray Day Care (Shetland)
- Whinnieknowe (Nairn)
- Williamwood House (Glasgow) – Dementia & Heart For Art in the Care Home

Further information on our services can be found on our website www.crossreach.org.uk

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Commend the Guild for ways in which they support the members and encourage and develop their spiritual growth (*Section 2.3*).
3. Encourage men across the church to consider joining the Guild (*Section 2.6*).
4. Celebrate the opening of a new Guild in Ellon (*Section 3.1*).
5. Congratulate the Guild and the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia on the development of the green canopy for Malawi (*Section 4.2.4.2*).
6. Encourage uniting congregations to ensure that the Guild is involved in discussions and enabled to explore ways in which Guilds merge or work in new ways (*Section 5.1.3*).
7. Commend Guilds in Forth Valley and Clydesdale for piloting a new way of working together and recommend to other Presbyteries and Guilds Together Groups that they explore new ways in which they can work together to support the greater involvement of Guilds in the mission of the Church (*Section 2.1*).
8. Welcome the establishment of the Young Adults Guild and encourage congregations and Presbyteries to promote this group to their young adults (*Section 6.1.4*).
9. Congratulate the Guild on the work of its Project Partnership Scheme 2021-24 and recognise the important issues tackled and vital monies raised.

Report**1. WEE SEEDS, BIG TREES****1.1 'I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.'**

1.1.1 Another year has gone by, seeds have been planted and harvests taken in; and it has been another year in which Guilds across Scotland have been engaged in worship, prayer, action and fellowship.

1.1.2 The report is written acknowledging the role played by those who have gone before and those who serve today in planting and nurturing seeds, but recognising that it is God alone who has given the growth.

1.1.3 Similarly, as we plant now we have confidence that with God's help it will bear fruit in the future just as a farmer plants in the spring trusting that the harvest will come in the autumn. In the same way we need to plant seeds which will grow the Guild. We need to plant to provide for future generations just as in the past seeds were planted for us to reap the good fruits.

2. SEEDS OF GROWTH

2.1 Wee seeds, big trees explores the idea of growth, both physical and spiritual. We are where we are because of the people who nurtured us both physically and spiritually to make us the people we have become.

2.2 In the lives of Guild members, the support and encouragement they get from each other help them to explore their faith in new ways.

2.3 The Annual Theme and Discussion Guide, produced by Guild members, provides valuable material to support Bible study, prayer and action, individually and collectively, to enable spiritual growth to develop.

2.4 This year we have developed a new monthly resource that encourages members to explore issues such as trust, peace and celebration. These resources have been written by people across the Church and are a way of helping further develop spiritual growth.

2.5 The growth of summer Guilds has enabled a whole new group of people to be part of the Guild family. These groups challenge us to be open to new possibilities and new ways of working, and in doing so we see growth.

2.6 In 1997, our name changed from the Church of Scotland Woman's Guild to the Church of Scotland Guild. In the intervening years a number of men have joined the Guild and this has again been true this year but there is potential for further expansion and we continue to explore and encourage men to join the Guild.

2.7 The number of people in Scotland living with an eating disorder is significant. Through our ongoing work with our Project Partner, Beat, we have been able to increase the number of people receiving support and advice. In particular the impact of eating disorders on men has been a focus for work this year. We hope to see this work develop further in the coming year by building closer relationships with those involved in work in schools.

2.8 When the Guild was established over 135 years ago, one of the primary aims was to increase the influence and impact of women in the church. Over these years that has certainly happened and we celebrate the many and varied ways in which women are active in the work and witness of our church. In Brazil, our project with UNIDA – which means "together" in Portuguese – is at the forefront of pioneering education that transforms the lives of young Brazilian women and develops them for future leadership in faith communities and in wider society.

3. SEEDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

- 3.1** During the year a new Guild was established in Ellon, where the congregation recognised the ways in which having a Guild supported the mission of their congregation. They are meeting monthly and are encouraged by the number of people who have joined them.
- 3.2** Uptake of our Guild enews continues to grow, providing us with a monthly opportunity to share good news stories from across the globe and encourage Guilds to look at the different ways in which they can work in their local community.
- 3.2.1** Similarly, using social media enables us to reach people who are not always familiar with our work but who have engaged in our worship, come along to events and been encouraged to join local branches.
- 3.3** In Uganda, the Sunflower Sanctuary that is being built for children with additional support needs is almost completed and the roof has been put on the building. This sanctuary, which will provide daily education through the medium of the arts for children who are amongst the most marginalised, will be invaluable in challenging social stereotypes and will allow the children to realise their potential.
- 3.4** Closer to home, our work with Home for Good is encouraging Christians to think about ways in which they can support people who foster and adopt vulnerable children in communities across Scotland as well as considering if this might be an option for them. There are increasing numbers of children in Scotland who find themselves requiring support in this way and we are keen to encourage congregations and Presbyteries to explore what role they can play in supporting these children and young people.
- 3.5** One of the most encouraging events in the Guild calendar is our Annual Gathering where Guild members, together with representatives of sister organisations, come together to share, celebrate and look forward to the work God has for us in the year ahead. This year was no exception.
- 3.5.1** We returned to the Assembly Hall following the successful event in 2021 and despite changing the date following the sad death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the reconvened date coinciding with a national rail strike, more than 500 Guild members and friends were able to share in the day.
- 3.5.2** We were also joined online by Guilds across the country. In particular we were able to chat with Guild members from Ardoch Guild who shared their experiences of the day.
- 3.5.3** The day included an address by the Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Iain Greenshields, who provided encouragement and challenge to our members to focus on the importance and impact of prayer in our individual and collective Christian witness.
- 3.5.4** Our keynote speaker this year was Rev David Clark, who encouraged us to reimagine the Psalms through the landscape of Scotland. He also encouraged us to remind ourselves of the people and situations that have planted significant seeds in our lives and shaped us into the people we are today.
- 3.5.5** Clydeside Singers, a community-based singing group for over 50's from Inverclyde, had people laughing, singing and also emotional as they shared in our programme.
- 3.5.6** The day also was the judging of our annual Convener's Challenge with participants producing a traybake. The champion baker this year was from West Lothian Guilds Together.
- 3.5.7** The day culminated in the installation of our new National Convener, who challenged the members to continue to plant new seeds of hope, love and faith in the year ahead.

4. SEEDS OF LOVE

- 4.1** From the Guild's inception, serving others with love has been at the very heart of who we are. These seeds of love have grown and developed, be that in building homes for families in Rwanda, traumatised after years of conflict, or working with the Lodging House Mission to provide practical, social and emotional support to homeless, vulnerable and socially excluded people. This year the Guild has continued to plant seeds of love in the hearts of people in Scotland and further afield.
- 4.2 Malawi**
- 4.2.1** We continue to develop our partnerships with the Guilds of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia. We have shared in prayer, in worship and in faith development.
- 4.2.2** As a Guild we welcome the many opportunities that come from our relationship with our brothers and sisters in Malawi. Our love for each other and mutual respect is enabling us to develop and sustain meaningful relationships.
- 4.2.3** Our twinnings between Guilds Together in Ayr and District, North Ayrshire, Shetland and Dunbartonshire with Presbyterial Guilds in Bandawe, Milala, Dwangwa and Mzuzu respectively have continued to develop during the past year. Changes in personnel on both sides have meant that new relationships are being built and friendships formed.
- 4.2.3.1** We are now beginning to plan to have an exchange, with representatives of each of our twinned areas coming to Scotland in 2024.
- 4.2.4** In 2022, in conjunction with people from across Scotland, the Guild decided to take part in planting a green canopy to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. However, the focus of Guild planting would be in Malawi, a Commonwealth country with which we have strong links.
- 4.2.4.1** The Guild believed that by planting trees in Malawi rather than Scotland we would have a greater immediate impact as Malawi is a country where deforestation is significant and climate change has a disproportionate impact on some of the poorest people.

4.2.4.2 With the death of the Queen it was agreed that this would also form our lasting tribute to her life and reign. Working alongside our Church of Scotland Mission partner, Gary Brough and the Synod, a plan has been developed to establish a tree nursery in Mzuzu and wood lots in each twinned area. These wood lots will provide ground cover trees, trees for commercial timbering and fruit trees that will generate income for the Guild locally to enable them to carry on their work in outreach and social care. Planting these trees will be the living embodiment of the wee seeds, big trees theme and to date xxxxxxxx has been raised

4.3 Love in action is something close to the hearts of Guild members. Sometimes that is a practical thing like picking up the phone to a bereaved member; sometimes it is supporting a local Boys' Brigade Company to teach boys to cook healthy meals on a budget.

4.3.1 In Kazunzu, Tanzania, that love in action is to build homes for orphaned children who are being supported by the Vine Trust. Already eight homes have been built providing a loving home to 25 children. These children have been fostered by a family and are being brought up as a loving, caring family. For these children they now have the support to help them be the very best that they can be. Work will now continue on the next block of homes so that a further group of children can be cared for.

4.3.2 Our project with Pioneers sees love in action lived out each day by people being paid a fair price for the cocoa beans they produce and women and men being treated equally in a culture where that is not always the case. We now are able to sell chocolate produced by those farmers, enabling them to increase their income and provide for their own family. The project is in a very practical way showing the love of God in action.

5. SEEDS OF CHANGE

5.1 Change is never easy but the changes to congregations and Presbyteries will without doubt impact on the Guild. The Guild has, over recent years sought to change how we work in a range of practical ways.

5.1.2 One of the most obvious changes has been to move in many places from an evening to an afternoon meeting. This change recognises that an important part of the Guild's ministry is to those who are older or who have recently retired. This move has seen a growth in membership for many of these Guilds.

5.1.3 There is little doubt that merging congregations will have a significant impact on the number of Guild branches we support but we have already seen evidence that these mergers can see a growth in actual Guild members, particularly where one of the uniting charges does not currently have a Guild. We want to encourage Guilds and congregations to use this time as an opportunity for growth and not a reason for decline.

5.1.4 Similarly, there have been Kirk Sessions who have encouraged their Guilds to consider meeting in community halls, hotels and individual homes when a physical church building will no longer be available, recognising the role of the Guild in the Christian witness of their congregation and we would encourage others to think about this as an option.

5.2 Presbytery reorganisation brings significant challenge for the operation of the Guild at this level. The size and geography of some Presbyteries are simply too large for Guilds Together Groups to come together as one. However, we are working with Guilds Together Groups and Presbyteries to consider how our relationships will develop and how the number of Guilds Together Groups can be consolidated to reduce the workload on Guild members. The solution will be one which meets the needs of the Guild but still enables us to engage effectively with Presbyteries.

5.2.1 The Guilds Together Groups in the Presbytery of Forth Valley and Clydesdale have come together in a pilot to work together as a joint committee drawn from the four Guilds Together groups. This pilot will help us to plan more effectively for the new structure.

5.2.2 To enable much of that change to take place, we have reorganised our staff team to now have two staff members who specifically support our work at a Guilds Together level.

- Joanne Brown has joined us as Regional Development Worker for the East of Scotland with responsibility for communications
- Christine Fulcher has joined us as Regional Development Worker for the West of Scotland with responsibility for resources

We are encouraged by the skills that they add to the staff team and the support they will be able to give to Guilds Together groups.

6. SEEDS OF HOPE

6.1 In 1996, a Guild Project Partnership with the Board of Parish Education entitled 'Bridging the Gap' raised £105,392 to establish the National Youth Assembly.

6.1.2 In the intervening years the Guild developed strong bonds with the young people who took part in the Youth Assembly and those who came as Commissioners to the General Assembly. The contributions of these young people to the future shape of the Church were important and the number who are now in full time ministry in various forms is significant.

6.1.3 With the folding of the National Youth Assembly and the subsequent reduction in participation with young people, the Guild was keen to help find a new way to give young people a voice and a hope for the future.

6.1.4 In June 2022, conversations took place with a group of young people and it was agreed to pursue the setting up of the Young Adults Guild. The Young Adults Guild is a vision for fellowship, service and representation for all young people 18-30 in the Church of Scotland and beyond.

6.1.5 The inaugural meeting online in January on the theme of empowerment saw 20 young people meet and share together. Subsequent meetings with Starchild and on the theme of justice and peace have seen those numbers increase and an in-person event is now being planned.

6.1.6 Having a place where young adults can meet, connect and encourage each other has given the young adults and the Guild a real sense of hope for the future.

6.2 Over the past year, the Guild has developed a positive working relationship with both the Faith Impact Forum and the Faith Nurture Forum. We are keen to see how this relationship can develop and help strengthen the work of the mission of the church in a strategic way.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 As the Guild, we recognise that nothing we do bears fruit without the nurturing of others and the growth given by God. The privilege to be God's fellow workers constantly reminds us of whose we are and whom we serve.

'For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.'

In the name of the Committee

HELEN ECKFORD, *National Convener*
KAREN GILLON, *General Secretary*

Appendix**Finance and Statistics**

Membership 9,270

Groups 451

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022			
General Fund Income	£	General Fund Expenditure	£
Members' Contributions	133,197	Management and Admin	161,548
Donations and Grants	15,008	Objects Expenditure	26,055
Sale of Goods	11,149	Cost of Sales	6,693
Project Support	20,807		
Other	21,640		
Total	201,801	Total	194,296

DONATIONS TO THE WORK OF THE CHURCH			
Sums given by Guilds in 2022, based on returns received to 31 March 2023, were as follows:			
			£
To Ministry and Mission Funds via Congregations			22,751.00
To Congregational Funds			88,342.04
To work of the Church, including projects			133,309.56
To work outwith the Church			44,567.68
Total			288,970.28

PROJECT DONATIONS	
1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023	
	£
BEAT – There is Hope	32,556.57
PIONEERS – Chocolate Heaven	24,804.05
STARCHILD – Finding the Light	32,069.05
VINE TRUST – Kazuznu Village	40,038.00
HOME FOR GOOD – A Home for Good	44,236.54
UNIDA – Hear our Voice	17,962.54
Total	191,666.75

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the reviewed remit of the Committee set out in section 2.1 (*Section 2*).
3. Remind every Kirk Session, Presbytery, Employing Agency and department of the National Office, that no person may be employed or appointed to undertake or carry out regulated work unless that person is a member of the PVG Scheme, or the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or has provided the Safeguarding Service with an appropriate overseas check and has been cleared by the Safeguarding Service (*Section 3.1.3*).
4. Instruct the Safeguarding Committee to amend the Ministers Learning Pathway for all those who are currently in role, to enable them to complete their safeguarding training requirements as soon as reasonably practical, whilst retaining the mandatory requirement that training be undertaken within the last five-year period (*Section 4 and Appendix 1*).
5. Authorise the Safeguarding Service to audit periodically congregational safeguarding records and practice and instruct Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to facilitate and co-operate with such audits (*Section 5.1.3*).
6. Instruct the Safeguarding Service to begin work to update the 2009 report 'For of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven' and report back to the General Assembly of 2024 (*Section 6.1.3*).
7. Note the availability of the new revised Safeguarding Handbook which can be found on the Safeguarding Service area of the Church's public website and:
 - a. Encourage congregations, Presbyteries and staff of the National Office to become familiar with the revised Handbook; and
 - b. Encourage congregations to provide a link to the Handbook on their own Church website (*Section 7.1.3*).
8. Encourage all those in congregations and Presbyteries who are no longer undertaking regulated work for the Church to contact Disclosure Scotland and the Safeguarding Service as soon as possible so that their records can be brought up to date (*Section 8.1.1*).
9. Note the ongoing work to bring a Survivor Policy to the General Assembly of 2024 (*Section 9*).
10. Note the good ongoing working relationships with Boys' and Girls' Brigade, CrossReach and the United Reformed Church in Scotland (*Section 10*).

Report

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** 'Shepherd the flock of God which is among you as overseers:
not under compulsion, but willingly as God would have you;
not for personal gain, but eagerly;
not exercising lordship over the portion, but being examples to the flock'
1 Peter 5:1-4

1.1.2 1 Peter is not about safeguarding, but it is about church leadership and the balance of positions of power for the good of the flock. It is one of many passages about ministry, but what makes it unique, is its dealing with those who are set apart in positions of ministry (Sargent, 2021).^[1]

1.1.3 The Safeguarding Service works tirelessly over the year to ensure that leadership within the church emulates best practice, and robust safeguarding to ensure a safe church for all. As the church seeks to explore its ministry to all people throughout Scotland, the challenge is to ensure that we are constantly up to date and compliant with legal, safeguarding requirements. There is no room for appealing to any sense of privilege or exception to rules. We must be exemplary, "examples to the flock" in Peter's words.

2. SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE REMIT

2.1 In December 2022, the Safeguarding Committee reviewed its remit to ensure its focus on appropriate issues and its ongoing currency. The revised remit is:

- To agree and ensure the implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures to secure the protection of Church communities, including volunteers, paid office holders, employees and members of the public
- To oversee the Safeguarding Service to ensure satisfactory performance and service delivery
- To provide information and advice about good safeguarding practice to all agencies of the Church including congregations, Presbyteries, General Assembly standing committees and statutory corporations and to individuals within these bodies
- Working with Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries, to ensure that all agencies of the Church work within the parameters of, and comply with, the Safeguarding Act 2018
- To ensure that safe recruitment practices are implemented across the Church, including appropriate overseas checks

- To carry out risk assessments as required in relation to conviction and vetting information and ensure that covenants are in place for managing those who pose a risk
- To ensure that the Safeguarding Service has sufficient resources in place for efficient and effective running of the service
- To ensure that suitable safeguarding training is provided to all ministers, volunteers and paid workers undertaking regulated work, to staff of the national office, trustees and other relevant parties
- To provide safeguarding services to connected third party organisations as may be determined from time to time by the Committee
- To liaise with internal and external stakeholders on safeguarding matters

3. PROTECTING VULNERABLE GROUPS SCHEME (PVG)

3.1 Safeguarding Act (Act XVI 2018) (as amended by Acts XVIII 2020 and VII 2021)

3.1.1 In 2018, the Safeguarding Act was passed by the General Assembly. The Act requires that, whenever a worker is being recruited to undertake or carry out regulated work, they are members of the PVG Scheme before taking up their post.

3.1.2 The Safeguarding Service has seen a number of instances in the last year of people being put into post without being members of the PVG Scheme.

3.1.3 As a consequence, the Safeguarding Committee would like to reaffirm the Church of Scotland's commitment to safer recruitment practices by reminding every Kirk Session, Presbytery, Employing Agency and departments of the National Offices, that no person may be employed or appointed to undertake or carry out regulated work unless that person is a member of the PVG Scheme, or the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), or has provided the Safeguarding Service with an appropriate overseas check and has been cleared by the Safeguarding Service.

3.1.4 For the avoidance of doubt, 'cleared' by the Safeguarding Service means when the Safeguarding Co-ordinator or other appropriate person receives an e-mail from the Safeguarding Service advising of such.

4. SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

4.1 Ministers' Safeguarding Learning Pathway

4.1.1 Following the introduction of the Disclosure Act 2020, the Safeguarding Service reviewed its safeguarding training strategy. The review concluded that it would be best practice to introduce a tiered approach to learning, commensurate with a person's role in the Church. Subsequent to this review, the Safeguarding Service presented the 'Minister's Safeguarding Learning Pathway', to the General Assembly of 2022 which was agreed.

4.1.2 The Learning Pathway has timescales and compliance measures attached to it. From the significant number of enquiries into the Safeguarding Service, it is clear that the volume of people who are required to attend safeguarding training for the first time, or who are required to refresh their safeguarding training, is more significant than originally anticipated. In addition, the COVID 19 pandemic has negatively impacted the delivery of training over a prolonged period of time which now means that a large number of people need training at the same time which is placing an increased burden on Safeguarding Trainers who are already stretched.

4.1.3 The Safeguarding Service, congregations and Presbyteries are taking steps to increase the pool of safeguarding trainers to meet demand, and where appropriate, 'fast track' people with relevant professional expertise.

4.1.4 One of these steps is to create a central pool of safeguarding trainers who will provide safeguarding training to Presbyteries that require support to deliver the courses required of them. This is intended as an interim measure to bolster support to those Presbyteries that do not have trainers in place or have insufficient trainers to meet the demands of the training pathway.

4.1.5 In light of the above it is unlikely that all those who are currently in roles requiring safeguarding training will be able to meet the deadlines indicated in the pathway. The Safeguarding Service therefore recommends that the required training be undertaken as soon as reasonably practical, and as close to the recommended timescales as possible.

4.1.6 All those covered by the Ministers' Training Pathway are required to complete the Leadership Training within 6 months of being offered it, and must have completed Introductory and Advanced training courses before attending. As this training will be rolled out in the coming months, it is recommended that these courses be made a priority for ministers.

4.1.7 It remains a mandatory requirement for everyone covered by the learning pathway to have had training within the last five-year period, with best practice being the last three-year period.

5. AUDIT AND REVIEW OF CONGREGATIONAL SAFEGUARDING RECORDS AND PRACTICE

5.1 Audit and review of safeguarding records, policies, procedures, and working practices, is an essential part of safeguarding activity. It attempts to establish the strengths and areas for improvement of the activity. It helps us understand whether the work we are doing is having a positive impact on the lives of children, young people and protected adults. It recognises good quality work and identifies where improvement is needed.

5.1.1 The Safeguarding Service has its practice reviewed internally via a number of quality assurance processes and has been subject in the past (2018) to a wider independent review of its practice, policies, procedures and delivery of training. This review also encouraged greater engagement with Presbyteries in relation to their superintendence role with regard to record keeping and local practice.

5.1.2 The Safeguarding Service has, in part, engaged with Presbyteries around record keeping by auditing congregational registers (SG7) in 2019-2020. This exercise proved very fruitful and did help us to understand what we needed to do to strengthen recruitment practices and improve the recording of safeguarding training for people undertaking regulated work and for those with trustee responsibilities for safeguarding.

5.1.3 However, the Safeguarding Service currently has limited authority to audit congregational safeguarding records (i.e. the SG7 Congregational Register, the SG7 Presbytery Register and the SG11 Audit Checklist), or to ensure that advice or instruction provided by the service has been acted upon.

5.1.4 This is a gap which the Safeguarding Committee would like to close and we therefore seek authority from the General Assembly to undertake such audits both in response to specific circumstances and on a periodic basis previously agreed with the Presbytery concerned. The audit would be undertaken by the Safeguarding Service, possibly with representation from the Presbytery, and would include discussions with people in relevant safeguarding roles, the review of relevant paperwork and the review of the actions taken in response to safeguarding concerns in the congregation.

6. REVIEW OF THE REPORT 'FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN' 2009

6.1 Joint Report of the Mission and Discipleship Council and the Safeguarding Committee Forgiveness and Proportionality Group

6.1.1 In 2009, the Forgiveness and Proportionality Group published 'For of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven'. A report whose aim was to 'discover and set out how the theological concept of forgiveness in Christianity may shape the policy and practice of the Church in relation to the involvement of sex offenders in the life of congregations'.

6.1.2 As a result of the report, the Church developed a deeper understanding of the concept of forgiveness as it relates to sex offenders who want to be involved in the life of the Church, and helped develop further the robust processes and procedures that are now in place for managing sex offenders who pose a risk in the Church of Scotland. The Safeguarding Service currently works closely with partner agencies such as Police Scotland, Social Work services and congregational safeguarding panels, to manage sex offenders in the Church.

6.1.3 The Ministerial guidance to Responsible Authorities on the discharge of their obligations under the Management of Offenders etc. (Scotland) Act 2005, was updated in March 2022. As a result of this update and to acknowledge that the public protection arrangements (MAPPA) also includes violent offenders, the Safeguarding Committee believes now would be a good time to review the 'For of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven' 2009 report to ensure that we remain in line with good practice in managing those who pose a risk in Church communities. The intention would be to provide an update on progress of this work to the General Assembly of 2024.

7. SAFEGUARDING HANDBOOK AND SAFEGUARDING SOFTWARE SOLUTION

7.1 Online Safeguarding Handbook

7.1.1 In 2021, the Safeguarding Service, in collaboration with the Communications Department of the National Offices, began work to revise and condense six different Safeguarding handbooks into one single online handbook. The aim was to ensure that users could quickly and easily navigate to the specific areas of advice or guidance they need.

7.1.2 The Handbook is now complete and is available to view on the Safeguarding Service area of the Church's public website.

7.1.3 The Safeguarding Committee encourages congregations, Presbyteries and staff of the National Offices to become familiar with the newly revised Safeguarding Handbook and encourage congregations to provide a link to the Handbook on their own Church website.

7.2 Safeguarding Software Solution

7.2.1 The Safeguarding Service has worked over the last year with the IT department of the National Offices to implement a new software solution to improve record keeping in relation to safeguarding concerns, criminal record checks and safeguarding training. The new system went 'live' in February 2023.

7.2.2 In the coming year we hope to be able to provide regular reports to session clerks and Presbyteries on those that currently hold a PVG Scheme membership or a check via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for undertaking regulated work for the Church of Scotland. The report will include when individuals last had safeguarding training and when they need to re-register for the PVG Scheme or be rechecked via DBS.

8. DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND ACT 2020 UPDATE

8.1 Have you stopped doing regulated work for the Church of Scotland?

8.1.1 It is anticipated that the Disclosure Scotland Act 2020 will be fully implemented by March 2024. The Safeguarding Service will keep congregations and Presbyteries informed of milestones in the implementation process as and when we receive information from Disclosure Scotland. Meanwhile, if you have not already done so, the Safeguarding Committee strongly encourages you to let Disclosure Scotland and the Safeguarding Service know if you have stopped doing regulated work for the Church of Scotland. This has become increasingly important in readiness for the transition onto the new PVG Scheme.

9. SURVIVOR POLICY UPDATE

9.1 The Safeguarding Committee, in collaboration with Faith Action, CrossReach, Integrity (working to end violence against women) and representatives from congregations, have continued work to better understand how well the Church responds to the needs of survivors of abuse. We hope to bring to the General Assembly of 2024 a finalised 'Survivor Policy' which reflects good practice in this area.

10. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

10.1 The Safeguarding Service has recently reviewed the Service Level Agreements it has with CrossReach, Boys' Brigade and the United Reformed Church in Scotland to ensure continued good practice and safeguarding of service users and members of the organisations.

10.1.2 In addition, by the time of the General Assembly we hope to have a finalised Service Level Agreement between the Girls' Brigade and the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service.

10.1.3 The Service Level Agreements are reviewed on a regular basis and good working relationships are well established and continue with each of the stakeholders mentioned above.

In the name of the Committee

ADAM DILLON, *Convener*
FIONA REYNOLDS, *Vice Convener*
JULIE MAIN, *Service Manager*

Appendix 1

Ministers Safeguarding Learning Pathway

Introductory Safeguarding Training (approx. 2.5 hours) – delivered locally by volunteer safeguarding trainers and the safeguarding training officer where necessary.

Learning includes understanding what safeguarding means (and child/adult protection), national guidance and policy, types of harm and abuse, the four R's and your role in reporting.



Advanced Safeguarding Training (approx. 2.5 – 3 hours) (*replaces Safeguarding Coordinator Training and Safeguarding Panel Training*) – delivered locally by volunteer safeguarding trainers and the safeguarding training officer where necessary.

Learning includes understanding the role of the Safeguarding Coordinator and Safeguarding Panel, raised awareness of resources available for ensuring best practice in safeguarding, understanding responsibilities regarding training, management and support of workers, understanding responsibilities regarding Safeguarding referrals and raised awareness of the Church Safeguarding Policies for example in relation to Managing those who pose a risk and Responding to Domestic Abuse.



Leadership Safeguarding Training (approx. 3 hours with some reflective work) – delivered nationally by the Safeguarding Service

Learning will be reflective and collaborative and will seek to include content such as analysing the leadership behaviours needed to promote a healthy safeguarding culture (including how to involve and empower others) and feel confident and determined to demonstrate them, reflecting on the kind of healthy culture that is protective, preventative, healing, and restorative, reflecting on the impact that abuse and trauma has on individuals' lives, relationships, and interaction in a community setting and looking at lessons learned.

Moving forward, our proposal would be that the pathway is completed in this order:

Introductory Safeguarding Training: Undertaken before or within 6 months of starting training

Advanced Safeguarding Training: Completed within the first half of your probation

Leadership Safeguarding Training: Within the first 2 years of your training for ministry ending. It is recommended that this training is refreshed every 3 years. It is a mandatory requirement every 5 years.

As detailed earlier, in relation to relevant Safeguarding refresher training we recommend that the highest level of training previously completed is undertaken as a mandatory requirement every 5 years (recommended every 3 years).

Ministers' Safeguarding Learning Pathway

ROLE & COURSES RECOMMENDED	Introductory Safeguarding Training	Advanced Safeguarding Training	Leadership Safeguarding Training	Trustee Safeguarding Training
Ministers ^[2]	➡	➡	➡	
MDS staff and Deacons	➡	^[3] ➡	^[4] ➡	

The Safeguarding Learning Pathway and Other Church Roles

ROLE & COURSES RECOMMENDED	Introductory Safeguarding Training	Advanced Safeguarding Training	Leadership Safeguarding Training	Trustee Safeguarding Training
All those undertaking regulated work (paid or voluntary)	➡			
Safeguarding Coordinators and Safeguarding Panel Members	➡	➡		
Interim Moderators (who are doing regulated work)	➡	➡		
Interim moderators (who are not doing regulated work)				➡
Trustees				➡

If you are unsure about what training is required for a certain role please contact the Safeguarding Service. You can also find more detail about these courses on the Safeguarding Service section of the Church of Scotland website [Training | The Church of Scotland](#).

Compliance Pathway and Associated Timescales for Essential Safeguarding Training: Ministers, Elders (and other congregational trustees), those doing regulated work (at congregational and Presbytery level)

This compliance pathway will be subject to review by the Safeguarding Committee on an ongoing basis.

Ministers^[5]

<p>1. Presbytery should assess whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ample opportunities have been provided to attend the appropriate safeguarding training (at least two or three suitable opportunities) • There are exceptional circumstances for the individual not attending the appropriate safeguarding training e.g. sickness absence. <p>If either of these situations apply, re-assess when reasonable opportunities are available and/or exceptional circumstances have changed.</p>
<p>2. If neither of those circumstances apply (or other circumstances which could be deemed to be exceptional) then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presbytery Clerk should initiate an informal discussion to encourage attendance, discuss the importance of safeguarding training and provide guidance on opportunities. An open discussion should be had about any concerns which the individual faces in engaging with the relevant safeguarding training. • This meeting should be recorded (albeit informally) and the Presbytery Clerk should write to the individual to confirm agreements made/any actions and the associated timeframe. • During this meeting if agreement can be reached for the individual to attend the relevant safeguarding training then a timeframe should be set (approximately 3 months or so dependent on the next available training courses)
<p>3. Review at agreed timeframe (in point 2) to ensure relevant safeguarding training has been successfully completed. If not, continue to next step.</p>
<p>4. If the concern has not been dealt with satisfactorily</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A letter detailing the fact that non- attendance may result in a referral under the Discipline Act should be sent and a more formal meeting should be arranged by the Presbytery Clerk to discuss next steps. • There is an option at this meeting to set another timeframe for completion of safeguarding training and any actions or outcomes of the meeting should be recorded.
<p>5. Review at agreed timeframe (in point 4) to ensure relevant safeguarding training has been successfully completed. If not continue to next step.</p>
<p>6. Another letter may be sent from the Presbytery Clerk detailing the need to attend the appropriate safeguarding training and the potential for a referral under Discipline Act.</p>
<p>7. If no resolution reached, Presbytery should treat the ongoing failure as a Discipline matter and refer under the Discipline Act. At this point the Law Department would be consulted.</p>

Trustee/Elder

<p>1. In the first instance, Presbytery should work with the relevant congregation and advise the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Panel Members to establish whether there are exceptional circumstances for an elder's non-attendance (e.g. illness, infirmity, recent bereavement, lack of training opportunities etc)</p> <p>If none of these circumstances apply, Presbytery should advise the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and/or Panel Members to have an informal discussion with the elder to try to come to an agreement before the matter is referred to the Presbytery officially. If no resolution can be found, the matter can be referred to Presbytery to take forward.</p>
<p>2. Presbytery should assess whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ample opportunities have been provided to attend the appropriate safeguarding training (at least two or three suitable opportunities) • There are exceptional circumstances for the individual not attending the appropriate safeguarding training e.g. sickness absence <p>If either of these situations apply, reassess when reasonable opportunities are available and/or exceptional circumstances have changed.</p>

3. If neither of those circumstances apply (or other circumstances which could be deemed to be exceptional) then:

- Presbytery Clerk should initiate an informal discussion to encourage attendance, discuss the importance of safeguarding training and provide guidance on opportunities. An open discussion should be had about any concerns which the individual faces in engaging with the relevant safeguarding training.
- This meeting should be recorded (albeit informally) and the Presbytery Clerk should write to the individual to confirm agreements made/any actions and the associated timeframe.
- During this meeting if agreement can be reached for the individual to attend the relevant safeguarding training then a timeframe should be set (approximately 3 months or so dependent on the next available training courses)

4. Review at agreed timeframe to ensure relevant safeguarding training has been successfully completed. If not continue to next step.

5. If the concern has not been dealt with satisfactorily

- A letter detailing the fact that non-attendance may result in a referral under the Discipline Act should be sent and a more formal meeting should be arranged with the Presbytery Clerk to discuss next steps.
- There is an option at this meeting to set another timeframe for completion of safeguarding training and any actions or outcomes of the meeting should be recorded.

6. Review at agreed timeframe to ensure relevant safeguarding training has been successfully completed. If not continue to next step.

7. Another letter may be sent from the Presbytery Clerk detailing the need to attend the appropriate safeguarding training and the potential for a referral under Discipline Act.

8. If no resolution reached, Presbytery should treat it as a Discipline matter and refer under the Discipline Act. At this point the Law Department would be consulted.

Those undertaking regulated work (appointed by Presbytery)**1. Presbytery and the individual's line manager should assess:**

- Whether ample opportunities have been provided to attend the appropriate safeguarding training (at least two or three suitable opportunities)
- There are exceptional circumstances for the individual not attending the appropriate safeguarding training e.g. sickness absence

If either of these situations apply, reassess when reasonable opportunities are available and/or exceptional circumstances have changed.

2. If neither of these circumstances apply

- **an informal meeting should be arranged with the Presbytery Clerk and individual line manager** to encourage attendance, discuss the importance of safeguarding training and provide guidance on opportunities. An open discussion should be had about any concerns which the individual faces in engaging with the relevant safeguarding training
- A note of this meeting should be made and timeframe for completion of training agreed.

3. Review at agreed timeframe (in point 2) to ensure relevant safeguarding training has been successfully completed. If not continue to next step.

4. Arrange a more formal meeting with the Presbytery Clerk and individual's line manager to discuss non-attendance. Another reasonable timeframe can be agreed and a letter confirming this should be sent to the individual.

5. Review at agreed timeframe (in point 4). If training has not been completed or an appropriate resolution agreed, convene a meeting to agree next steps.

6. Letter should be sent to individual detailing the potential outcome of non-attendance at essential recommended training

7. If no resolution is reached, the advice from the Safeguarding Service is that the individual be removed from regulated work with children and/or protected adults. This is to acknowledge that they may present an ongoing risk to vulnerable groups if not suitably trained. If an individual is a **paid** employee, advice should be sought from the Law Department before any further action is taken.




8. Outcome should be recorded by the Presbytery and communicated to the individual.







Those undertaking regulated work (*appointed by Kirk Session at congregational level*)

<p>1. Safeguarding Coordinator and/or Safeguarding Panel assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether ample opportunities have been provided to attend the appropriate safeguarding training (at least two or three suitable opportunities) • There are exceptional circumstances for the individual not attending the appropriate safeguarding training e.g. sickness absence <p>If either of these situations apply, reassess when reasonable opportunities are available and/or exceptional circumstances have changed.</p>
<p>2. If neither of these circumstances apply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an informal meeting should be arranged with the safeguarding coordinator to encourage attendance, discuss the importance of safeguarding training and provide guidance on opportunities. An open discussion should be had about any concerns which the individual faces in engaging with the relevant safeguarding training • A note of this meeting should be made and timeframe for completion of training agreed.
<p>3. Review at agreed timeframe (in point 2) to ensure relevant safeguarding training has been successfully completed. If not continue to next step.</p>
<p>4. Arrange a more formal meeting with the Safeguarding Panel and individual to discuss non-attendance. Another reasonable timeframe can be agreed and a letter confirming this should be sent to the individual.</p>
<p>5. Review at agreed timeframe (in point 4). If training has not been completed or an appropriate resolution agreed, convene a meeting of your Safeguarding Panel to agree next steps.</p>
<p>6. Letter should be sent to individual detailing the potential outcome of non-attendance at essential recommended training</p>
<p>7. If no resolution is reached, the advice from the Safeguarding Service is that the individual be removed from regulated work with children and/or protected adults. This is to acknowledge that they may present an ongoing risk to vulnerable groups if not suitably trained. If an individual is a paid employee, advice should be sought from the Law Department before any further action is taken.</p>
<p>8. Outcome should be recorded by the Kirk Session and communicated to the individual.</p>







TIMESCALES FOR INITIATING COMPLIANCE PATHWAY





Timeframe for initiating compliance pathway for Ministers

NEW IN ROLE	Introductory Safeguarding Training	Advanced Safeguarding Training	Leadership Safeguarding Training	
	Completed within 3 months of starting first placement or as soon as reasonably practical 	Within the first half of full-time probationary placement or as soon as reasonably practical 	Within the first 2 years of your ministry training ending or as soon as reasonably practical 	Complete Leadership Training no less frequently than every 5 years thereafter

ALREADY IN ROLE	Introductory Safeguarding Training	Advanced Safeguarding Training	Leadership Safeguarding Training	
If no training completed in last 3 years	Complete as soon as reasonably practical 	Complete by 30 June 2023 or as soon as reasonably practical 	Complete within 6 months of it first being offered 	Complete Leadership Training no less frequently than every 5 years thereafter
If you have attended Introductory Safeguarding Training in the last 3 years		Complete by 30 June 2023 or as soon as reasonably practical 	Complete within 6 months of it first being offered 	Complete Leadership Training no less frequently than every 5 years thereafter
If you have attended Safeguarding Panel or Safeguarding Coordinator Training in the past 3 years			Complete within 6 months of it first being offered 	Complete Leadership Training no less frequently than every 5 years thereafter

Timeframe for initiating compliance pathway for other Church Roles

NEW IN ROLE	Introductory Safeguarding Training	Advanced Safeguarding Training	Leadership Safeguarding Training	Trustee Safeguarding Training
All those undertaking regulated work (paid or voluntary)	Before starting or within 3 months of taking on role 			
Safeguarding Coordinators	Before starting in post 	Before starting in post 		
Safeguarding Panel Members & Interim Moderators	Before starting in post or within 3 months of taking on role 	Before starting in post or within 6 months of taking on role 		
Trustees				Before starting in office or within 3 months of becoming a trustee 

CURRENTLY IN ROLE AND NOT ATTENDED TRAINING IN THE LAST 5 YEARS	Introductory Safeguarding Training	Advanced Safeguarding Training	Leadership Safeguarding Training	Trustee Safeguarding Training
All those undertaking regulated work (paid or voluntary)	Complete by 30 June 2023 or as soon as reasonably practical 			
Safeguarding Coordinators		Complete by 30 June 2023 or as soon as reasonably practical 		
Safeguarding Panel Members & Interim Moderators		Complete by 30 June 2023 or as soon as reasonably practical 		
Trustees				Complete by 30 June 2023 or as soon as reasonably practical 

N.B. Refresher Training: All Church roles should complete the highest level of training previously completed no less frequently than every 5 years thereafter.

References

- [1] [Not for shameful gain: a Petrine theology of safeguarding - Benjamin Sargent, 2021 \(sagepub.com\)](https://www.sagepub.com)
- [2] 'Ministers' for the purposes of the Safeguarding Training Learning Pathway means parish ministers, Interim Ministers, Transition Ministers, auxiliary ministers, probationers, OLM, readers, locums and Armed Forces chaplains. The Learning Pathway for Deacons and MDS will be identified through their job descriptions; advice should be sought from the Safeguarding Service
- [3] Grey shading in the arrow indicates there may be a recommendation to attend the courses highlighted but it will depend on the persons Job Description. Please seek advice from the Safeguarding Service/HR.
- [4] See endnote 3
- [5] 'Ministers' for the purposes of the Safeguarding Training Learning Pathway, parish ministers, Interim Ministers, Transition Ministers, Associate Ministers, auxiliary ministers, probationers, OLM, readers, locums and Armed Forces chaplains. MDS and deacons who are appointed by the Church of Scotland national office will follow their HR procedures.

TRUSTEES OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HOUSING AND LOAN FUND FOR RETIRED MINISTERS AND WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS OF MINISTERS MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Appoint Rev Dawn Anne Laing as a Trustee of the Fund.

Report

1. AIM OF THE FUND

1.1 The Fund exists to support retired Church of Scotland ministers, and widows, widowers, separated or divorced spouses and separated or former civil partners of Church of Scotland ministers, in need of help with housing. The Trustees endeavour to provide assistance by way of either a house to rent or a house purchase loan in accordance with guidelines set, and regularly reviewed, by the Trustees. Guidance Notes incorporating these guidelines are available on the Church of Scotland website or can be requested from the Secretary at the Church offices. The Secretary may also be contacted by potential applicants to discuss their particular situation, and the assistance which the Trustees may be able to provide to them.

1.2 Help from the Fund takes one of two forms. A beneficiary of the Fund is either provided with a house to rent or with a loan to assist with a house purchase. Rents are charged at concessionary rates and loans are provided on favourable terms. Loans are granted up to 70 per cent of a house purchase price, subject to an overriding normal maximum of £25,000 for Standard Loans and, since January 2023, £175,000 for Shared Appreciation Loans.

2. HOUSING TRANSACTIONS: 2022

2.1 Assistance provided during 2022 to ministers, widows and widowers, and separated and divorced spouses, is detailed in Appendix 1 annexed to this Report. The property market continued to be buoyant with a supply and demand issue created by Covid-19. A more challenging mortgage market in the latter months of the year has contributed to signs of a settling of the market.

2.2 The Trustees owned 185 houses at the end of 2022. The houses purchased and those sold by the Trustees during that year, are detailed in Appendix 2, which also shows the average price of the houses purchased, and the average price of the houses disposed of. At the end of 2022, 6 houses were being marketed or prepared for sale.

3. RENTS AND RENTAL REVIEWS

3.1 At the start of a tenancy the Fund obtains a professional assessment of the Market Rent. Rents are charged at 50% of the Market Rent for Ministers, and separated or divorced spouses and separated or former civil partners of ministers and at 25% for widows, widowers and bereaved civil partners of ministers.

3.2 The Trustees considered carefully the level of annual rent increase. In light of the good financial position of the Fund, the Trustees decided that rents should not be increased in 2023.

3.3 Rental income has been sufficient to cover maintenance and repairs. Since the easing of Covid-19 restrictions, it has been possible for routine visits to rental properties to resume and to catch up with the maintenance work not able to be carried out because of the restrictions.

4. LOAN TRANSACTIONS: 2022

4.1 The Fund provides loans by way of Standard Loans, Shared Appreciation Loans, and Short Term Bridging Loans.

4.2 Standard Loans are granted up to a normal maximum limit of £25,000 at a rate of interest of two per cent for ministers and separated or divorced spouses and separated or former civil partners of ministers and one per cent for surviving widows, widowers or bereaved civil partners of ministers.

4.3 Shared Appreciation Loans, which link loan repayment values over their term to the value of the property concerned over the same period, were granted up to a normal maximum limit of £154,000. Currently rates of interest for such loans are one and a half per cent for ministers and separated or divorced spouses and separated or former civil partners of ministers and three quarters of a per cent for widows, widowers or bereaved civil partners of ministers. Visits by the Secretary to borrowers due their 5-yearly visit were resumed after the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

4.4 Short Term Bridging Loans are granted for a specific period, and in specific circumstances, at the discretion of the Trustees. Interest is charged at a rate equivalent to that permitted by HM Revenue & Customs without liability for benefit-in-kind taxation. At the time of writing this was two and a quarter per cent.

4.5 Details of each of the three types of loan outstanding as at 31st December 2022 are given in Appendix 3.

5. DONATIONS, BEQUESTS ETC.

5.1 The Trustees are gratified to report that during 2022 they received a total sum of £25,300 by way of donations, bequests and gifts and a property was bequeathed to the Fund.

6. FUNDS

6.1 The amount realised from sales of houses, less the expenditure on house purchases, during 2022 was £894,088. The net increase in long-term loans during 2022 was £191,000.

6.2 Investments at market value, and cash deposits, at 31st December 2022 amounted to £26,227,209.

7. THE FUTURE

7.1 Those Ministers who are within five years of retirement are encouraged to contact the Fund if they feel they may need to avail themselves of the Fund's assistance. Similarly, the Trustees always welcome an initial approach from those who are within five to ten years of retirement. Such approaches not only assist the Trustees with financial forecasting, but can help to alleviate some of the anxieties which ministers and their spouses may experience in respect of housing as they contemplate their future after retirement. 17 new and 13 updated applications were approved in 2022. Details of commitments for the provision of either a house to rent or a loan during the next five years, and approved at 31st December 2022, which will require to be met from funds, can be found at Appendix 4. The number of ministers planning to retire with assistance from the Fund within a five to ten year period from 31st December 2022 and the number placed on the Preliminary Applications List for assistance can also be found at Appendix 4.

7.1.1 The Trustees would like to make clear that the Fund can be of assistance beyond the point of retiral. Already retired Church of Scotland ministers, widows, widowers, bereaved civil partners, separated or divorced spouses and separated or former civil partners of Church of Scotland ministers who find that their circumstances have changed and would now like to be considered for assistance from the Fund are welcome to speak to the Secretary at any point. This can include those already in receipt of assistance from the Fund who may now wish to seek further assistance.

7.2 In December 2022 the Trustees considered carefully the parameters for granting assistance with housing to rent, and assistance by way of housing loans, taking into account the current state of the housing market, the numbers of ministers due to retire, and equally the Fund's obligations towards the Church and the proper and appropriate stewardship of its resources. Particular note was taken of the sale prices of properties returning to the Fund which were often exceeding the Fund's maximum price. The Trustees agreed that the house purchase price limits for 2023 be increased so that the maximum price for a house to rent increased by £30,000 to £250,000 and the maximum price, or value, of a house in respect of which a loan would be given increased to £250,000. The Trustees are satisfied that such parameters will enable appropriate housing to be purchased for rental, or with the aid of Fund loans, in the current housing market for those who are eligible for assistance from the Fund.

8. CONSULTATION WITH ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

8.1 The Trustees continue to work on a Strategic Review of the Fund to identify how, in compliance with the Fund's purposes, assets which currently outstrip the Fund's anticipated obligations can be best applied for the benefit of the Fund's Beneficiaries and the wider benefit of the Church.

8.2 Over the last year significant effort has been expended in progressing the Review, including liaising with the Chief Officer and Assembly Trustees about how any surplus funds might be deployed in a manner that is in keeping with the Fund's purposes. This included taking both internal and external legal advice on how best to bring this matter to a conclusion.

8.3 The Fund's Trustees hope to complete the Strategic Review in time to bring a detailed report to the General Assembly in 2024. In doing so they will continue to consult with the Assembly Trustees, who have remitted their future input in this matter to the Chief Officer to take forward on their behalf.

9. DILIGENCE

9.1 The Trustees confirm that the Staff have monitored their stock of rental housing, and housing over which loans have been secured, and have continued to support their tenants and borrowers. It continues to be challenging to find trades people and contractors to carry out maintenance and repair work.

9.2 Any empty property held by the Fund presents challenges as the Fund follows good practice by ensuring that they are all checked regularly and heated during cold weather, a practice underlined by the Insurers' requirement for such precautions. Garden upkeep and payment of council tax add significantly to the costs of maintenance for such properties. Efforts are made to try and relet such properties but, for a variety of reasons, this is often not practicable. Commercial rental of such properties is only undertaken rarely, where the prospect of a sale, is for market reasons, highly unlikely. Empty properties are offered to potential tenants in the first instance and if not suitable are marketed for sale as soon as possible.

9.3 The Trustees endeavour to maintain the properties owned by the Fund at a high standard and to comply with all legal requirements.

9.4 During 2022 safety procedures for visits and repairs were followed as appropriate as a result of Covid-19.

10. STAFF

10.1 The Trustees wish to place on record their indebtedness to the work of the staff of the Fund, and in particular the care and support afforded by staff to all those who apply to, or have been assisted by, the Fund.

10.2 The Property Assistant's hours were doubled in late 2022 to assist with the increased administration and increase maintenance capacity.

10.3 In February 2023 the new post of Project Manager was created to manage improvements to the existing housing stock for the benefit of the beneficiaries, manage work required to fulfil the Fund's obligations in terms of expected Energy Performance Certificate Regulations and assist with the Church's Net Zero aims.

11. MEMBERSHIP

11.1 The Trustees would be pleased if the General Assembly would agree to the appointment of Rev Dawn Anne Laing as a Trustee of the Fund.

11.2 The Rev Allan McCafferty comes to the end of his second term as a Trustee. The Fund has appreciated his faithful attendance, pertinent contributions to discussions and dedication and attention to Fund matters, and are grateful too for the support and encouragement he has given to the staff of the Fund.

11.3 The Trustees and Secretary would be delighted to speak to anyone interested in becoming a future Trustee of the Fund.

In the name of the Trustees

DOROTHY U ANDERSON, *Chair*
BRUCE H SINCLAIR, *Deputy Chair*
HAZEL BETT, *Secretary*

Appendix 1

Assistance provided	2021	2020	2019
Number of Ministers retiring*	38	40	29
Percentage assisted with a house to rent	3%	15%	7%
Percentage assisted with a house purchase loan	8%	8%	3%
Total percentage assisted	11%	23%	10%
Instances of assistance provided*	2022	2021	2020
Retiring Ministers	4	9	3
Ministers already retired	1	3	4
Widow(er)s & Civil Partners	0	1	1
Spouses	3	0	1
Total	8	13	9

* Assistance may be provided in a different calendar year to that in which the Minister actually retires

Tenants as at 31st December	2022	2021	2020
Ministers	111	123	123
Widow(er)s & Civil Partners	54	51	51
Spouses	11	9	9
Commercial rental	2	2	3
Vacant	7	4	11
Borrowers as at 31st December	2022	2021	2020
Ministers**	65	65	72
Widow(er)s & Civil Partners	34	34	38
Spouses	0	0	0

** 2 Ministers have dual loans

Appendix 2

Rental Housing			
	2022	2021	2020
Total number of houses owned at 1st January	189	197	203
Houses purchased during year	4	8	4
Total cost of purchases	£704,521	£1,336,621	£641,673
Average house price	£176,130	£167,078	£160,418
Houses sold during year	8	16	10
Total amount realised	£1,598,609	£2,739,438	£1,599,297
Average proceeds	£199,826	£171,215	£159,930
Houses bequeathed/gifted during year	1	1	0
Houses re-let during year	0	0	1
Total number of houses owned at 31st December	185	189	197
Average market rent of property purchased during year	£8,700	£8,250	£8,175
Average rent of new tenancies – Ministers/Spouses	£4,350	£4,125	£4,088
Average rent of new tenancies – Widow(er)s	£2,175	£2,063	£2,044

Appendix 3

Housing Loans			
	2022	2021	2020
<i>Long term loans outstanding at 1st January</i>	101	110	112
Value of loans outstanding	£6,000,250	£6,241,750	£6,337,955
New loans granted during year	3	4	4
Additional loans granted during year	0	1	0
Value of loans granted	£302,000	£377,000	£252,500
Loans fully repaid during year	3	13	6
Loans partially repaid during year	2	1	1
Value of loans repaid	£111,000	£618,500	£348,705
Long term loans outstanding at 31st December	101	101	110
Value of long term loans outstanding	£6,191,250	£6,000,250	£6,241,750
<i>Short term Bridging Loans outstanding at 1st January</i>	0	0	0
Value of Bridging Loans outstanding	£0	£0	£0
Bridging loans granted during year	2	0	0
Value of Bridging Loans granted	£117,000	£0	£0
Bridging loans repaid during year	2	0	0
Value of Bridging Loans repaid	£117,000	£0	£0
Short term Bridging Loans outstanding at 31st December	0	0	0
Value of Bridging Loans outstanding at 31st December	£0	£0	£0

Appendix 4

Outstanding Commitments at year end	2022	2021	2020
For next 5 years			
Houses to rent	20	21	23
Housing Loans	7	5	9
Value of outstanding commitments	£5,485,030	£5,183,000	£5,550,000
Preliminary Applications	2022	2021	2020
For those retiring between 5 – 10 years	4	4	2

REGISTRATION OF MINISTRIES COMMITTEE MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.

Report

1. The Registration of Ministries Committee's main function is to consider applications from Church of Scotland Parish Ministers, who are currently categorised as E or R, who wish to have the status of O, which entitles them to be inducted to a charge. In addition, where ministers are returning from suspension, and wish to transition out of category S (for those who've been suspended) the Committee will consider such applications. The Registration of Ministries Committee's responsibility is to assess an individual's readiness for parish ministry, and then to specify what steps need to be taken to address any gaps in knowledge, understanding and experience which come to light. Over and above this, the Committee also asks Presbyteries to review the names of those for whom it has pastoral responsibility once a year. Details of the Committee's operations can be found at this link <http://bit.ly/3J3Szg> on the main Church of Scotland website, and the Registration of Ministries Act is accessible at this link <http://bit.ly/3IroMQ3>.

2. The Committee met on five occasions since the General Assembly of 2022, once online only, and on four occasions in hybrid format. Two applications for Category O registration were considered and were granted; three further applications considered prior to the General Assembly of 2022 were also granted, meaning five in total were considered.

3. Given that the Act has now been in operation since January 2018, some five years, the Committee met with Presbytery Clerks and others in Presbyteries responsible for administering the tasks associated with the Act. The Committee was keen to learn how Presbyteries maintain and review the Register of Ministries for those Deacons and Ministers within the bounds, whether they are full members of Presbytery or not. A series of roadshows took place in February 2023, with in person meetings in Dundee and in Glasgow, with an online meeting for others who were unable to take part in these earlier gatherings. This online meeting had originally been conceived as a hybrid event, to take place in Dingwall, and feedback from the initial invitation resulted in it becoming an online meeting. Fifteen of the twenty-one Presbyteries took part, although technical difficulties at the hosting end meant that the Clerk of one Presbytery was not able to participate.

4. These conversations were helpful and demonstrated the variety of approaches adopted by Presbyteries old and new, particularly around the task of annual review of the Register. Template letters and forms which some Presbyteries had been using were shared.

5. It was recognised that the greatest challenge lay in engaging with ministers seeking to retain Category R registration, whether or not as members of Presbyteries, especially when they move outwith the initial Presbytery where they are registered. The General Assembly of 2023 will consider changes to the Church Courts Act (Act III, 2000), and this may impact on the work of Registration of Ministries. The Committee will move to prepare further guidance to be placed on the website, and to be issued to Presbytery Clerks, relating to the annual review provided for at s. 21 of the Registration of Ministries Act, following the General Assembly. These meetings took place in Glasgow; Dundee; and Dingwall. The Committee expresses its thanks to the Presbytery of Glasgow; and to the Steeple Church, Dundee for hosting these meetings.

6. Dates for the Committee's cycle of meetings are published on the Church of Scotland website at the above link, along with an indication of a deadline for prior submission of papers.

In the name of the Committee

HAZEL HASTIE, *Convener*
HILARY MCDUGALL, *Vice-Convener*
ANGUS R. MATHIESON, *Registrar*

REPORT OF THE CHURCH HYMNARY TRUSTEES

A REGISTERED SCOTTISH CHARITY (SCOTTISH CHARITY NO. SC002769) TO

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

IN RESPECT OF THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. To appoint Reverend Joanne C Hood and Reverend MaryAnn Rennie as Trustees of the Church Hymnary Trust.

Report

1. CHURCH HYMNARY 4TH EDITION

1.1 In the year to 30 September 2022 the sales of the various editions were as follows:-

Words:	243 copies compared with 178 (2021)
Full Music Edition:	257 copies compared with 156 (2021)
Melody Edition:	94 copies compared with 111 (2021)
Large Print Edition:	129 copies compared with 46 (2021)
CD-Rom:	27 copies compared with 43 (2021)

1.2 The commission due to the Trust calculated in respect of the year to 30 September 2022 in respect of CH4 was £1334.36 compared with £944.99 in the previous year. From this, royalties were payable to the authors of £1070.11, the first £2000 of which is met by the publishers with net commission due to the Trust of £1334.36.

2. CURRENT WORK

2.1 The Trustees are pleased to report that, at their meeting on 30 March 2023, they agreed a grant totalling £30,000 to Faith Action for the purposes of providing support for digital resources and launch events in connection with the forthcoming Hymnary Supplement, due to be published in 2024 in partnership with Hymns Ancient & Modern.

3. FUNDING FOR PROJECTS

3.1 The Trustees affirm their wish to encourage more applications for grants to be made from trust funds, particularly where the applications relate to local training purposes. The Trust purposes include:-

“the advancement of the Christian faith through the promotion and development of hymnody in Scotland with particular reference to the Church of Scotland by assisting in the development, promotion, provision and understanding of hymns, psalms and paraphrases suitable for use in public worship... to enable the Church, and in particular the Church of Scotland, to worship in ways which are relevant to individual congregations or groups of congregations”.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Mr Alan Aitchison and Mr David Stewart have tendered their resignation to the Chair which he accepted with regret. The Trustees are grateful to both for their hard work and attention to detail over their years of service to the Trust.

4.2 The Trustees propose that Reverend Joanne C Hood and Reverend MaryAnn Rennie be appointed to be members of the Trust.

In the name of the Trustees

PHILIP H BRODIE, *Chair*
ANNE STEELE, *Secretary and Treasurer*

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HM FORCES MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Thank those who serve in His Majesty's Forces as Chaplains for their service to Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel, their families, and the wider military community, and commend them, and their own families, to the prayers of the Church.
3. Recognise the contribution of our Chaplains in supporting our personnel who are deployed following the invasion of Ukraine.
4. Recognise the contribution of Chaplains in supporting our personnel following the death of their Commander-in-Chief, Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, whose loss was felt intensely across the military community.
5. Encourage eligible ministers of the Church to consider service as a Chaplain to HM Forces, Regular or Reservist.
6. Encourage those eligible to consider service as Chaplains in any of the Cadet organisations and thank all serving Cadet Chaplains.

Report

1. THE WORK OF CHAPLAINS

1.1 Routine and Operational Work

1.1.1 After Iraq and Afghanistan, there may be an assumption that the Armed Forces are doing less than they have in the past. Nothing is further from the truth. Our military personnel, and their Chaplains, have been deployed at home and around the globe since the last Assembly. Spiritual and pastoral care continues to lie at the heart of who Chaplains are, whether that be on an aircraft carrier in the Pacific, an army barracks in Poland, or in Mount Pleasant in the Falkland Islands, to name but three.

1.1.2 The Committee is sure that the whole Church is grateful to HM Forces personnel, including Chaplains, who responded to NATO's call for support, in light of operations following the invasion of Ukraine. As with the whole Church, we pray for peace and justice in that land.

1.1.3 The death of Her late Majesty was profoundly felt across the whole military community. She was their Commander-in-Chief, she knew the community very well, and some would even say she was at her happiest when visiting the military family. The Committee is grateful to all Chaplains who supported our military personnel, and their families, through this period of national mourning.

2. CHAPLAINS AND THE CHURCH

2.1 Tri-Service Conference 2023

The Tri-Service Conference (Continuous Professional Development) for Church of Scotland and Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) Chaplains was held at the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, in Wiltshire, in early March of this year, where the visiting speaker was The Rev Dr Katie G Kime, Executive Director and co-founder of Faith Leaders on Frontlines, an organisation promoting the inclusion of frontline spiritual care workers in news media, as well as professional support for faith leaders serving amidst crisis. The Conference theme was 'Multi-faith Spiritual Care & Leadership in the 2020's: Challenges, Opportunities, and Lessons Learned.' The Conference was attended by the Convener and the PCI Convener.

2.2 Pastoral Contact

This is a primary component of the Committee's remit. The Committee continues to offer regular pastoral contact with Chaplains and their families, organised by the Vice Convener. The Convener responds to more acute pastoral situations, which can involve a Chaplain's ill-health, professional issues, or to discuss discernment of future ministry and service.

2.3 Moderator's Visit to HM Forces

In February, the Moderator and Convener visited the British Army. The visit included a visit to NATO's Allied Rapid Reaction Corps Headquarters (ARRC), commanded by Lieutenant General Nick Borton DSO MBE, who addressed the General Assembly in 2022. The Moderator received a briefing, and tour, on the work of the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre and MOD Medal Office, learning of their work with casualties and compassionate cases 365 days a year. The Moderator visited the Headquarters of the British Army in Andover, and learned of the work of the Defence Christian Network, and met with the Deputy Chaplain General. The Moderator was hosted at the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre at Beckett House, a part of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, where he also participated in two ethics workshops with Officers on their Intermediate Command and Staff Course (ICSC Land). The Committee is very grateful to The Rev (Lt Col) Duncan Macpherson CF, for organising such a rewarding and insightful programme.

2.4 Armed Forces and Veterans Champions

The Committee is waiting for the current process of reducing the number of Presbyteries to be completed, and will then ask each to nominate an Armed Forces and Veterans Champion, and will keep that resource up-to-date, and ensure, as required, that the appropriate training and support is given.

3. RECRUITMENT

3.1 The Committee, at the time of writing, and as a part of its constitutional purpose, has endorsed two candidates for ministry in HM Forces, one for Regular and one for Reserve service, since the last Assembly. These candidates will now go forward for the formal selection process of the respective Service.

3.2 Most chaplains eventually return to the civilian ministry of the Church, with particular expertise in working with young adults, knowledge of the wider Church, and pastoral experience that equips them for future ministry, either in a parish or another sector. The Committee believes the Church gains far more than it loses over the long term of a minister's 'career', and encourages all eligible ministers to discern if God is calling them to serve as a Chaplain in the Royal Navy (including the Royal Marines), the Army or the Royal Air Force, full-time or part-time.

3.3 Meanwhile, Chaplaincy in the Cadet Forces provides those benefits – mission to the young and development of ministerial skill-sets – in the course of parish (or other civilian) ministry. We commend this valuable ministry to the Church too.

4. GOVERNANCE

4.1 Tri-Service Advisory Group

The Convener serves on this Advisory Group (known as the TRIAG), along with the Anglican and Catholic Bishops to the Forces, three other Conveners from Protestant Churches or Groupings, and representatives from other World Faiths' communities. The TRIAG exists as a two-way street between the three Heads of Chaplaincy and the Sending Churches/Endorsing Authorities, to discuss Chaplaincy policy within Defence and to engage and inform each other. The Committee is grateful to the three Heads of Chaplaincy for facilitating this important annual event.

In the name of the Committee

SCOTT J BROWN CBE, *Convener*
ANDREW TAIT, *Vice-Convener*
DARAN GOLBY, *Secretary*

Appendix 1

Royal Navy

The war in Ukraine that began in February, the largest conflict in Europe since the Second World War obviously dominated the year. For the RN the war has not had huge obviously visible implications, rather it has added a greater sense of urgency to the standing patrol tasks and NATO commitments that were already in play. Type 23 frigates HMS NORTHUMBERLAND, RICHMOND, PORTLAND and KENT continue to excel and have been deployed on long Towed Array Patrol Ship (TAPS) duties in northern waters. HMS NORTHUMBERLAND covered 40,000 miles and was away from her home in Devonport for 241 days in 2022, primarily employed on anti-submarine warfare (ASW) taskings. Chaplains have been onboard for all these taskings.

The RN led the NATO Maritime High Readiness Force in 2022 and warships and submarines spent around 10,000 hours directly supporting the alliance. This included Exercise COLD RESPONSE, the largest exercise held in Norway since the end of the Cold war and ASW Exercise DYNAMIC MONGOOSE off Iceland. Ships were also attached to the Standing NATO Maritime and Mine Countermeasures groups.

The RN's Vanguard-class submarines continue to conduct nuclear deterrent patrols, but maintenance becomes more difficult as the boats get older. This has implications for submariners who are having to endure even longer periods at sea. In 2022 one of the boats conducted the RN's longest deterrent patrol to date, spending more than 5 months underwater. One of our chaplains was onboard for the duration.

The Revd Dr Mark Davidson RN is now Principal of the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre (Beckett House), a role in which he leads in the delivery of the education that all Chaplains receive as part of their continuing ministry with the Armed Forces. Mark took over this role following his successful tenure as Chaplain supporting the Ships Company of HMS PRINCE OF WALES. Mark has also been engaged internationally this year, representing the Chaplain of the Fleet in Romania at the International Military Chiefs of Chaplains Conference (IMCCC).

The Revd Stephen Ashley-Emery RN returned from an arduous deployment to the Far East in 2022 successfully supporting HMS KENT in its role as part of the Carrier Strike Group on OP FORTIS. He is now the Chaplaincy Team Leader at HMS SULTAN, where he coordinates and delivers the provision of pastoral care to trainees and staff alongside providing spiritual development to all who seek it.

The Revd Mark Dalton RN has recently moved to support the work of Naval Base Clyde following a successful tour with the Royal Marines in Scotland. He is now charged with supporting submariners and their families and providing both pastoral and spiritual guidance.

Appendix 2

Army

As the Army continues to fulfil the task of delivering initial training to Ukrainian recruits over 6 weeks of basic instruction here in the United Kingdom, Chaplaincy walks alongside British instructors and Ukrainian recruits alike. Rev Hector Mackenzie shared his experience in this work:

"I had the huge privilege of leading an informal communion service for a number of Ukrainian personnel and also praying with many of them after the service. It was both a sobering and heart-warming experience."

Chaplaincy was called to participate and support the delivery of Her Majesty the Queen's funeral. One of the most poignant memories came from Rev Dr Ken Jeffrey, one of our Reserve Chaplains. He wrote -

"It was one of the proudest days of my life. I received the honour and privilege of standing guard on Hammersmith Bridge. I am the Padre of 7SCOTS, 51st Highland, 7th Battalion of The Royal Regiment of Scotland. Earlier in September, we were taking part in our Annual Deployment Exercise in Dingwall in the Highlands. During our camp, we received the call to mobilise in order to participate in the Royal funeral. We left Dingwall on 13 September for our 573 mile journey to London. On the M74, we received new orders, to proceed to the Queen Elizabeth Barracks in Strensall, York where we should await further instructions about our role in the funeral. Finally, and after some concern that we might be 'stood down', we made our way to MOD Feltham in Middlesex within Greater London on 18 September. We joined a camp of around 1400 Army personnel and were billeted in a large warehouse where 700 of us were crammed together and slept on new cot beds that were arranged in long columns and rows. The beds squeaked all night as people rolled over again and again, trying to get some sleep. Fortunately, I was wearing ear buds! The highlight of my experience at Feltham was receiving the opportunity to lead a short memorial service for the late Queen on the Sunday evening at 8 pm before a congregation of 1400 people. They gathered around the back of a large white pantec van while I stood on the van's rear platform that was raised about six feet into the air, so that everyone could see and hear me. It was an unforgettable moment. The next morning, the day of the late Queen's funeral, we were up at 4 am. We travelled into London and met members of the Metropolitan Police. Together, with them, we lined the route of the funeral cortege across Hammersmith Bridge. We were in position at around 9.30am, and stood in our places for five hours until after the funeral procession had passed. During this time, I spoke at length with members of the public who had gathered at the bridge."

Church of Scotland Chaplains continue to develop policy and theology of practice in the developing area of care for those suffering from Moral Injury. The Royal Army Chaplains' Department lead is Rev Nicola Frail. As Chaplaincy seeks to understand and respond to this injury as our Service Personnel come to terms with some of the sometimes deeply conflicting operational requirements. Alongside this, Chaplaincy continues to be at the heart of delivery of ethical education for all Service Personnel at every level of service from initial training.

List of Church of Scotland Regular Chaplains (Actively recruiting)

Chaplain	Unit	Location
Rev Dr Jim Francis MBE	Regional Command	Aldershot
Rev David Anderson	HQ North West England	Preston
Rev Chris Kellock	Permanent Joint Headquarters	Northwood
Rev Duncan Macpherson	HQ 1 Recce Strike BCT	Tidworth
Rev Nicola Frail	HQ Defence Medical Services	Whittington
Rev Alan Cobain	HQ South West	Tidworth
Rev David Thom	HQ SHAPE	Mons
Rev Hector MacKenzie	ITC 2 Battalion	Catterick Garrison
Rev Paul Van Sittert	1 LANCS	Cyprus
Rev Richard Begg	3 RSME Regt	Minley
Rev Geoff Berry	3 SCOTS	Fort George
Rev Stewart MacKay	3 PARA	Colchester
Rev Neil McLay	Army Air Corps Training Centre	Middle Wallop

List of Church of Scotland Reserve Chaplains (2 vacancies in Scotland)

Chaplain	Unit	Location
Rev Michael Mair	32 Sig Regt	Glasgow
Rev Dr Ken Jeffrey	7 SCOTS	Perth
Rev Christopher Rowe	5 MI Bn	Edinburgh

List of Church of Scotland ACF Chaplains (9 Vacancies out of 20)

Chaplain	Unit
Rev Keith Blackwood	2 Bn THE HIGHLANDERS, ACF
Rev Shuna Dicks	2 Bn THE HIGHLANDERS, ACF
Rev Cameron MacKenzie	LOTHIAN & BORDERS, ACF
Rev Alen McCulloch	1 Bn THE HIGHLANDERS, ACF
Rev Ecilo Selemani	GLASGOW & LANARKSHIRE, ACF
Rev Sean Swindells	ANGUS & DUNDEE, ACF
Rev Fiona Wilson	WEST LOWLAND, ACF

Appendix 3**Royal Air Force**

In his 2022 Christmas address to the RAF the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Mike Wigston, said, “2022 has been an extraordinary year of achievement for the RAF. Protecting our skies and overseas territories, monitoring threats to our national interests in space, patrolling our seas, bolstering NATO and doing everything we can to support Ukraine’s heroic defence against Russian aggression. We took great honour in celebrating Her Late Majesty the Queen Elizabeth’s Platinum Jubilee, then joined mourning her sad passing. The RAF has also faced challenges this year: criticism and legitimate questions about how we increase our diversity and high profile cases of unacceptable behaviours. Throughout this time the RAF has endeavoured to learn, adapt and continue to improve as an organisation which is better prepared for whatever the future might bring.”

It is within this context that the Church of Scotland has placed two chaplains to offer ministry as RAF Chaplains.

Rev Craig Lancaster RAF LOSSIEMOUTH

Rev David Young RAF LOSSIEMOUTH

FAITH IMPACT FORUM MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. *Legacies of Slavery – section 3*
 - a) Commend the report on ‘the Church of Scotland and the legacies of slavery’ for study and action and reaffirm the Church of Scotland’s teaching and action for racial justice.
 - b) Instruct the Faith Impact Forum to consider ways to support the delivery of the recommendations set out in the report.
 - c) Instruct the Faith Impact Forum, in partnership with the Theological Forum and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group to prepare a statement of acknowledgment and apology for the Church’s involvement with and connection to historic chattel slavery, to be considered for adoption at a future General Assembly.
 - d) Encourage congregations to research the history of slavery and its connections in their local areas, and to continue to celebrate Racial Justice Sunday to challenge racism and speak out against racial injustice.
3. *Net Zero – section 4.3*
Urge Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, and national committees and agencies to note and consider ways of taking forward the outcomes of the ‘Net Zero Strategic Outline’, and instruct the Faith Impact Forum, in partnership with the Assembly Trustees, General Trustees, CrossReach and Eco Congregation Scotland to continue to develop plans and activities to encourage and enable all parts of the Church to work towards the target of Net Zero by 2030.
4. *Earthquake in Syria – section 5.3.4*
Encourage Presbyteries and congregations to offer prayerful and financial support to the rebuilding of lives and churches in Syria and Lebanon through ‘Standing Firm – Rebuilding lives in Syria’.
5. *Pakistan – section 5.4.1*
Instruct the Faith Impact Forum to continue to engage with ecumenical and international partners on the misuse of the blasphemy law and forced conversion and forced marriage in Pakistan.
6. *Integrity: Violence Against Women Task Group – section 7*
Instruct the Faith Impact Forum, in collaboration with Integrity to develop the Violence Against Women Charter as a resource to build a network of congregations, supported and equipped to help respond to and prevent this form of violence.
7. *Cost of Living – section 8*
Instruct the Faith Impact Forum to share the Church’s practical experiences and policy ideas in relation to tackling poverty and helping people with the cost of living with the Scottish and UK Governments, and to report to the General Assembly of 2024.
8. *Assisted Suicide – section 10.4*
Support the current legal protections which prohibit assisted suicide/assisted dying and urge members of the Church to make representation to their MSPs.
9. *Constitutional issues – section 10.1*
Reaffirm that the Church will remain impartial on the issue of Scottish independence and on related questions about the holding of a referendum.
10. *Addictions/substance use – section 11*
Instruct the Faith Impact Forum to research and develop thinking on the policy, ethical, spiritual and theological issues arising from Scotland’s current crisis with regards to addictions and substance use, including producing advice and information to support the work of local congregations.

Report

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Governance

Since last year’s General Assembly, the Faith Impact Forum has continued to work to fulfil the deliverances agreed by previous General Assemblies. In addition, this year we have worked closely with the staff based at the national office to plan our work and governance properly in line with the Assembly Trustees D10 Strategic Planning Team (D10 SPT) (see section 13.4 of the Report of the Assembly Trustees).

1.2 Staff Structure

In September 2022 the staff who previously worked for individual Forums became one Faith Action Programme staff team and the agenda for the Forum meetings adjusted to reflect this change under the new Programme Group areas, namely: People and Training; Mission Support (including Presbytery and Partnership Support); Public Life and Social Justice; and, Resource and Presence.

1.3 Budgets

In preparation for the expected closing of both Forums to be replaced by a single Faith Action Programme Leadership Team the individual budgets of both Forums were united in January 2023. As regards both sets of Forum financial accounts we are able to report to the General Assembly that net savings were made between both Forums of over £1m (Faith Impact Forum net saving of £384,732 & Faith Nurture Forum net saving, (excluding ministries staffing costs), of £722,348).

1.4 Reporting

Recognising the changes made and anticipated to governance, staff structure and budgeting, Commissioners may note changes to where previous work areas sit; these are highlighted in the new Programme Group areas reflecting the movements made in the last year. Please find below a short executive summary to cover the areas of our output over the last year. We hope this means of reporting to the General Assembly will help Commissioners.

The report following this summary will deal directly with the deliverances relating to the Forum, and the strategic plans we have developed with the Assembly Trustees as priorities to deliver the Faith Action Programme over the next 3-5 years.

We invite the General Assembly to recognise and acknowledge that, with new staff structures, changing committee structures and with a new strategic Faith Action Programme, the immediate capacity for developing or taking on new areas of work this year is limited. With this in mind, it will be hard for Convener's to be willing to accept significant new and unplanned work in the form of additional deliverances. If the Assembly were to insist on new work, we have to caution that it may not be possible to fulfil in a timely manner or to the high standards which would be expected. This would help us all as we move forward into this new governance and staffing arrangements, and develop focus on Programme delivery. We do not envisage the same situation to be facing us next year by which time we expect work to be running smoothly, and so we would be prepared to return to normal and discuss significant new deliverances at the 2024 General Assembly.

1.5 Public Life and Social Justice

This staff team's role is to support the delivery of the Faith Action Programme with particular regard to helping the Church of Scotland's contribution to public life and social justice, through the sharing of ideas. This is in response to and in support of the development of congregations' and presbyteries' social action work and witness for the benefit of congregations and the wider community.

Public Life and Social Justice includes the work of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office, the Society, Religion and Technology Project and Integrity: The Church of Scotland's violence against women task group. It also supports the work of the Church's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group and Interfaith relations work. Public Life and Social Justice also helps other departments with support and advice on public issues, including media relations and helping the Moderator in their political and civic facing role.

1.6 Mission Support

Included in the work of the new Mission Support programme group is the work of Congregational Engagement, which has worked to support Faith Impact Forum priorities such our supporter-facing communication (e-newsletter and social media channels), relations with relevant Presbytery committees and for taking forward projects related to the HIV Programme and Twinning. Congregational Engagement have also supported the running of events online and onsite, and in providing speakers for talks, Guild meetings etc. Another important element of Mission Support is the work of the Priority Areas team, which has been and will continue to be an important collaboration on issues of public witness, solidarity and mutual support to express the Gospel bias to the poor.

1.7 Presbytery and Partnership Support

The critical strategic task in International Partnerships is to set priorities between supporting individual mission partners, and grant aiding partners, against a three-to-five-year horizon, with a reducing budget.

1.8 Resource and Presence

The Israeli Institutions continue to recover well after Covid-19, with the second half of 2022 in particular being extremely strong in both Jerusalem and Tiberias. The School in Jaffa has also worked well, although it is now in need of serious renovation work over the coming years. All three organisations continue to be self-sustaining on an operating level, with some financial help required for investments in the fabric of the buildings.

The Furlough properties will be the subject of a review in 2023 to ensure that the Forum is maximising the return from them.

2. UPDATE ON PREVIOUS DELIVERANCES

Deliverance from General Assembly 2023	Update/Action/Comment
	Commend the Report "The Earth is the Lord's: A Theological Account of Creation Care" to congregations for study and instruct the Faith Impact Forum to provide opportunities and resources to aid reflection, conversation and response. (Section 3; Appendix 2)
Faith Impact Forum 2.	We have worked with the Theological Forum to produce the report in a format which is more accessible to the local, and at the time of writing are in the process of developing resource materials with our partners at Eco-congregation Scotland and Christian Aid. The report on this work can be found below at section 4.3.
	Instruct the Forum, in partnership with the Assembly Trustees, General Trustees, Social Care Council and Eco- Congregation Scotland, to continue to develop plans and activities towards meeting a 'Net Zero by 2030 Strategy' and to report to the General Assembly in 2023. (Section 3)

Deliverance from General Assembly 2023		Update/Action/Comment
Faith Impact Forum 4.	In view of the call from the UN and International Energy Agency to recognise that there can be no new oil and gas developments if we are to limit global heating to 1.5 degrees Celsius, call upon the UK Government to grant no further licenses for new fossil fuel exploration or extraction	The adoption of this public policy position has been made clear in our public statements, including in our response to a Scottish Government consultation relating to onshore conventional oil and gas in August 2022.
Faith Impact Forum 5.	Instruct the Forum to work with congregations (particularly in Priority Areas) and with partner organisations on advocacy and practical action to address the growing crises of fuel poverty and energy insecurity.	As part of the reconfigured Faith Action Programme staff team, the work of previously separate departments is now being delivered and shared across the Priority Areas team and the Public Life and Social Justice team. The Forum notes the success of Fife Presbytery's Poverty Task Force. The Forum continues to support the development of partnership with other churches, including the Joint Public Issues Team, and civil society organisations, such as the Poverty Alliance. More details can be found below at section 8.
Faith Impact Forum 6.	Give thanks for the life and witness of Mission Partners who have died, acknowledge with gratitude those who have completed their period of service overseas, and uphold in prayer all who continue to serve.	Follow the work of and support in prayer our Mission Partners working with Partner Churches and organisations: https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/connect/international-work-and-global-partnerships/mission-partners
Faith Impact Forum 7.	Urge the UK Government to do more to ensure Covid-19 vaccines are available throughout the world, particularly in resourcing poor countries, and instruct the Forum to make representations and to promote this campaign with church members. (Section 4.1)	Our engagement with the UK Government has included a call to restore the international aid spending requirement to the statutory minimum of 0.7% of Gross National Income as soon as possible. The Forum has promoted efforts and work by others, including Christian Aid and the People's Vaccine Alliance, through its congregational engagement work.
Faith Impact Forum 8.	Instruct the Forum to share with congregations and Presbyteries the work of Mediterranean Hope and other international partners providing humanitarian and integration support to displaced people, and promote opportunities for local churches to respond with prayer, action and giving. (Section 4.2)	The Forum has continued to promote the work of Mediterranean Hope, and to highlight the role of Fiona Kendall as Mission Partner. A further update is below at 5.1.2
Faith Impact Forum 9.	Instruct the Forum to continue to support work with asylum seekers and refugees, alongside Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, and encourage congregations to participate in the 'Faithful Welcome' project and to explore Community Sponsorship so that they may be directly involved in refugee resettlement. (Section 4.6)	The Forum has been committed to supporting the work of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, which is a partnership led and hosted by the Church of Scotland. 'Faithful Welcome', a project jointly delivered with Faith in Community Scotland reached 153 congregations and faith communities (39 Church of Scotland). An update on our refugee work is below at section 9
Faith Impact Forum 10.	Commend the Korea Peace Appeal and instruct the Forum to promote the appeal to church members and congregations for them to sign as part of the effort to bring an end to the Korean War. (Section 4.8)	The Forum has promoted the Korea Peace Appeal to Church members through our social media channels and newsletter. The Moderator was due to visit Korea but had to cancel his travel due the timing of the death of Her Majesty the Queen.

Deliverance from General Assembly 2023		Update/Action/Comment
Faith Impact Forum 11.	Note the report of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Pakistani Minorities: Abductions, Forced Conversions, and Forced Marriages of Religious Minority Women and Girls in Pakistan; instruct the Forum to continue to engage with ecumenical and international partners on the issue and to provide resources to encourage church members to write to MPs urging the UK Government to implement the Report's recommendations. (Section 4.9)	In addition to promoting this work through our congregational engagement programme, the former Moderator, Lord Wallace of Tankerness KC has continued to take an active interest, and has asked questions of the UK Government in Parliament and hosted a reception in the House of Lords (with the current Moderator) in November 2022.
Faith Impact Forum 12.	Commend to congregations this year's Stamp Appeal which will support the Church in Lebanon in its ministry. (Section 4.10)	The Forum is grateful to the continued support of individuals and congregations for this appeal.
Faith Impact Forum 13.	Commend to the prayers of the church the members, ministers and leaders of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar who continue to worship and witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in a context of conflict and danger and instruct the Forum to write to Her Majesty's Government urging the use of diplomacy and sanctions in order that the elected government of Myanmar be reinstated.	A letter to the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office was sent. The Forum and staff continue to be in contact with – and pray with – churches in Myanmar.
Faith Impact Forum 14.	Commend the ongoing dialogue and collaborative effort with the Office of the Chief Rabbi to produce a Jewish-Christian glossary to shed light on divergent uses and understandings of theological and political terms that relate to the Holy Land. (Section 5.1)	A report on this work can be found in a Supplementary Report.
Faith Impact Forum 15.	Note with concern that Islamophobia remains widespread in the UK, and in line with other faith-based, social, political and governmental organisations, adopt for internal use the All-Party Parliamentary Group's (APPG) definition of Islamophobia, and its guidelines, to aid the Church of Scotland in challenging Islamophobia. (Section 5.2)	The Forum hosted a webinar in November 2022 (during Islamophobia Awareness month and Interfaith Week) to encourage church members to think about the issues and deepen their understanding. At the time of writing an e-training module based on this webinar is planned.
Faith Impact Forum 16.	Endorse the definition of Conversion Therapy as outlined in the 'Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy in the UK', noting that the Methodist Conference have supported and adopted this definition and the Church of England General Synod have endorsed a similar statement; urge the Scottish Government to ban Conversion Therapy and instruct the Forum to make representations to the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament. (Section 7.3)	During the late spring and summer 2022, the then Convener of the Forum, the Very Rev Dr Susan Brown, was appointed to a Scottish Government advisory group to help with the framing of legislation to ban conversion therapy in relation to sexual orientation or gender identity. This group's work has concluded and the Scottish Government are expected to begin a process of public consultation in 2023 to which the Forum (or its successor) will respond. A Scottish Parliament Bill may be introduced around winter 2023/24.
Faith Impact Forum 17.	Instruct the Forum, in consultation with CrossReach and others, to report to the General Assembly of 2023 on issues relating to drugs and substance use. (Section 7.4)	This report can be found below at section 11
Faith Impact Forum 18.	Instruct the Forum to convene a cross-Church group to explore the benefits and opportunities afforded to the Church of Scotland by digital technologies and to support congregations in their utilisation of these. (Section 7.8)	The Forum has supported the development of this work though the initiative for it has been taken on by Sanctuary First and, in the Faith Action Programme, by the Mission Support Programme Group. The Society, Religion and Technology Project (which has come under the responsibility of Faith Impact), has played a part in these conversations, the fruits of which are discussed in the Report of the Faith Nurture Forum.

Deliverance from General Assembly 2023		Update/Action/Comment
Faith Impact Forum 19.	Following the publication of the paper 'Apologising for Historic Wrongs' produced by the Theological Forum, acknowledge and regret the terrible harm caused to all those who suffered from accusations and prosecutions under Scotland's historic witchcraft laws, the majority of whom were women, and apologise for the role of the Church of Scotland and the General Assembly in such historical persecution.	Information about the Church's apology has been made available on the website [insert web link] and further consideration to marking this deliverance will be given over the coming months.
Faith Impact Forum 20.	<p>a) Condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>b) Call for an immediate ceasefire and urge all parties, supported by the international community, to negotiate a just and peaceful solution which respects human rights, democracy and the rule of law.</p> <p>c) Urge prayer across the Church of Scotland:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for the people of Ukraine suffering under war. • for wisdom among the leaders of the nations and all who work for justice and truth, and who keep open the horizon of reconciliation and peace. • for the generosity of the Church in supporting the spiritual and humanitarian efforts of the local partner churches for those afflicted by war. • to strengthen all those working in response to human need in Ukraine and other places around the world afflicted by war and violence, and for those working to welcome refugees. <p>d) Condemn any Russophobia and discrimination against Russian citizens living and working in Scotland.</p> <p>e) Encourage members of the Church who wish to host refugees to register with the Homes for Ukraine scheme run by the UK Government, under the aegis of the Scottish Government as a 'super sponsor'.</p> <p>f) Instruct the Forum to continue to respond to developments in the war in Ukraine, and to raise issues with the Scottish and UK Governments, with ecumenical partners, and with Reformed church partners around the world.</p>	An update of our work in response to the war in Ukraine is below at section 5.1.1.
Social Care Council 5.	Commend the close collaboration between CrossReach and the Faith Impact Forum in responding to areas of concern to the Church as they impact on wider society and instruct the Faith Impact Forum to continue to work with CrossReach to make representation on issues of national importance including the proposed legislation on a National Care Service; the investment needed to support a net carbon zero target in the care sector; and the policy and funding framework required to tackle Scotland's high level of drugs related deaths. (Section 3)	The Forum has continued to seek to work closely with CrossReach, especially on the issues of Net Zero, in the development of our report on substance use and drugs deaths, and on the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill.

Deliverance from General Assembly 2023		Update/Action/Comment
Work from Previous Years		
Faith Impact Forum GA2020	Reaffirm that racism is a sin, and declare that Black Lives Matter; instruct the Faith Impact Forum, in partnership with the Faith Nurture Forum, Assembly Trustees, and General Trustees to report to a future Assembly on the issue of racial justice and the legacy of slavery and the Church of Scotland and to consult widely with people of colour in the Church of Scotland and with Black Majority churches in Scotland	The Forum presents this report this year, and can be found below at Section 3.
Faith Impact Forum GA2021	Appoint a Special Committee of five persons to consult with the Faith Impact Forum, the Church of Scotland Investors Trust and the Assembly Trustees to consider the best framework for future recommendations about the ethics of investment practice being brought before the General Assembly, and report to the General Assembly in 2023.	The work of the Special Committee is presented at this General Assembly in a separate Report.

3. THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND AND THE LEGACIES OF SLAVERY

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 In 1846 New College, Edinburgh – now home to the General Assembly Hall – opened its doors as a training college for the ministers of the newly seceded Free Church of Scotland. In the same year the Free Church would find itself in the middle of a transatlantic moral storm which gathered momentum when a trio of American abolitionists arrived in Britain, including the self-liberated former slave Frederick Douglass (Shepperson 1951). The impetus for the Americans' visit was an event which had taken place two years earlier. Following the 1843 Disruption, a deputation was sent by the Free Church of Scotland to the United States of America to raise support for the new Free Church. Amongst the donations, around £3000 was received from southern congregations who admitted slave owners into their fellowship. The new Free Church of Scotland thus found themselves embroiled in a fierce debate on the compatibility of slave ownership and church membership which was dividing the American Church and Nation (Whyte 2012).

3.1.2 Douglass spoke passionately against slavery and proclaimed that Christianity and slavery were incompatible. He declared that the Free Church should "send back to America, that blood stained money". The cry of 'send back the money' would be repeated numerous times during the course of 1846. In response to the furore, Free Church minister John MacNaughton argued, in a speech given in Paisley in April 1846, that the abolitionists' demand was both impractical and hypocritical. If the money was to be returned, he stated, then "We must not buy [American] cotton, nor wear it, we must not use their rice nor purchase their tobacco, [for] the stamp of slavery is on them all." (Quoted in Murray 2023)

3.1.3 The intense debate was influenced by wider social, political, and moral issues on both sides of the Atlantic, but this episode in Scottish church history is one of many that highlights that everyday religious life in Scotland was not isolated from the tragedy of slavery in Africa, the Caribbean and the Americas.

3.1.4 This report focuses on connections between the transatlantic slave trade and the Church of Scotland during the years between the Union of Parliaments (1707) and the Emancipation of the British West Indies (1838). Connections relating to the historic Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church are generally not included, although these do in some cases constitute part of the present-day Church of Scotland's legacies. It is hoped that this work encourages the Church, as a largely White institution, to engage in self-reflection and to examine the roots of racial discrimination that many in Scotland still experience today. It does not seek to lay blame or make people today feel guilt for actions that happened in the past.

3.1.5 Nearly 200 years have passed since the Abolition of Slavery Act 1833 was passed which gradually outlawed slavery across most of the British Empire, however slavery sent waves across the globe that continue to this day. It has shaped our modern world economies and contributed considerably to the wealth of slave owning nations. Enslaved people in the Caribbean produced many of the raw materials that drove industrial revolution in Europe, whilst the Caribbean nations themselves were excluded from participating in industrialisation with long lasting effects. Intergovernmental organisation CARICOM (2013) assert that 400 years of "trade and production policies of Europe could be summed up in the British slogan: "not a nail is to be made in the colonies"". The effect is not purely economic either. Across the Caribbean poor health outcomes in present-day Black communities have been correlated with the harsh treatment and malnutrition of historically enslaved populations (CARICOM 2013). On the other side of the Atlantic, slavery also severely deprived many African nations of generations of men and women who would have otherwise contributed to local economies. The transatlantic slave trade was the largest of four major slave trades to affect the African continent. It is estimated that around 20 million people were translocated out of Africa between the years 1400-1900 due to slavery, with at least one study concluding that slavery is directly responsible for the significant income gap between African nations and the rest of the world (Nunn 2008).

3.1.6 Closer to home, the legacy of slavery still shapes the experiences of Black people living in Britain. Chattel slavery (whereby enslaved people were considered the legal personal property of the enslaver in perpetuity) helped to shape a worldview where Black people were treated as lesser than White people. Many of the offensive attitudes that fuel racist behaviours today stem from ideas and beliefs that were used to justify the transatlantic slave trade. Chaplain and psychotherapist Delroy Hall notes that “the history of dehumanization of African Caribbean people has been detrimental and the effects are still not fully known” (Hall 2021:5).

3.2 Summary of the Church’s Position

3.2.1 *Over the last 25 years racial justice and tackling racism has at times been more of a slow gander than a quick sprint for the Church of Scotland, both ecumenically and as a national church. That said, there have been several deliverances passed and reports received by the General Assembly on racism and racial justice, including:*

In 2005

Deliverance: Recognise the continuing problem of racism in Scottish society and encourage Church members to take every opportunity to inform themselves of the issues, and to find appropriate ways to support work for racial justice, including the marking of Racial Justice Sunday. Commend to the Church inter-faith dialogue and acts of solidarity which seek to overcome religious or racial intolerance.

In 2011:

The Church and Society Council brought its report ‘One Scotland Many Cultures’ to the General Assembly. The report took its name from a Scottish Government project aimed at tackling racism and discrimination in Scottish society. The Church of Scotland offered its support for the eradication of racist views, prejudice and discrimination in Scotland, with its prayers and action for racial justice. The report and its follow-up literature for congregations stated:

The culture of the Church itself is not homogenous. We need to ask how our culture fits in with a diverse and changing Scotland. Of central importance is how as a Church with a real focus on mission, our culture can speak to those outwith the Church, either as a counter-cultural witness, or as a way to reach those to whom the Church’s traditional way of being is outside their comfort zone. Continuing to offer Jesus’ radical hospitality must remain one of our core principles.

The report focused on radical hospitality but did not go as far as actively tackling or supporting congregations to tackle racial injustice.

In 2013

Deliverance: Reject racism and religious hatred and condemn antisemitism and Islamophobia.

In 2020:

The General Assembly reaffirmed that racism is a sin and declared Black Lives Matter, and for the first time the legacy of slavery was linked with racial justice issues.

What is unclear is whether these deliverances have had any impact over the years. Did they influence local Church of Scotland congregations and the communities they serve, both in Scotland and its English and International congregations? What impact, if any, have they had on people within these congregations who are suffering from and experiencing first-hand racial injustice?

(Extract from *The Church of Scotland and the Race for Justice*, by Rev. Mandy Ralph, EDI Group Convener, in *Race for Justice* (Reddie 2022)

3.2.2 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The Church of Scotland’s Theological understanding of Equality and Equity “means recognising that all humans are created alike in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-28). All humans have equal dignity in the eyes of God (Psalm 8). All humans deserve respect, and all humans are equally loved by God (John 3:16). Christians are called to love their neighbour as themselves (Mark 12:31). In Jesus we are one and the divisions of this world are broken down (Galatians 3:28). We are called to a form of discipleship marked by justice, fairness, acceptance and love (Amos 5:24; Psalm 89:14; Luke 4:18-19; John 15:12).” (Church of Scotland 2023).

3.2.3 The mission of the EDI Group is to ensure that everyone in the Church of Scotland is made to feel and know that all are welcome. This may sound like a mission that the Church has already fully embedded, evidenced by the fact that many Churches have ‘all are welcome’ on their signs and notice boards. However, the practical elements of helping visitors and members feel valued, loved and accepted are what turns a ‘welcome’ sign into a lived reality. It is the subtle act of using language that is inclusive and considerate. It is in the act of encouraging behaviours and building cultures that help people feel seen and not ignored, that know the difference between showing interest in a person’s story and alienating them by it. Welcome is also found when the Church creates environments that meet the physical and practical needs of everyone. When it comes to a racially just welcome, this can mean checking one’s assumptions about another person’s background. It can also mean recognising what is known as micro aggressions. These often occur when those from the majority White community ask questions or make comments which alienate and belittle others. These may not be intentionally aggressive, but the impact is often experienced as such. This is partly due to the frequency with which they are experienced by those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds and also because they subtly point to stereotypes and differences in a way which is alienating and othering. Such aggressions include being repeatedly asked ‘where do you really come from?’, ‘do you find it cold here?’, or ‘when are you going back?’

3.2.4 Conversely, a lack of welcome can also be experienced by those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds when no one from the congregation reaches out as people are too worried about saying anything wrong or assuming a person won’t be able to speak English. This can feel profoundly lonely. Work on the legacy of slavery, and other work like this, alongside research on the contemporary experiences of Black and minority ethnic members of the Church or Scotland are vital to helping the EDI Group identify gaps in the collective knowledge of the Church. This is not always

easy, but by listening and understanding we can recognise patterns of behaviour that have been shaped by the history, culture and theology of an era in which stereotypes and inequality were pervasive, and yet still shaped so much of the world we see and experience today.

3.3 Race relations in Britain

3.3.1 This April marked thirty years since Stephen Lawrence was murdered in South-east London by a group of White men in an unprovoked racially motivated attack. The subsequent bungled metropolitan police enquiry became a watershed moment in the history of UK race relations. Lawrence's killing was just one of many murders of young Black and Asian people to take place in the UK during the 1980s and 1990s, often without prosecution. The Government inquiry which followed, stated that the police's handling of Lawrence's murder had been "marred by a combination of professional incompetence, institutional racism and a failure of leadership" (Macpherson 1999:365), and brought the term 'institutional racism' into the public forum.

3.3.2 More recently, a renewed wave of interest in racial justice issues swept across Europe and North America following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota in the summer of 2020. Floyd's death followed a number of well publicised homicides in the USA, and became a symbol of police brutality worldwide. The global 'Black Lives Matter' demonstrations that followed Floyd's death can now be seen as a major moment in the ongoing campaign for racial equality. In the UK many people who had not previously encountered issues such as institutional racism and White privilege began to become aware of the systemic nature of racism in British society.

3.3.3 Despite this, there has been a perception among some British people that racism is more prevalent in other parts of the world. In Scotland, because of historically low levels of racial diversity, the perception 'that racism is not a problem here' persisted much longer. Floyd's murder was not an isolated incident on the other side of the world, however. The deaths of Black men in police custody, similar to that of George Floyd, were covered in a 2021 BBC Panorama documentary which also re-examined evidence relating to the killing of Sheku Bayoh in Kirkcaldy, Fife in 2015. A public enquiry into Bayoh's death began evidential hearings in May 2022 and will examine if race was a factor in the killing. This conversation was reignited once again in September 2022 when 24-year-old Chris Kaba was killed by a Metropolitan Police officer following a police pursuit of the vehicle Kaba was driving in Streatham Hill, South London. Kaba was unarmed. Institutional racism in British society, it would seem, is endemic.

3.4 British Church Responses to Legacies of Slavery

3.4.1 Whilst some of the key figures in the abolition movement were heavily involved in Christian churches, such as the influential 'Clapham Sect' which included William Wilberforce MP, many churches now are learning that there is another side to the abolition narrative, and that many European churches also benefitted from Black enslavement.

3.4.2 As a result, a number of denominations and ecumenical groups across Britain have committed to addressing their legacies of slavery over the last two decades. Including;

- The United Reformed Church
- The Methodists in Britain
- The Baptist Union of Great Britain
- The Church of England (a number of Dioceses and the Church Commissioners)
- Quakers in Britain
- Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)
- Council for World Mission
- The Scottish Episcopal Church

3.4.3 Research by Dr Katherine Gerbner (2018) into the relationship between Protestant Christianity and slavery in the Caribbean suggests that Christianity, rather than Whiteness, was used as the primary symbol of power and authority over the enslaved in the emerging plantation societies. Scripture was also sometimes used to defend keeping another person in a state of chattel slavery (e.g. Ephesians 6:5-8; Philemon 12), whilst the so-called 'curse of Ham' (Genesis 9:24-27) was manipulated to specifically sanction Black slavery. In this way scripture could be used alongside the invention of 'scientific race' and 'racial categories' to differentiate between White 'labourers' and Black 'slaves'.

3.5 Methodology

3.5.1 Legacies of Slavery Project Group (LoSPG)

The Church of Scotland Legacies of Slavery Project Group was formed in August 2021 to fulfil the 2020 Deliverance:

Reaffirm that racism is a sin, and declare that Black Lives Matter; instruct the Faith Impact Forum, in partnership with the Faith Nurture Forum, Assembly Trustees, and General Trustees to report to a future Assembly on the issue of racial justice and the legacy of slavery and the Church of Scotland and to consult widely with people of colour in the Church of Scotland and with Black Majority churches in Scotland.

3.5.2 The group consisted of members of staff from the Faith Action Programme and the General Trustees, and the Convenor of the EDI Group and reported to the Faith Impact Forum. The LoSPG was joined by representatives from the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago and the Presbyterian Church of Nigeria in November 2021. Between April and September 2022, the LoSPG was supported by an MSc Heritage student from the University of Stirling who carried out targeted research with two churches in Inverclyde.

3.5.3 Group Remit

The agreed scope of this research was to ascertain whether legacies of slavery, primarily within our church buildings could be barriers to inclusion. The group sought to examine church buildings held in trust by the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland to note any physical evidence of slavery connections, such as memorial stones, inscriptions and stained-glass windows dedicated to enslavers. They also noted links to slavery in buildings that were historically

associated with the Church of Scotland but are no longer the responsibility of the General Trustees, as these serve to evidence a cultural legacy of slavery within the Church. Burial Grounds fell outwith the scope of this report. The group also sought to uncover the ways the Church may have benefitted from slavery, financially or otherwise.

The group's discussions were guided by the following three questions:

1. What physical evidence remains in Church of Scotland buildings today that reveals involvement in the transatlantic slave trade?
2. To what extent did the Church of Scotland benefit both directly and indirectly from the profits from transatlantic slavery?
3. What is the cultural legacy of slavery in the Church today?

3.5.4 In this report direct connections to slavery are considered as links with enslavers and traders. Indirect connections are less easily defined, but generally refer to links with the decedents of slave owners, and also those linked with businesses that traded in commodities produced by slave labour. As indirect connections to slavery have repercussions for almost every part of life in Scotland from the Seventeenth century onwards (see MacKinnon and Mackillop 2020), this report will almost certainly underestimate the impact of slavery on the Church.

3.5.5 Language

The terms enslaved person/people and enslaver are used throughout this report in place of slave and slave owner, except in specific circumstances. This is to afford dignity to the enslaved people who, although they were considered property, were autonomous individuals forced into slavery against their will. Likewise, the term slave owner refers to a hierarchical system where one individual was legitimised in their ownership of another. Although this may have been accepted in the social system of the time, this hierarchy intentionally devalued the lives of countless Black men, women and children and our language should reflect this.

3.5.6 Methods

Over a period of 18 months, the group examined Scottish heritage sources, historic and archival records, and published academic texts and databases. By far the most enlightening source of information was the University College London Legacies of British Slavery database, an encyclopaedia of British slave-ownership at the moment of abolition in 1833, largely comprised of the records of the Slave Compensation Commission.

3.5.7 Between August and September 2022, a questionnaire on church history and architecture was distributed to each Presbytery in Scotland to be forwarded to every congregation. Eighty-two congregations responded to the questionnaire. The responses informed this report and shaped our recommendations. A summary of the questionnaire responses can be found in a separate report available online at <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/general-assembly-2023/reports-documents>.

3.5.8 In January 2023 a focus group of ministers and members of congregations met with the project group to discuss both the challenges and the opportunities of researching the role of the Church of Scotland in relation to issues such as historic slavery (see Section 9).

3.6 What have we been finding?

The role of Presbyterian Church in the Caribbean in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century

3.6.1 The *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae* provides a comprehensive list of Church of Scotland's appointments in the Caribbean from 1799 onwards. A Church of Scotland presence is recorded in The Bahamas, Grenada, Jamaica, Tobago, and Guyana (British Guiana), between 1799 (first missionary) and 1838 (emancipation) and later in Antigua, St Vincent, Belize (British Honduras) before the end of the Nineteenth century. By far the largest Church of Scotland presence during this period was in Guyana and Jamaica.

3.6.2 The earliest missionary recorded is Joseph Bethune, who was appointed by the Scottish Missionary Society to Jamaica. Bethune arrived in 1799 however died from a fever after only a few months. He is the only Presbyterian missionary recorded in the *Fasti* to have been in the Caribbean pre-1807 (abolition of the slave trade).

3.6.3 Up to as many as 20,000 Scottish migrants arrived in the West Indies during the latter half of the Eighteenth century. Dr Stephen Mullen (2016) has argued that the establishment of Presbyterian churches across the Caribbean towards the end of the slavery period demonstrates the desire of Scots abroad to preserve their national identity. It is likely however that many places of worship in the Caribbean, like many historical buildings, were built by enslaved people. For example, St Andrews Church, St George's, Grenada, where Church of Scotland ministers were in post between 1833 to 1945, was constructed by enslaved labourers whilst the church bell was cast in Glasgow. Part of the cornerstone inscription reads (in Latin) "For the worship of the True God, Omnipotent, Eternal, according to the rights and disciplines of the Presbyterian Church, est. in native Scotland" (Presbyterian Church Grenada 2023).

3.6.4 Guyana (British Guiana)

Although Guyana is located in mainland South America, it has more in common culturally, demographically and historically with the Caribbean islands. The historic colonies that today make up Guyana were ceded to British from the Dutch in 1814. The country is perhaps best known for the production of sugar in the Demerara region.



Map of the Caribbean and wider region (adapted from Serafy et al 2015)

3.6.5 Archibald Browne was for several years the only Scots Minister, serving between 1816 and 1824 at St Andrews Kirk, Georgetown. Browne travelled widely across the colony and it is recorded that he married and baptised a number of enslaved people. He was in post when the 1823 Demerara uprising broke out, and wrote an article for the pro-slavery *Glasgow Courier* criticising the role of the London Missionary Society in the uprising. He also published three sermons, later serialised in the *Courier*, entitled “*On the Duties of Subjects to their Sovereign and the Duties of Slaves to their Masters*” (Alston 2021).

3.6.6 St Andrews was the first church in British Guiana that admitted enslaved people, with members recorded as early as 1819. During the 1823 uprising the building was requisitioned by the Demerara Militia as barracks to suppress the revolt (Hernandez 2013).

3.6.7 Rev. James Struthers, Church of Scotland clergyman and minister of the Scots Kirk in Georgetown between 1826-1857 is recorded in the registers of the Slave Compensation Commission. The extent of his compensation or slave ownership is unknown.

3.6.8 Jamaica

Jamaica was a key destination for Scottish ‘sojourners’ (temporary residents). Scots played a disproportionate role in the administration of the British Empire, despite only representing around ten percent of the British population. People of Scottish descent constituted a significant minority in Jamaica making up around one third of the White population in the year 1774. Enslaved people in Jamaica made up forty percent of all enslaved people in the British West Indies. As such, Jamaica was also one of the most profitable colonies and the island contributed just over half of the entire wealth of the British Caribbean (Whyte 2004).

3.6.9 The Established Church in colonial Jamaica was the Anglican Church; Presbyterianism was considered a dissenting faith. Although ‘non-conformists’ had originally been barred from political life in Jamaica, by the 1800s there were a number of powerful Scots in the Jamaican Assembly. In 1814 a failed attempt to achieve legal establishment of Presbyterianism in Jamaica led to a substantial amount of money being secured from the Jamaican Assembly to contribute towards a place of Presbyterian worship (Mullen 2016).

3.6.10 The Scots Kirk, Kingston

The building of the ‘Scots Kirk’ (St Andrews) was completed in 1819, financed primarily by subscription from Scots in Kingston and two grants from the Jamaican Assembly. Many of the first trustees were wealthy attorneys, merchants and plantation owners (Mullen 2016).

3.6.11 Under part of the Jamaican legal system (*Code Noir* (1696)), slave owners were encouraged to baptise and instruct slaves into the Christian faith, however in practice many enslavers felt that the Christian message of freedom in Christ would encourage slaves to challenge their enslavement. The Rev Peter Duncan, a Wesleyan Missionary, confirmed to a Commons Select Committee in 1832 that there was “general hostility” amongst planters that enslaved people should receive religious instruction by “the Established Church of England and by the Church of Scotland”. During the later 1700s and following 1807 however, some policies which encouraged the religious instruction of enslaved people began to emerge. Mullen (2016:10) quotes kirk minutes from 1819 to note that the minister, Rev. John Brown – appointed by The Presbytery of Edinburgh – supported a petition to the Jamaican Assembly stating that “one of the great and most important objects [of the Kirk]...[was that] Ministers should be devoted to the instruction of people of colour and slave population’ in order to encourage them to ‘attach themselves to the congregation”.

3.6.12 Scots Ministers Engaged on the Plantations (Estates)

The above 1832 Select Committee *report* makes several references to Church of Scotland ministers and Scottish missionaries being present on the plantations in Jamaica. Additionally, the *Annals of the Calabar Mission 1846-1945*, notes the appointment of Rev George Blyth of the Scottish Missionary Society in 1824 to minister to the enslaved population at the Hampden and Dundee estates, Trelawny, Jamaica. As part of the appointment half of the expenses for the chapel built at Hampden were paid for by Scots Archibald Stirling (the Younger) and William Stothert, Scottish-born owners of the Hampden and Dundee estates.

3.6.13 Evidence of the Legacies of Slavery within The Church of Scotland in Scotland

3.6.14 The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

There is little research that specifically examines the role of the Church of Scotland in slavery and the slave economy. Much of what is known about Scottish churches’ involvement in transatlantic slavery comes from the work of Dr Iain Whyte. His research (2004;2006) provides key insights into the role of Scotland’s Christians in the abolition movement.

3.6.15 Whyte notes that there were many anti-slavery petitions promoted by Church of Scotland Presbyteries and Synods, and highlights individual Church of Scotland ministers who played key roles in anti-slavery campaigns. There are no records that the General Assembly, despite condemning slavery, ever petitioned parliament in relation to transatlantic slavery (Whyte 2004).

3.6.16 The 1788 General Assembly received proposals on the abolition of slavery from three Synods (Lothian and Tweeddale, Angus and Mearns, and Merse and Teviotdale). Whyte (2004) references a contemporary report from *The Scots Magazine* which described the commissioners as mostly unanimous in their agreement on the principal of abolition, (save for concerns about loss of life and property for Europeans in the Caribbean, and one commissioner who believed the atrocities of the slave trade to be ‘greatly exaggerated’). They were however less decided over ‘the mode in which they ought to interfere’. It was suggested that the issue should be raised in a loyal address to the King, as to petition Parliament would be ‘beneath the dignity’ of the supreme court of the National Church. The vote to petition lost by 34 votes. The Assembly instead declared,

“*The General Assembly think themselves called upon as men, as Christians and as members of the national church, to declare their abhorrence of a traffic contrary to the rights of mankind and the feelings of humanity.* (Whyte 2004:111)

3.6.17 The 1788 deliverance was reaffirmed in 1791, and the Assembly was satisfied to trust Parliament to take the necessary steps towards abolition. The 1792 General Assembly produced a more strongly worded deliverance that the slave trade was “incompatible with the great principles of religion and morality” and expressed “ardent wishes and earnest prayers” that Parliament should speedily act to bring the trade to an end” (Whyte 2004:112). The debate was observed favourably by Black abolitionist Olaudah Equiano, and the sentiments of the General Assembly were reflected in the petitions sent by Presbyteries and Synods. Whyte contends that even without any formal petitions from the General Assembly, the activities of the lower courts of the Church in 1792 represent a truly national campaign for abolition (Whyte 2004:140).

3.6.18 Following abolition in 1834, the General Assembly wrote to King William IV,
...the Ministers and Elders of the Church of Scotland beg leave to embrace the opportunity which our meeting in the General Assembly affords us, of approaching your Majesty's throne, for the purpose of expressing the lively satisfaction with which we have observed, that an Act has recently been passed by the Legislature, in consequence of which the system of Slavery, so long contemplated by ourselves and our brethren with feelings of regret and anxiety, will, before the termination of the present year, stand abolished forever throughout the British dominions. We humbly beg to congratulate your Majesty on this event, as one which cannot fail to bestow eminent distinction on your Majesty's reign and to afford so great facilities for the spread of the Gospel throughout your Majesties Colonies...
 (Records of the General Assembly, 1834)

3.6.19 Individuals within the Church with links to slavery

The British Government paid £20 million to slave owners in compensation for their loss of ‘assets’ when slavery was abolished across most of the British Empire in 1833. The funds distributed by the Government were precured as a loan and it was only in 2015 that British tax payers finished paying towards this Government debt. This is despite the dehumanising ‘Apprenticeship Scheme’ which followed, where former slaves were compelled to work for their former masters for indecently low wages. The scheme was argued to ease the social transition from enslavement to freedom and to prevent the collapse of colonial economies, however it was considered to be slavery by another name by abolitionists. The scheme was ended and enslaved people finally emancipated in 1838.

3.6.20 The records of the Slave Compensation Commission have been digitised by the University College London Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery (LBS), which holds the most comprehensive registers of British slave ownership and involvement in the Caribbean. The records contain references to a number of individuals related to the Church of Scotland, including some who benefited from slavery through inheritance. In some cases, money from slavery was bequeathed to parishes for specific purposes, such as poor funds distributed by the kirk.

3.6.21 Listed below are a number of examples from the LBS database:

Angus Mackellar – Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (1840), Minister at Pencaitland, inherited a part-share of Hampden and Kerr estates in Jamaica through his wife Helen Stirling.

John Ross of Berbice – Plantation owner in Berbice and later Scottish merchant and banker. Elder in the Church of Scotland, commissioner at the General Assembly for a number of years (Alston 2021)

Rev. Thomas Davidson – Minister at Tollbooth Church, Edinburgh, party (capacity unknown) to a deed in 1804 concerning the Providence estate in Tobago

Rev. Stair McQuhae – Minister of St Quivox and son of senior clergyman Rev. William McQuhae, awarded compensation with others as executor and trustee of Alexander McDowal, likely to be his half-brother-in-law, for the Two Mile Wood estate in St Catherine, Jamaica.

James Smith of Jordanhill – Elder in the Church of Scotland. Silent partner in Leitch/Leith and Smith, West India merchants. Received compensation from a number of estates in Grenada.

William Taylor – Member of the Church of Scotland, one-time merchant and attorney in Jamaica turned abolitionist.

Rev. Peter Robertson – Minister at Callander, awarded compensation for enslaved people on the Friendship Estate, Jamaica as an executor and trustee of Duncan Robertson (uncle).

Rev. Robert Walker – Prominent abolitionist, minister at Cramond and later Canongate Kirk, known as, “the skating minister”, was left the residuary estate of his brother John Walker, merchant in London and St Lucia.

Rev. Robert Walker (Snr) – Moderator of the General Assembly (1771) and Minister of St Giles’ left £100 by John Walker (above)

3.6.22 Sons and relatives of Church of Scotland Ministers recorded on the LBS Database

William, Thomas and James Collow – Sons of the Rev. John Collow, Minister of Penpont, slave-traders and merchants in St Vincent, St Domingue, St Vincent and Tobago.

Robert Haldane Scott – Enslaver, Jamaica, son of Rev. James Scott, Presbytery of Dundee, and nephew of Thomas Munroe (below).

Thomas Munroe – Wealthy planter and surveyor. Owner of the Kinloss and Esher Estates, Jamaica. Son of Rev. James Munroe, minister of Kinloss, Presbytery of Elgin.

Katherine Forbes – Wife of Rev William Asher, minister of Inveraron. Major beneficiary in the will of John Gordon in Jamaica, who owned numerous estates and 300 enslaved persons.

Richard Brodie – Son of Rev James Brodie, minister of Latheron, Caithness. Resident in Jamaica, enslaver.

Robert Douglass of Better Hope – Son of George Douglass, minister of Kirkwall and later Tain. Planter in Demerara.

William Morrice – London West India Merchant, and awarded compensation for several estates in Jamaica, chiefly as a trustee. One of three sons of Rev William Morrice, of Kincardine O’Neil who went to Jamaica.

Hugh Rose of Glastullich – Fifth son of Rev Hugh Rose, minister of Tain, Rosshire. Wealthy enslaver in Berbice, and land owner in Scotland.

3.6.23 Church Buildings

Details relating to church buildings were gathered where possible from information on individual church websites, from academic publications, Historic Environment Scotland's CANMORE database, and through the questionnaire survey. This data is incomplete as a full index of Church of Scotland buildings is not currently searchable, and to research each church building individually was beyond the scope of this project. Some of the buildings noted are no longer the property of the Church of Scotland. There are also a number of former Free Church of Scotland buildings that are now in the care of the General Trustees of the Church of Scotland. Some of these buildings are likely to have been financed by donations from enslavers from both Scotland and the USA, (as referenced in Section 1). Additional research should be undertaken on the history of the former Free Church buildings.

3.6.24 A note on the responsibilities of the General Trustees: church buildings and closures.

In the majority of cases church buildings including the fixtures and fixtures are vested in The General Trustees, although there are examples mostly former United Presbyterian churches, which are held by local trustees. The furniture and other movable items are the property of the congregations.

3.6.25 When a church closes and is sold, any remaining funds are held on behalf of the congregation in the consolidated fabric fund. Once a building is sold Church of Scotland interest ceases, and responsibility for the building passes to the new owner.

Alexander Grant of Aberlour – Enslaver and merchant in Jamaica, nephew of Rev. Alexander Grant, minister of Glenrinnies. Financed the clock tower at Aberlour Parish Church (Questionnaire).

Margaret MacPherson Grant – Heiress of Alexander Grant, financed the building of a school at Craigellachie which is now a Church of Scotland building (Questionnaire).

Stanley Parish Church (closed) – The building of the church, housing and stipend of the minister was financed by Dennistoun, Buchanan and Co, a West India Merchant firm and cotton mill investors (Cooke 2012).

Killearn Parish Church – It is understood that the church building benefitted from the local laird and heritor whose fortune was made in sugar, and the son of a former minister who owned a plantation (other details not known – Questionnaire).

St Columba's, Oban (closed) – Originally built as Argyll Square Free Church, the building was given £1000 by Robert MacFie whose family had made their fortune from sugar refining in Greenock (Questionnaire).

Gourock Old and Ashton – The coat of arms of Gourock, which is widely understood to depict an enslaved man, appears in several locations in the church, including on one exterior wall. The coat of arms has strong links to Duncan Darroch, who made his fortunes in Jamaica (Zuliani 2022).

St George's Parish Church (St George's Tron) – Highlighted in the Glasgow Slavery Audit as having been the place of worship for a number of Glasgow's elite merchants, including John Gordon, James Ewing, Colin McLachlan, James Connell (Mullen 2022).

St Andrews-in-the-Square, Glasgow (closed) – Served some of Glasgow's wealthiest citizens, the Church was built between 1739-1756 and was paid for by the magistrates and the city council, it is also assumed that the tobacco merchants of Glasgow contributed toward the cost. The mahogany interiors were imported from plantations in the Caribbean (Mullen 2009).

Buchanan Parish Church – Built in 1764 by William Graham, 2nd Duke of Montrose, son of the James Graham 1st Duke of Montrose, who kept a black servant in his Glasgow home. This servant may have been one of the earliest black slaves in Scotland and may also have worn a silver 'slave collar. (Lewis 2019).

3.6.26 Monuments, memorials and dedications within churches

All data gathered from the UCL Legacies of British Slavery Database, unless otherwise stated.

Glasgow Cathedral (under the care of Historic Environment Scotland) – Contains a number of memorials to prominent Glasgow merchants who made their fortunes through tobacco and sugar in addition to plantation owners in the West Indies. These include,

- Memorial Window to Alexander Spiers of Elderslie, "Tobacco Lord"
- Memorial Window to William Stirling, Chancellor of Glasgow University, son of enslaver Archibald Stirling (the Younger).
- Memorial inscription to Sir James Stirling of Keir, enslaver in Jamaica
- Memorial inscription to Andrew Cochran, Lord Provost of the City "Tobacco Lord"
- Cecilia Douglas, Grand Dame of Glasgow, planter, enslaver and art collector donated a large window to the Cathedral.

St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen – Memorial window (Bishops' Window) to Hugh Leslie and his wife Ann Agnes Lamond, absentee owner of an estate in Jamaica.

St Michael's, Edinburgh – Stained-glass window in memory of Robert Dall, owner of the Cedar Valley estate, Jamaica.

Bothwell Parish Church – Two memorial inscriptions to Cecilia Douglas and her husband Hugh Douglas, planters and enslavers in St Vincent and Demerara.

Dornoch Cathedral – Memorial window to the Hoyes Family, whose wealth came from Lewis Hoyes, a merchant resident for 34 years in Grenada. Dornoch Cathedral itself was rebuilt between 1835 and 1837 with funds obtained from Elizabeth, Countess-Duchess of Sutherland. Sutherland is largely infamous for her role in the Sutherland Clearances, however she is also noted to have familial links to inherited wealth from slavery in Jamaica, through her mother and grandfather (Alston 2021).

Dallas Parish Church – Memorial to Thomas Cuming of Demerara, prominent member of Demerara society and owner of two plantations.

St Nicholas', Aberdeen – Memorial erected in 1787 by the Jamaica merchant and slave-trader, Alexander Allardyce, to his wife Ann Baxter in St Nicholas' Kirk.

Rosemarkie Parish Church – Memorial to John Fowler, an estate owner in Jamaica and agent for the Bristol based slave-trader James Rogers.

Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh – Memorial inscription to Frances James Adam, part owner of the Nismes Estate in British Guiana.

Fullarton Parish Church – Memorial to James Montgomery, abolitionist poet and hymn writer (Scotland Churches Trust 2023).

Colinton Parish Church – James Gillespie and brother John, philanthropists and tobacco merchants are buried in the church yard and understood to be memorialised inside the church as well (Dick 2018).

Crimond Parish Church – Clock gifted by James Laing of Haddo, doctor and plantation owner in Dominica (Crimond Parish Church 2023).

3.6.27 Funds and financial legacies

All data gathered from the UCL Legacies of British Slavery Database unless otherwise stated. At the time of abolition (1830s) £100 had the equivalent purchasing power of around £6780 today.^[i] Financial legacies predating abolition may have had greater purchasing power.

Logan Parish Church – Bequeathed £500 Jamaican currency (recorded £3500 sterling) by John Bean, owner of the Stirling Castle estate Jamaica.

Irvine Kirk Session – Bequeathed £100 in trust for the benefit of the poor of the Parish by William Gemmell, merchant in Messrs Gemmell, Bogle & Scott. Associated with the Mount Craven estate, Grenada.

Reverend Thomas MacKnight – Minister at Edinburgh, and Moderator of the General Assembly in 1820, left £250 by William Gemmell (as above).

Minster and Kirk Session (likely Forbes) – Bequeathed £100 sterling by John Hoyes of Grenada, likely merchant in St George, Grenada, Speaker of the House of Assembly Grenada and Treasurer of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, for the purchase of coals and 'other articles' for the poor of his "native town".

Presbytery of Aberlour – Bequeathed £200 in trust for the local schoolmaster by Alexander Green associated with two estates in Jamaica.

Ministers and elders of the parish of Aberlour – Bequeathed £100 for the benefit of the poor by Joseph Green, attorney and enslaver in Jamaica.

Ministers and Elders of the parish of Kilmadock – Bequeathed £300 for the poor of the parish by Thomas Paterson, owner of Downe Castle estate Jamaica.

Parishes of Selkirk and Robertson – Bequeathed "£20 sterling to the poor" of both parishes by William Chisholme, owner of sugar plantations in Jamaica. Also left "£20 to the minister of Selkirk for a ring".

Alexander Urquart – Minister at Tough, Aberdeenshire, left £60 per annum for "his natural life" by Robert Harvey enslaver in Antigua.

Rev. Norman McLeod, North Uist – Named in the will of Malcolm McLeod, enslaver in Jamaica.

Ministers of Kilmarnock – Left a perpetual annuity of £180 by William Paterson, an attorney in Jamaica. One half of the annuity was for the "indigent" poor of the town and the other to "promote rivalry and emulation" amongst the scholars of the town.

Minister of Sanquhar, Dumfriesshire – Left £40 for the poor of the parish by Charles Scott, attorney and enslaver in Jamaica.

Dollar Kirk Session – John McNabb, ship owner who transported slaves to the West Indies and benefactor of Dollar academy, left "70,000 pounds bequeathed to Dollar Kirk Session for a "Charity or School for the parish of Dollar and shire of Clackmannan wher I was born."

Bell's Trust – Rev Andrew Bell was a Church of England clergyman who spent a portion of his career in Virginia. He became involved in tobacco trading and received shares and bonds as payment for tutoring services. He left the City of Glasgow £10,000 for educational purposes, and the funds were disseminated by ten Kirk Sessions.

Augusta Lamont Bequest – The great niece of John Lamont, a sugar planter and enslaver resident in Trinidad who received £9000 in compensation on the abolition of slavery. Although illegitimate, John is credited with reviving the Lamont family's fortunes, and he left the majority of his wealth to his nephew James, Augusta's father. Augusta was the last of the family to inherit Clan Lamont's property in Scotland. Upon her death in 1950 she bequeathed the entirety of her share of the estate, which largely related to the contents of Knockdow house, to the Church of Scotland to further the work of the Church in the Cowal Peninsula. The sale of the property and the contents was completed in 1990 and in 1992 £1,549,814.16 was received by the Church of Scotland. The fund is currently understood to be valued at just over £5.5 million.

3.6.28 Miscellaneous

Guarantor: Rev. John Anderson of Bellie – Controversial minister, demitted in 1819. He paid a "substantial sum" as a guarantee for Kenneth McPherson, a relative of his wife, and indebted enslaver in Jamaica (LBS).

Architect: John James (JJ) Stevenson – Architect who designed a number of churches across Scotland. Son of James Stevenson, merchant, broker, co-owner of a cotton spinning mill and business partner of members of the Oswald family, who were linked heavily with slavery (Dictionary of Scottish Architects 2016; MacLehose 1885).

Trustee: Rev Lewis Gordon – Minister at Kinnadar, named as a trustee for lands, plantations, shares of ships and all personal and real estate in Scotland and Jamaica by James Peterkin, estate owner in Jamaica (LBS).

Communion Ware, Kilmadock Parish Church – Two silver communion cups commissioned for Kilmadock Parish Church by William ‘King’ Mitchell, enslaver in Jamaica and activist for the West India Interest. Now in the ownership of National Museums Scotland (National Museums Scotland 2023).

Robert Story, St Modan’s – A previously enslaved man who was transported to Trinidad via Rio de Janeiro. He was brought to Scotland as a free man by Stewart Kerr of Kelso, and taken in to the manse by Rev. Robert Story, under whose name he is buried (Questionnaire).

Executor: Rev Morris Forsyth – Minister, Mortlach Church. Executor of the will, and received the compensation payments, of his late brother James a ‘mortgagee of an estate in St Lucia’ (LBS).

3.6.28 Heritors

The heritors of a church were generally local landowners, who would have contributed towards the church building and its upkeep. Some of this landholding and wealth predated slavery however, there is an interconnected relationship between colonial Britain and estate ownership in Scotland, particularly in the Highlands and Islands. Profits derived from slavery often financed large scale land purchases in the region during the early-to-mid 19th century (Mackinnon and Mackillop 2020).

3.6.29 In general, assessing the wealth of individual heritors requires site specific research which goes beyond the scope of this report. Similarly, without examining the rolls of each individual church it is not possible to know exactly who was worshipping in each church, (aside from some high-profile examples), paying teinds (a historic form of tithing based on agricultural produce), or contributing in other ways towards financing the ministers’ stipends.

3.6.30 There were exceptions to these traditional funding arrangements. For example, across Scotland’s major cities some ministers’ stipends were paid for by mixture of teinds, voluntary giving, and funds from the municipality (Sawkins 2022). Prof John Sawkins (2022) has noted how in 1661 a 6% annuity tax was placed on the rental values of a number of premises across Edinburgh to finance the stipends of six ministers serving the Burgh churches. Another six ministers were financed from other revenue sources, including seat rents and a duty on goods imported through Leith Harbour. The 6% annuity tax was abolished in 1860 with the establishment of the Edinburgh Ecclesiastical Commission, and the harbour duty soon after. Overall the income derived from the Leith Harbour duty was minimal, however Leith Harbour Custom House was noted by the Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review as having a minor link to slavery as the “importation of goods produced by enslaved people into Leith was a major part of the trade coming into Edinburgh, generating significant revenue” (Edinburgh City Council 2022).

3.7 What have we learned?

3.7.1 Through this work the Legacies of Slavery Project Group have become aware of a wider story around slavery and the Church of Scotland which goes beyond the role of the Church in abolition. We have learned that stories of slavery and abolition are often nuanced and not always clear cut. For example, we note that one of the most visually recognisable proponents of abolition Dr Robert Walker, Edinburgh, (immortalised as the ‘skating minister’ by Henry Raeburn), who led the Presbytery of Edinburgh to petition parliament in 1788, was also named eight years previous in 1780 as the residuary heir of the estate of his brother John Walker, a merchant operating in St Lucia. We are also mindful of the number of ‘sons of the manse’ who profited, some significantly, from the enslavement of their fellow humans, whilst also recognising the commendable campaigns of many Presbyteries and Synods as part of the abolition movement.

3.7.2 In many cases we do not see clearly defined direct relationships between slave ownership and the Church of Scotland, although slavery related connections between Scotland and the Caribbean clearly abound. This research however has identified the breadth of indirect connections between the Church and slave derived wealth.

3.7.3 We have learned that there is architectural evidence of connections to slavery within some of our church buildings, although it is not believed to be as wide spread as first thought. There are some prominent examples, such as those at Gourrock Old and Ashton, which has been the subject of previous media reports, and others which specifically mention Caribbean connections, such as the window dedicated to Robert Dall at St Michaels, Edinburgh, or the memorial to Thomas Cuming at Dallas Parish Church. Many examples however require a degree of local or historical knowledge to connect them with slavery, such as the examples of the clock tower and church building in Aberlour, or the clock gifted to Crimond Parish Church. Others such as the memorial to James Gillespie at Colinton Parish Church relate to slavery indirectly through associated industries (in this case tobacco). There are also examples of memorials to those connected to the abolition movement, such as James Montgomery in Fullarton Parish Church. It is hard, however, to ascertain whether a memorial within a church relates to someone connected with slavery by their name alone. There are certainly examples which have been missed by this research as a nation-wide examination of every person named on a church memorial would have been impractical.

3.7.4 There are some examples where the Church or ministers can be seen to have benefitted directly from the profits of slavery, for example enslaver Robert Harvey left £60 a year to the minister at Tough, Aberdeenshire for the rest of his natural life. These examples are not widespread however. What we do see are many instances where money was left to ministers and kirk sessions to distribute amongst the parish or to be used for philanthropic causes: Does this itself though, constitute a benefit to the Church?

3.7.5 Many of the examples listed above relate to Scots who made financial and social gains from enslavement but left a portion of their money for what could be seen as ostensibly ‘good’ purposes, caring for the poor for example. This raises important questions regarding the origins of money from which many people in Scotland, including the Church, benefitted. If the Church is committed to seeking racial justice then we must seek to acknowledge the origins of such funds that the church either received for its own use, or distributed for others.

3.7.6 The case of the Augusta Lamont bequest, which was donated to the Church, does however represent a direct benefit. This family's revived fortunes originated mainly with Augusta's great uncle John Lamont and his business interests, and slave ownership, in Trinidad. The money donated to the Church came primarily from the sale of the contents of the estate in Scotland, rather than directly from the Caribbean. We know that Augusta played no part in slavery personally and, from original documents, she had a strong connection to the Church of Scotland with a desire to see the work of the Church furthered in her local area. But we also know from the experiences of people in our partner church in Trinidad and Tobago that the actions of Augusta's family had an irrevocable impact on the lives of people living in Trinidad, both in the past and today.

3.8 Statement on the impact of slavery in Trinidad and Tobago

Daily life in Trinidad and Tobago, as in most if not all of the Caribbean, is constant testimony to the legacy of slavery. Streets, parks and communities are named after slave owners. Landholding patterns and usage were dictated by those who owned slaves and plantations and then chose to dispose of the land and resources as they chose.

To use one example, the Lamont family owned several plantations in Trinidad and, after the abolition of slavery, disposed of their property and possessions according to their economic, political, religious and social interests.

The Church of Scotland was established in Trinidad and Tobago by those who were part of the British Empire at the time of slavery. The Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago began afterwards with missionaries whose families had migrated to Canada because they had lost their homes in the highland clearances in Scotland. These Presbyterian missionaries saw people here who, like them, had been forced from their homes, culture and language. The missionaries established schools whose locations and curriculum were then shaped by local powerful interests such as those of the Lamont family.

Our present green spaces, roads, social and economic infrastructure have all developed from the decisions made by slave owners. It is therefore a fair conclusion to say that the way we eat, breathe, think and talk as well as the places we live, study, work and worship are all today influenced by slavery and slave owners.

(Rev. Adrian Sieunarine, Principal St Andrews Theological College, Trinidad and Tobago)

3.9 Where do we go from here?

3.9.1 The Church's Legacy of Slavery and Racial Justice today.

A focus group was held in January 2023 made up of ministers and members of congregations from across the Church of Scotland; participants came from both rural and urban locations. The group explored three questions to draw some conclusions about the legacy of slavery in Scotland and the Church, and what the role of the Church should be today in addressing these legacies.

- What do you think the legacy of slavery is in Scotland today, and does this episode of history have an impact on our Church?**

The focus group acknowledged that a substantial proportion of Scotland's wealth came from the industries connected to transatlantic slavery, and that this wealth was not just confined to cities, such as Glasgow. For one participant, alongside the abhorrence of slavery was also a sense of gratitude towards the enslaved, and an acknowledgment that our lives in Europe would be very different had slavery not been integral to the industrial revolution. This was also evidenced in others' reflections that poor funds, schools and church buildings in their areas were known to have been partially, or fully, funded by the profits of enslavers. Many participants shared they had no knowledge of slavery links in their local areas before beginning to actively research the topic. The focus group concluded that there has not been enough acknowledgment of this part of Scotland's past, which extended to an acknowledgment that the Church had also profited through slavery. It was thought that the perception of Scotland as a 'freedom-loving country', with no mention of slavery in its past has been allowed to perpetuate for too long. Many felt this was a difficult issue to address in congregations, although it was suggested congregations did need to be challenged to engage in new ways of addressing historic slavery and present-day racial justice. Participants felt churches often wanted to raise awareness but were unsure about how they could do this well without increasing risks of inflaming local tensions, or taking on a disproportionate responsibility for this part of Scotland's history.

- What is the responsibility of the Church to address issues such as historic slavery?**

It was felt that the Church should use any knowledge it had about past links to slavery to educate people, and learn from this past, not to downplay or try to conceal it. It was felt that physical features of buildings that had links to historic slavery should not be removed, but instead used to help congregations and people the local area learn about this part of Scotland's history. This was seen as an opportunity for the whole Church to examine the story we tell about who we are and what we value. One participant questioned whether, as part of this, the Church should seek to better understand the ways that Christianity was introduced to other parts of the world. It was also suggested that part of the Church's response to the issue of historic slavery and racism today should be to examine its internal structures, addressing where our processes may have been shaped by biases and ignorance, often inadvertently, and thus have been exclusionary. The importance of listening to, and taking seriously, the experiences of people within the Church who are not White was voiced strongly. It was expressed that any acknowledgment or apology must be carefully considered so that the Church is fully aware of what is being acknowledged and apologised for, and there must then be actions behind these words.

- What role does the Church of Scotland have in working towards racial justice across Scotland?**

Whilst it was acknowledged that there is national work that can be done, some participants felt that there would be more benefit in exploring what can be done locally in communities to make changes. It was expressed that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach that would be effective across the whole of Scotland. It was hoped that a fresh look at liturgy and resources could help equip congregations to have conversations about racial justice, and sharing examples of what is being done and working well could help everyone to engage. It was suggested that the Church

often waits for anniversaries or specific moments to progress work around issues such as racial justice when instead we should be weaving equality and justice into all aspects of our common life. One participant felt that we can take the lessons we have learned about the Church and historic racial injustices and apply this to climate change today, and encourage the Church to consider that climate change caused by fossil fuel extraction in the wealthy global north has had a disproportionate effect on the poorer global south. Others were keen to point out that slavery still continues today and we should support work that fights against this. In discussing if the Church should take steps towards reparations, it was acknowledged that engagement with ethnic minorities in Scotland were critical, as are our relationships with Churches abroad. The group also noted it was important to consider how any reparative action today differs from the philanthropy of those who made their fortunes from slavery.

3.9.2 Next steps for Churches

The findings of the Legacies of Slavery Project Group can be supplemented by the work of MSc Heritage student Nathan Zuliani who undertook research with two churches in Inverclyde during 2022. Zuliani quotes Annalisa Bolin (2022) to explain that “what we do with heritage reflects how we understand ourselves: who we were, who we are, and who we want to be” (quoted in Zuliani 2022:58). Zuliani worked to understand how both churches, who had links to historic slavery wealth, aimed to acknowledge their past, consider difficult objects in their buildings, and tell this story to present and future generations

3.9.3 Zuliani (2022) recommends a three-step approach that churches could take when dealing with difficult or challenging pasts: **Understanding; Engaging; and Managing for future uses**. This framework can apply nationally, but would allow individual churches to make decisions based on their own communities and in ways that make sense for them locally.

Step 1: Understanding means describing what is already known and openly discussing the outcomes within the church community. A key part of this is also acknowledging the differing moral context between the present day and of the past period.

Step 2: Engaging asks congregations to work through the following questions;

- What does this history mean for us – as the people who are the inheritors of this history?
- Why does this history need to be told? Why is it important to tell it?
- What is it about that history that still speaks to us today? Is it meaningful? Is it a warning?
- For objects: What was the objects purpose then, and what is its purpose now?

Step 3: Managing for future uses moves these questions into considering practical actions. Churches can then consider;

- How do we share what we know today so that it will not be forgotten?
- How do we deal with physical evidence of the past? Can we remove, relocate, replace, reframe or re-tell it? And what do we need to do this?
- Are we equipped to bring people to engage, converse and interpret safely? What training or guidance do we need?
- Are there any other means available to help us tell difficult stories and help people engage with them?

(adapted from Zuliani 2022:66-67)

3.9.4 Acknowledgement and Apology

The questionnaire responses (see in the online additional appendix at <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/general-assembly-2023/reports-documents>) and the discussions of the focus group evidence a desire of many to see the Church acknowledge the harms that slavery has done in our society and to acknowledge, and apologise in some cases, for the role the Church of Scotland played in these harms.

3.9.5 Through this research we can see that there is evidence of historical connections to, and benefits from, slavery within the Church. As such, the Legacies of Slavery Project Group feel that the Church should acknowledge these connections, confess that we do not worship in a church that is untouched by racism and racial injustices, and offer an appropriate apology.

3.9.6 Apology: A Theological Response

In its 2022 report, ‘Apologising for Historic Wrongs,’ the Theological Forum of the Church of Scotland drew attention to the importance Jesus placed on being reconciled with a brother or sister who has something against us. The history recounted above highlights a number of wrongs that might stand between sisters and brothers of African descent and the Church of Scotland. Past officers and members of the Kirk participated in or benefitted financially from the enslavement of others. They also embraced racist ideals that they attempted to justify on theological grounds. Many of them bequeathed their racist ideals and ill-gotten gains to the Kirk. And subsequent generations of the Church continued to make use of both the material and the ideological inheritance for years thereafter, in some cases extending up to the present day. The Theological Forum observed that ‘Issuing an apology for our historic sins can be an important step toward reconciling with neighbours from whom the church’s past has alienated her’ (CofS Theological Forum 2022). For this apology to succeed in helping to reconcile us with the communities that were wronged, more will be required than merely words. Nevertheless, an apology is a good place to begin.

(Prof. Glen Pettigrove, Chair of Moral Philosophy, University of Glasgow and member of the Theological Forum)

3.10 Recommendations

- 1) A statement of acknowledgment and apology should be brought to a future assembly, to be worked up by the Faith Impact Forum (or any successor body) in collaboration with the Theological Forum and the EDI group. This should include a process of consultation with the wider church where possible to ensure a Whole Church approach.
- 2) A permanent acknowledgement of our legacies of slavery by creating a dedicated page on the church website

- 3) A commitment to becoming anti-racist church and to encourage congregations and presbyteries to continue to engage with the topics of historic slavery, racial justice, and to mark Racial Justice Sunday
- 4) An appropriate art work is commissioned that can help congregations to begin conversations around historic slavery and racial justice in their own local contexts
- 5) The Church supports an academic scholarship, with student support, in partnership with a Scottish University. Our recommendation would be that this scholarship be open to any student linked with our partner churches in Africa and the Caribbean, with as little restriction on topic of study as possible.

3.11 For a list of references for this report, see Appendix 1.

4. SAFEGUARDING THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

4.1 Climate Crisis

The Climate Crisis struck hard in 2022, continuing to smash temperature records in Europe and the UK. Heat, droughts and wildfires raged across the continent causing unprecedented damage, affecting crop yields, food prices, water supplies, transport and public health. As Europe reeled from so-called 'once in a decade' climatic events, the reality is that it got its first taste of what many in the global south have suffered for over a decade but who have less financial resilience to cope. India and Pakistan also scorched in heatwaves, the latter alongside Brazil, China and parts of West and South Africa as regions that experienced devastating floods.

Christian Aid reports the global tally of lives lost in climate related disasters for 2022 to be around 1,800 human beings, with a further 7 million displaced. The financial impact cost around \$200bn. These under-estimates cannot account for long term impacts, nor slow-onset climate events, such as long-term drought occurring in Madagascar which is the first caused exclusively by climate change.

The collapsing climate continues to impact the poorest communities who are least responsible and church communities across the world, including our Partner churches continue to tell their stories and speak up for justice. It is for this reason that we must use our influence to hold the Scottish government to account on its promises on Loss and Damage funding and meeting climate targets. We must also act internally to end our own contribution to the injustice of climate change by decarbonising our operations to achieve Net Zero.

4.2 Biodiversity

As global numbers of insects, birds, mammals, reptiles and other flora and fauna continue to plummet, climate change and biodiversity are increasingly viewed as two sides of the same coin. Landmark agreements on reforestation at CoP26 in Glasgow (2021) and the Biodiversity CoP15 (2022) in China to ensure 30% of the world's surface land and 30% of the sea are dedicated to biodiversity conservation by 2030. Scotland's Biodiversity strategy sets ambitious nature recovery targets to main-stream nature conservation into our way of life. Decades of nature conservation targets have been missed and Scotland now ranks as the 12th most nature depleted nation on earth.

As a church with compassion for God's world, we must care for creation with fervour and call for a better relationship with nature not only in our role as stewards but in preserving the ecosystems that sustain our planet and provide us with resilience to limit climate change.

4.3. Net Zero by 2030 Strategy

4.3.1 The Forum has continued to develop work to realise the General Assembly's goal for the Church of Scotland to be a net zero carbon emitting organisation by 2030. The Forum has convened a cross-Church strategy group which brings together the main entities and decision-making bodies in the life of the Church, including the General Trustees, CrossReach and the work and outputs of the national office at 121 George Street. To ensure inclusion of younger people's perspectives, the Strategy Group includes a former member of the National Youth Assembly. The approach that the Forum is recommending in the following *Net Zero Strategic Outline* has been considered and supported by: The Faith Impact Forum, Faith Nurture Forum, General Trustees, the Central Services Committee, Social Care Council, and the Assembly Trustees.

4.3.2 A *Net Zero Strategic Outline* paper (available at <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/general-assembly-2023/reports-documents>) has been developed with the aim of providing a framework which different agencies and entities of the Church can use to gather data on their current greenhouse gas emissions, and plan for reductions. CrossReach and the General Trustees are currently using the strategic paper to begin data collection. The *Net Zero Strategic Outline* focuses on collecting data, reviewing current practice, raising awareness and setting targets in four areas: buildings and land, activity and travel, finance and investments, and policy and behaviour change. The strategy includes researching and developing a policy on carbon compensating, or "off-setting", which can be used by the different entities in the Church. It sets out work in three phases. Phase 1 is 2022-2025, Phase 2 is 2025-2030, and Phase 3 is 2030-beyond.

The targets in Phase 1 are focused on collecting data, policy change and planning to support action and implementation at local level. Implementation will follow. Although in many congregations action is already underway, experience suggests that previous deliverances of the General Assembly instructing all congregations to reduce their carbon emissions have been rendered largely ineffective by a lack of support, tools and policy-change across the whole church. Phase 1 of the Strategic Outline aims to ensure that local planning and action are effectively supported and implemented.

4.3.2.1 Property and Land

How property is used and maintained will be one of the largest sources of emissions within The Church. This is likely to be the biggest challenge, especially during structural reform in many areas of The Church. Understanding the role of property and land in achieving Net Zero must involve long term strategical planning. An Energy Footprint Tool is being developed to facilitate data gathering on energy use of church property which is a good start in this area, however there is more to be done for other areas.

How will this be measured?

Congregations will be asked to use the Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) to record and submit the energy use, the size of their buildings and the number of regular users of their buildings. The data will then be used to measure the cumulative footprint of The Church and to spot trends in consumption pattern, energy loss and operational costs. This understanding will enable the church and its entities to develop a strategic approach to planning for energy reduction using prioritisation criteria.

Target Outcome 1

- 50% of congregations using the EFT to submit their data via the EFT system by 2025, rising to 75% by 2027
- All other entities of the church submit data on at least 50% of their properties via the EFT system by 2025, rising to 100% of properties by 2027.

Target Outcome 2

National Church emissions reduction plan agreed by 2024

- All entities of the church have agreed a standardised emissions reporting system by 2024.
- Understand the feasibility of emission reduction opportunities for property and land.

Target Outcome 3

- Review of buildings and land to identify feasibility, requirements, and priorities for Net Zero by 2025 and a carbon management plan for all land owned by The Church by 2025.

4.3.2.2 Activities and Travel

Being a national church with various entities in Scotland and partners across the world, The Church must look at its emissions associated with its activities and travel. There will be variation between the different areas of The Church but collectively, The Church is likely to have a large travel and activity footprint.

How will this be measured?

Congregations will be encouraged to use [Climate Stewards](#) to capture emissions data from the day-to-day operations (i.e. goods and services) of their church. This data can be collected and combined with EFT data to get a full picture of congregational church emissions.

Target Outcome 1

- Net Zero Pathway (a web-based resource for congregations with advice and sign-posting to practical information on reducing emissions) available for churches by early 2023
- 50% of congregations are submitting additional annual activity data by 2025, rising to 75% by 2027.
- All other areas of The Church audit their financial expenditure to calculate the emissions footprint of day to day activities such as procurement, waste management, staff travel etc.

Target Outcome 2

- All areas of The Church understand their emissions footprint by 2024
- All areas of The Church have an environmental policy aimed to reduce the emissions of day to day operations by 2024

4.3.2.3 Finance and Investments

The church has wrestled for quite some years with the complexities of how the finances of its pensions and investments are managed. [A report in 2021^{\[ii\]}](#) found that the UK's banks and financial institutions are responsible for emissions nearly two times that of all the country's domestic emissions. This has fuelled ongoing debate on how the church manages its own finances and pressure to ensure its finances are not being used to fund high carbon activity.

Achieving net zero demands that the church no longer indirectly fund climate change through its investments and that the emissions of its assets are fully accounted for.

How will this be measured?

All areas of the church to request inventory emissions data from investment bodies and financial institutions responsible for church funds. This data should be used to understand the emissions footprint of the church's financial assets.

Target Outcome 1

- All areas of The Church understand the emissions footprint of their investment portfolio by 2025
- Where emissions data is not available, church bodies should explore other means of gathering data and/or moving investments to an institution that can provide faith consistent investments for The Church.

Target Outcome 2

- All areas of The Church should have Net Zero compatible investment policies by 2027

4.3.2.4 Policy and Behaviour Change

The Church has two roles when it comes to policy. The first is internal policy. All entities of The Church, including congregations, have policies and standards which determine acceptable terms, outcomes and behaviours of its employees and office-bearers. Individual entities will have varying degrees of power to initiate policies which will reduce the emissions of their employees, office-bearers and operations/ activities. The Net Zero Pathway aims to assist congregations in identifying changes they can make in policies and practices to reduce their carbon emissions.

How will this be measured?

All areas of The Church to instruct Human Resources departments, with appropriate support, to review all staff policies which may have potential to help reduce emission producing activities. Undertake to update any relevant policies that have the potential to reduce emissions or encourage behaviour change toward low emission practices. This includes congregations reviewing their policies and practice, including purchasing policies, at a local level.

Target Outcome 1

- From 2024, Net Zero and emissions reductions will be considered in all new policies.
- All areas and levels of The Church to review operational policies and guidelines that influence decision making. Undertake to update any relevant policies that have the potential to lower the emissions impact of operations and activities by 2025

Target Outcome 2

- All national office staff, presbytery clerks, MDS and parish ministers and relevant decision-making staff in Church entities are briefed and Net Zero aware by end of 2023
- All areas of The Church should have Net Zero policy coherence across relevant national office departments, in presbyteries and at a local level by 2025.
- All national entities in The Church have developed a behaviour change recording system which covers all services and operational areas by 2024 with agreed reporting system to track annual progress.

The second role is that of its national influence on local congregations and public affairs. The Church can bring about behaviour change throughout the institution through its ministry, teaching and practical application of the Marks of Mission. It already has the support of the Theological Forum's paper on caring for creation. It can also influence national policy change through its relationship with partners and the Scottish government.

Target Outcome 3

- Care for Creation and climate justice will be evident in church teaching and ministry.
- Church is visibly engaged with staff, congregations and its entities to ensure their views, experience and business operational and service needs inform policies, strategies and actions towards meeting the net zero targets.
- Church is visibly engaged, participating and challenging world leaders at the highest levels of international debate

4.3.2.5 Carbon Compensation

Recognising that there are areas of The Church in which emissions are irreducible is equally an admission that the church must have a robust and reasonable carbon compensation or off-setting plan that is consistent with the Church's ethics. Navigating the path through an unregulated market of carbon trading and offsetting schemes to a verifiable, long term carbon capture solution which verifiably meets ethical and human rights requirements will be challenging but necessary in order to achieve net zero. The Net Zero industry standard encourages no more than 5-10% of emissions should be offset

Target Outcome 1

- All areas of The Church to look at the fiscal feasibility and the ethical impacts of offsetting and agree on national or independent offsetting strategies which meet appropriate criteria in these areas. These are developed by late 2024.
- Voluntary emissions offset and reporting opportunities available for congregations by 2024.

The Faith Impact Forum commends the *Net Zero Strategic Outline* across all parts of the Church as the basis for making Net Zero a topic for consideration and action at congregational, presbytery and national levels. The Forum would also like to express its appreciation and thanks to the staff and committee members from other departments and agencies for their willing assistance and collaboration in preparing the *Net Zero Strategic Outline*.

4.4 Other Net Zero Activity

An 'Environmental Footprint Tool' is envisaged to help congregations measure carbon footprint in their buildings, is being developed in partnership with the Church of England. This project has not progressed as planned over the last year due to issues arising on data protection, but these have now been resolved and the tool will be developed and trialled in 2023.

A Net Zero Pathway is a new web resource aims to help congregations to identify practical actions they can take to reduce emissions. The Pathway contains tips for free and relatively simple actions and also signposts sources of advice and information on a range of more complex issues. It is expected that this will be launched in the Spring of 2023.

Weekly worship materials about climate change and climate justice are expected to be on line for Sunday 6th June 2023, to coincide with the UN World Environment Day on 5th June.

Project Eve, aimed at providing electric car charging points in church grounds, continues as a pilot, with a number of congregations trying different approaches to installation. Congregations' experiences and learning are informing a "Route Map to EV Installation" which will be available for interested congregations.

5. INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP, PEACE AND DISARMAMENT

5.1 Europe

5.1.1 Ukraine

The war in Ukraine has overshadowed life within the continent of Europe over the past year. Transcarpathia is the westernmost region of Ukraine where many internally displaced people from the war-torn areas of the country have sought refuge. The region is home to a large Hungarian minority population in Ukraine. The Churches in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries have been at the forefront of supporting those fleeing and in providing support to them and to those still in Ukraine. The Church of Scotland already had good and long connections with the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia (RCT) and the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH), and congregations and members very generously raised £430,000 to help. This was sent to the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia, the Reformed Church in Hungary, Hungarian Church Aid and St Columba's Church of Scotland in Budapest

The most important and critical asset of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia's social ministry is the pastors and their families who have remained in Transcarpathia and who coordinate the effort of the local parishes to take care of all those who suffer from the war and are left behind: the elderly, the sick, the large families, the disabled and the internally displaced persons who cannot return to their homes. With 108 congregations, led by 75 pastors, including 12 women, and 64,000 members (many have fled the country or were forced to leave their homes) it is a heavy load. They carry emotional and physical burdens.

The Church provides internally displaced people with free accommodation for the short and the long term. Food for refugees has been prepared in schools, kindergartens, and parish halls. Healthcare and personal hygiene products, clothes and non-perishable food have also been provided.

The Church opened its community spaces for refugees and organised day-care and summer camps for children, and adults were offered pastoral consultation and care. Religious books and worship services were provided in the Ukrainian language. In the midst of it all, the Church maintained its focus on the children of its congregations. Summer camps and preparatory weeks for confirmation have been held, providing a welcome diversion for them from the depressing weight of the war. Additionally, bomb shelters were built to meet the newly set legal conditions for schools and nurseries to open and continue educational services.

Dr. Károly Czibere, head of the Diaconia of the Reformed Church in Hungary and chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid (HRCA) said *'We are grateful for the tremendous wave of solidarity, the prayers and donations from sisters and brothers and partner organisations around the world. Congregations and members of our sister churches have shown that their hearts go out to refugees and victims of the war. They have contributed substantial donations to the ministry of the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, which has been shared with refugees in Hungary and internally displaced people in Transcarpathia, Ukraine. There are no words sufficient to express our gratitude on behalf of the HRCA and the Reformed churches in Hungary and Ukraine, as well as the thousands of refugees to whom you have offered hope in a time of hopelessness.'*

As of 9 February 2023, a total of 23,282 displaced persons from Ukraine have arrived in Scotland and congregations have offered a warm and generous welcome through hosting, befriending, activities in their buildings and more. To support the response of congregations in Scotland, £42,000 of external funding from Action of Churches Together in Scotland was secured to employ a part-time Churches Support Officer for two years until summer 2024. In the first 6 months of the role we have engaged with 62 churches and established local ecumenical networks of churches working to support Ukrainians. If you would like to develop your own work with Ukrainians please contact David Moodie David.Moodie@churchofscotland.org.uk or visit <https://www.sfar.org.uk/ukraine/>.

Church life has been marked by regular prayer for Ukraine and those displaced. Most recently congregations were supported in marking the first anniversary of the start of the war with prayers commended by Rt Rev Kenneth Nowakowski, Eparchial Bishop of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic community in Great Britain and Christian Aid, as well as an ecumenical prayer service for peace on 24 February attended by the Moderator

5.1.2 Mediterranean Hope

Fiona Kendall, Mission Partner in Italy continues to work with colleagues to support and grow the migrant programmes. In the past year there has been the development of migrant corridors providing safe passage for some, innovative new work beginning in the Balkans and further afield in Pakistan. In Scotland we have been able to highlight the issues faced by migrant populations through the excellent Fairtrade Co-operative in Calabria. In 2023, it is hoped to visit Calabria with members of the Church of Scotland who will then be able to take forward this initiative at local presbytery level.

5.2 Africa

5.2.1 South Sudan

In 2019, Pope Francis, the Archbishop of Canterbury and a former Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, hosted a retreat at the Vatican for the leaders of South Sudan. They prayed it would be a space for the Holy Spirit to work, and in that meeting they saw the possibility of hope. Pope Francis knelt to kiss the feet of each politician. Almost five years later, in February 2023, this leadership group returned to South Sudan, in humility, in prayer, ready to wash feet, to listen, serve and pray with the people. The Church of Scotland was joined by a delegation from the Presbyterian Church USA, led by co-Moderator, Rev Shavon Starling-Louis, which has supported the Church in Sudan and South Sudan for over 100 years.

In the Ecumenical Pilgrimage of Peace to South Sudan, the Pope, Archbishop and Moderator emphasised different aspects of the things that make for peace. The Pope spoke of a need to change direction: "I beg you, with all my heart, to accept four simple words: not my words, but those of Christ.... he cried: "No more of this!" (Lk 22:51). Dear President and Vice-Presidents, in the name of God... now is the time to say "No more of this", without "ifs" or "buts". No more bloodshed, no more conflicts, no more violence and mutual recriminations about who is responsible for it, no more leaving your people athirst for peace. No more destruction: it is time to build! Leave the time of war behind and let a time of peace dawn!"

They met those displaced from the conflict going on across the country to hear their stories and understand their context. They heard about the devastation, suffering and grief, but also the beauty of the land, and the hopes of the people. They met with young people and women and were able to share their dreams and aspirations with the political leaders.

The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke of how "We come to encourage the church...Remember your wonderful work in building peace and bringing people together... we come to listen to the young people, 70% of South Sudan, for without listening to their voice, there will be no peace and reconciliation. And we come to honour the women who have known such terrible suffering. And yet to this day are the sign of resurrection life."

They felt God's presence in the country. And sought to encourage the church and its members to remember and call to mind the dedicated work so many people from so many different churches had done over many decades to support peacebuilding and reconciliation. When all else was in disarray, the churches continued to meet, to worship, to offer hope, and to support the people.

The International community is becoming fatigued by a perceived lack of political will to build peace. The people are fatigued by the complications which the lack of peace brings to their lives, in food scarcity, homes destroyed, crops unplanted and so unharvested. Christian Aid continues its witness in the difficult situation by offering humanitarian assistance.

In the Ecumenical Pilgrimage for Peace, the Moderator emphasised how: "All the people are essential co-workers in God's desire for a world in which all people can live life in fullness... (and) extend the reach of justice and compassion to the whole of this young and optimistic country, full of people ready to work for a vibrant and fulfilling future." And that in the power of the Spirit, the people might "live as the prophet Isaiah promises:

21 They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant fields and eat their fruit.

22 ... for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be ... (Isaiah 65)"

5.3 Middle East

5.3.1 Israel and Palestine

The situation in Israel and Palestine shows no sign of changing, with the Occupation bringing hardship and difficulties to Palestinians, but also to Israelis. 2022 was one of the worst years on record for deaths due to the conflict, with numerous clashes throughout the year. The Church of Scotland's partners have remained strong in the face of such hardship, but are also suffering both emotionally and financially in the current climate. It is important that the Church continue to support those who are on the ground making a difference, in both physical and material ways.

The Forum has spoken out on two major items – the E1 Settlement block and the move of the UK Embassy to Jerusalem. Both of these are seen as destructive to the peace process, and steps which will confirm facts on the ground that will be difficult ever to reverse. Working with our ecumenical partners throughout the UK, there have been letters written, with positive results.

Relationships continue to be built across the faith communities, and we hope to develop these further in the coming year. With two new Ministers in place in Jerusalem and Tiberias, we are also hopeful of developing our partner relationships during this year. Here in Scotland, links through presbyteries are providing opportunities for learning and sharing being developed.

5.3.2 Friends of St Andrew's Jerusalem and Tiberias

In 2022, the Friends of St Andrew's Jerusalem revised their statutes and elected a new Board to seek to revamp the work of the Friends in supporting the broader ministry of St Andrew's Jerusalem and Tiberias. New members are sought to support the work and develop the life of the Friends. In January 2023, the Friends supported the visit to Scotland of Jamal Shehadeh from House of Grace in Haifa, a ministry to former prisoners. Rev Muriel Pearson, Mission Partner in Tiberias, accompanied Jamal to help highlight the work of House of Grace. He was able to engage during the visit with a number of different groups including sharing the scope of the work with FICS, Crossreach and church members.

5.3.3 The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) took an historic step on January 22, 2023 when it ordained Ms Sally Azar as its first female pastor. Ms Azar is a graduate of the Near East School of Theology in Lebanon, and undertook further study and preparation for ordination in Göttingen, Germany. She also serves on the Lutheran World Federation Council.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), highlighted how: "Sally's ministry sends a powerful message of acceptance and progress in the church's journey toward Gender Justice." Ms Azar highlighted the important role her friends have played in offering support and encouragement, not least Rev. Mathild Sabbagh, from Syria, who was ordained last year in the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, the Church of Scotland's partner there.

The newly ordained Rev Sally Azar celebrated the sacrament of the Lord's Supper with her father, Bishop Sani Ibrahim Azar, at the Lord's Table in the Church of the Redeemer in the Old City of Jerusalem. Rev Dr Stewart Gillan, the Church of Scotland's Mission Partner and minister of St Andrew's Jerusalem and Tiberias, commented, "I was seated with a large number of women bishops from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, who shared stories of their own journeys to ordination. Outside in the sunshine we enjoyed a youth band, replete with bagpipes, from Bethlehem. It was one of the most thrilling days I have had in ministry. Let us answer Sally's call for prayer – for herself, her Church and the peoples of Israel and Palestine – that the compassion, justice and healing of God be theirs."

Rev Sally Azar will serve the ELCJHL English-speaking congregation in Jerusalem, and also work as a bridge between the Arabic-speaking and English-speaking congregations, as well as working with youth. She commented, "With my ordination, I hope that not only young women are inspired to pursue theology, but that women of all ages who may have wanted to study theology, but didn't think it was possible, will be encouraged to do so."

5.3.4 Earthquake in Syria

Following the strong earthquakes which hit Syria and Lebanon as well as Türkiye, the Church of Scotland was immediately in touch with the Rev Joseph Kassab, General Secretary, of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (NESSL), and his colleagues to offer prayerful support and solidarity, and then followed up with an emergency grant of £10,000 for the church's work in the affected areas in Syria. Many individuals and congregations have given to the emergency response, through organisations such as Christian Aid and the DEC, but the situation will be ongoing

for many months. It is planned to develop a resource – ‘Standing Firm – Rebuilding lives in Syria’ – for presbyteries and congregations to have opportunity to support work in rehabilitation and physical and psychological support through the NESSL. With the Lebanese economy imploding and Syria still not out of a civil war, outside help is essential. This is an opportunity to make a big difference to the life of the Church in Syria and Lebanon and for them to know the love and support from presbyteries, congregations and people in Scotland.

5.4 Asia

5.4.1 Pakistan

Pakistan has been in political turmoil and the economy is struggling with the real possibility the country will default on its sovereign debt. Blasphemy has been weaponised and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) position themselves as the party that champions killing of people accused of the crime. Mainstream parties like Pakistan Muslim League (N) and Pakistan Tehreek Insaf have moved to show their pro-blasphemy credentials by attacking Ahmadi and Shia Muslims to gain approval from the powerful Islamist lobby. The blasphemy law affects everyone but it disproportionately affects marginalised people and communities more. The misuse of the law appears to pass the Pakistan equivalent of the dinner part test, e.g., people boast that they threaten domestic servants with blasphemy charges when they demand their contracted days of leave. Some tradesmen use similar threats against customers from minority faith backgrounds if they complain about high charges. False accusations can ruin people's and families' lives as they have leave home and go into hiding. With TLP able to put huge pressure on the authorities and people involved in blasphemy cases, judges and lawyers who are involved in blasphemy cases are at risk of violence and some have been killed.

The scale of misuse of the blasphemy can perhaps be shown by the fact that while there has been no judicial executions of anyone convicted of blasphemy, there are about 80 people currently on death row. At least 20 people accused of blasphemy have died in extra-judicial killings.

In January the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan expressed its concern over the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act 2023, which was passed unanimously in the National Assembly. While the stated aim of this bill is to curb sectarianism, HRCP believes it is likely to exacerbate the persecution of Pakistan's religious minorities and minority sects. The proposed legislation increases the punishment for using derogatory remarks against holy persons in Islam from three years with a fine to imprisonment for life 'which will not be less than ten years'. The bill also makes the offence non-bailable, thereby directly violating the constitutionally guaranteed right to personal liberty under Article 9. Given Pakistan's troubled record of the misuse of such laws, these amendments are likely to be weaponised disproportionately against religious minorities and sects, resulting in baseless cases, harassment and persecution. Moreover, increasing the penalty for alleged blasphemy will aggravate misuse of the law to settle personal vendettas, as is often the case with blasphemy allegations. At a time when civil society has been calling for amendments to these laws to prevent their abuse, strengthening this punishment will do the exact opposite^[iii].

Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is a mechanism to combat money laundering and terrorism financing but is also used against Non-Profit Organisations and so stifles civil society. Churches, including our partner Church of Pakistan, have largely retreated from working on or even commenting on justice and peace issues with only occasional references to particular blasphemy cases.

The Forum works with the Centre for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS), a Christian organisation committed to addressing ongoing religious persecution in Pakistan. With the Church of England, we have continued to co-host webinars exploring related issues; using insights from partners and activists, two bishops and Lord Jim Wallace of Tankerness have asked questions in the House of Lords about the UK Government's commitment to upholding human rights in Pakistan especially relating to forced conversion and forced marriage of Christian and Hindu young women and girls. Earlier this year a group of United Nations Special Rapporteurs has written to the government of Pakistan on the issue of forced conversions to Islam. They express alarm over the rise in abductions, forced marriages, and forced conversions of underage girls and young women belonging to religious minority groups in Pakistan. It cites a lack of access to justice for victims and their families and the court system's enabling of these offenses through the acceptance of fraudulent evidence. The experts have urged the Pakistani government to take immediate steps to prevent such acts, investigate ongoing and future cases in line with domestic legislation and international human rights commitments, and hold perpetrators to account^[iv].

5.4.2 South Korea

The Korean War ended 70 years ago in June 1953 with an Armistice rather than a peace treaty. Nearly five million people died, more than half – about 10 percent of Korea's pre-war population – were civilians. Among the military casualties were 1,114 British soldiers. Perhaps 10 million families were separated on either side of the 38th Parallel. As we reported in 2022, our partners urge us to support the Korea Peace Appeal (<https://en.endthekoreanwar.net/>) to bring about a Peace Treaty to formally end the Korean War, end sanctions against DPRK, promote links between North and South Korea, and sustainable peace on the Korean peninsula. National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) is one of over more than 370 South Korean civil society organizations, religious groups, individual supporters and over 75 international partner organisations participating in the Korea Peace Appeal campaigning to end the Korean War by collecting 100 million signatures by June 2023, the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice Agreement.

In a statement in January 2023, NCCCK said a strengthening of the New Cold War Order with military cooperation between the US, South Korea, and Japan could provoke North Korea into its own confrontational military responses. This has led to both South Korean and North Korean governments releasing more statements threatening dangerous policies that edge both countries closer to war, whether planned or accidental. The NCCCK affirms that the people living on the Korean Peninsula should not be used as collateral, but should be sovereign and be able to work for peace.

NCKK again claims that only the restoration of mutual trust through peaceful dialogue and diplomacy can lead to common security. NCKK notes that the constitution of South Korea includes language that makes the government responsible for “democratic reform and peaceful unification” which would “contribute to lasting world peace and humanity.” The South Korean government should honour this responsibility rather than pushing the peninsula to the brink of war.

NCKK calls on the South Korean government to ‘stop relying solely on a military response, but instead to put its full effort into breaking the deadlock by pursuing peace through dialogue and building mutual trust. The administration should honour the sovereignty of the people, the majority of whom want peace rather than war. We should work toward a peninsula that feels the warm wind of peace blowing freely’.

5.4.3 Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is facing an immense debt crisis. In December 2021 their debt was sitting at 104.60% of GDP according to the Sri Lanka Central Bank. This is an extreme situation where Sri Lanka pays more than two thirds of its revenue as interest cost: “...compared to all the countries for which data is available in the world, Sri Lanka was recorded as having the highest percentage of interest payments compared to its government revenue in 2020. Sri Lanka’s interest cost to revenue ratio reached an unprecedented level of 71.7% in 2020.”

This unsustainable debt is severely affecting the government’s ability to provide its citizens with basic services such as healthcare, education and social security. With an economy heavily reliant on tourism and exports of textiles, garments and tea Sri Lanka was highly affected by the Covid Pandemic. This is the worst economic crisis Sri Lanka has faced in its post-independence history, and it has plunged Sri Lanka deeper into a political crisis that shows no signs of resolution³. As Sri Lanka deals with multiple crises – political, social and economic – it is also vulnerable to the effects of climate change which requires funds for adaptation, as well as finances to tackle loss and damage. Civil society has been pushed to the point of street protests in the light of food, fuel and medicine shortages, including frequent power cuts. We have received several accounts in the last year of how our partners including National Christian Council of Sri Lanka, Presbytery of Lanka and St Andrew’s Scot’s Kirk have tried to mitigate the worst of the effects.

Faith Impact Forum has held exploratory conversations with Jubilee Scotland about helping to amplify their campaign for debt justice for Sri Lanka. This is an opportunity for Church of Scotland congregations to get involved in the Debt Justice for Sri Lanka campaign through supplied worship packs and/or craftivism campaign packs which will have clear actions they can take to support the campaign, influence the Scottish Government and in turn demand action in Westminster.

5.5 Twinning and Faithshare visits

Due to the Covid pandemic and congregational focus being internalised as presbytery plans were developing during the last two years, congregations and presbyteries have not been able to travel or receive visitors from twinned congregations. It is however heartening to have several planned visits for 2023 and inklings of new twinning developments. Of course, there has been various degrees of online communication over the period of the Covid-19 pandemic and this has surely galvanised using digital media to keep in touch. However, nothing can replace face to face connection – the opportunities to sit around a table for a meal and chat or to share another’s life for a few days can truly change people. Just one example of this, in 2023, the congregation and community on Benbecula will once again welcome their friends from Chuka in Kenya to the island. This visit will be a celebration of a 10-year friendship, a renewing of twinning objectives and the opportunity to expand faith journeys.

5.6 Stamp Project

Despite the use of postage stamps reducing, by collection at congregational level of used stamps we have been able to support the salary of a pastor in the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon this year. This money raised from used stamps provides the vital resource of pastoral teaching, care and support in Lebanon, a country which is facing crisis after crisis and yet where our partner church continues, despite its small size, to provide more than church on a Sunday! The stamp project will continue in 2023-24 and will support tree planting in Malawi as part of climate mitigation work.

5.7 Fairtrade and Traidcraft

The Church of Scotland and Christian Aid have supported the Fairtrade movement for many years and the General Assembly has repeatedly urged congregations to buy Fairtrade and encourage church members to advocate for a wider range of Fairtrade products in shops and supermarkets.

The Forum was saddened to hear the news that Traidcraft, a fair-trade innovator rooted in church life, had gone into administration in January 2023. We recognise that many congregations will have sold Traidcraft products through Fairtrade stalls. The work of Traidcraft, which was founded in 1979, helped to transform awareness of and support for Fairtrade for more than 40 years. We want to give thanks for all that Traidcraft has achieved, and to acknowledge the incredible work for economic justice that its staff and countless local volunteers and Traidcraft reps helped to deliver. They leave an important legacy and we encourage the Church to continue its steadfast support for Fairtrade and to continue to maintain Fairtrade Church status as a way to honour this heritage.

5.8 Nuclear disarmament

The Moderator was able to demonstrate the General Assembly’s continued and consistent position in support of nuclear disarmament at a prayer vigil and peace witness held outside Faslane naval base in October 2022, together with the Archbishop of Glasgow, the Most Reverend Bill Nolan, president of the Scottish Catholic Justice and Peace Commission.

6. INTERFAITH RELATIONS

6.1 Jewish-Christian Glossary Project

It is anticipated that the Forum's work in relation to the Jewish-Christian Glossary Project will be outlined in a Supplementary Report.

6.2 Islamophobia Webinar

Following the General Assembly's approval of the deliverance to "adopt for internal use the All-Party Parliamentary Group's (APPG) definition of Islamophobia, and its guidelines, to aid the Church of Scotland in challenging Islamophobia", Faith Impact Forum arranged a webinar with members and activists within the Muslim community to discuss the importance of this definition and how Islamophobia affects Muslim individually and across society. With the tangible examples discussed at the webinar and the suggestions of what would express solidarity from non-Muslims will be turned into an e-learning training available to everyone in the Church to access and engage with. This will be ready some time in 2023 with access details released via the Church of Scotland website or Ascend.

6.3. Interfaith Week 2022

The Moderator managed to visit the places of worship of the Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish communities during this week along with receptions for the Council of Christians and Jews and Interfaith Glasgow. These visits are an important way of extending and maintaining existing interfaith relationships and a way to discuss common areas of interest and listen to the specific experiences and insights of those from different communities.

7. INTEGRITY – THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN TASK GROUP

7.1 Integrity's strategy since September 2021 has been focused on building the capacity of individual Church members and leaders to understand, respond and prevent violence against women, building on the 2021 General Assembly Deliverance. In order to achieve this, the strategic priorities have been narrowed to two areas of work. The first has been the objective of improving awareness within the Church of Integrity's work and thus creating a communication unit dedicated to promoting resources and training. This unit has also dedicated time to learn from congregational feedback as to which resources and aspects of training needed to be adapted and improved. The second priority has been focused on developing one single form of introductory training piloted in 2021, rather than expanding the range of topics Integrity could offer. This decision was reached out of recognition that a diversity of knowledge, confidence and understanding exists within the Church and, in order to determine that the Church as a whole seeks to 'do no harm' at the very least, Integrity was better to continue delivering introductory knowledge to a broader base of people, rather than focusing on the smaller group who had already been trained.

7.2 By focusing on this one singular form of training Integrity, has ensured that over 100 people across a diverse range of roles and leadership within the Church of Scotland, received the same foundational training. The impact is that individuals in a variety of roles receive consistent advice and information which they can then share safely with others. Integrity would then seek to continue offering introductory training, for which demand has been high, and also approach those who have been trained with more in depth and practical training opportunities. Impact reports for each training Integrity can report that 95% reported that their knowledge improved, furthermore 85% reported that their confidence had grown in responding to disclosures due to the pragmatic information regarding what is helpful, unhelpful and actively harmful for victim survivors. Overall the training has helped Integrity make direct contact with those who have just begun to journey on this topic and are looking to gain basic insights and those who are further ahead but require encouragement and more pragmatic advice. As a result, Integrity has found that the training sets people up with a range of ideas for people to implement in their own context and provides a link to allow individuals to reach out for future support and resources from Integrity. In addition to facilitated training, Integrity has also developed e-learning training for anyone within the Church to access and learn at their own pace. The course takes individuals through the issues underpinning violence against women, practical ideas in responding to disclosure and initiatives to help your Church become a safe and trustworthy environment for people to turn for support.

7.3 Integrity has been keen to connect the wider societal issues of gender inequality, with issues that specifically affect those in Church life and faith, often an ignored dimension when women access support services. At the same time, Integrity has increased our engagement with Scottish Women's Aid, Rape Crisis and others to share knowledge and experience regarding how their support might be better suited for women of faith.

7.4 Integrity is piloting a men's only training in February entitled 'What's a man to do?' which was borne of the recognition that much of prevention starts with men having open and frank conversations about attitudes and behaviours that can lead to abuse. As well as offering skills and advice to build their confidence in speaking out when they hear and see problematic behaviour. The general training already offered can only go so far in encouraging men given that 90% of participants have been women. Very Reverend Martin Fair has been a key part of putting this training on and summarised the need for this work as follows:

"...For men simply to say they wouldn't commit acts of physical violence isn't enough – violence comes in many forms and is happening so I want all men to consider that they have a part to play. Men need to raise awareness and take action."

7.5 The final focus for Integrity this year will be to review the Violence Against Women Charter. This was developed in 2016 as a way for congregations to find a way into the topic as well as identifying related areas of Church life that they can positively influence. Integrity would like the charter to be a way of building a network of congregations actively engaged on this topic and working with each other to promote gender equality alongside healthy, happy and flourishing relationships. The charter would also seek to help them create environments that would encourage anyone in the Church, or those outside of it, to seek support and be met with love, grace and kindness in keeping with our calling as Christians. Integrity's vision can be summed up using the words of a victim survivor within the Church:

7.6 *"I long for the church to be a supportive community...friendly. A community of courage, willing to challenge the causes of violence. Not a place to hide or cover up suffering in our midst, but accepting of vulnerability, pain and the messy realities of human life. A sacred space where it's safe to be just who we are, and loved by God. A place of celebration, hospitable, open..."*

(Rosie, domestic abuse survivor)

8. POVERTY AND COST OF LIVING

8.1 Congregations and communities have continued to endure the crisis of rising food, fuel and energy costs over the past year. Stories of people struggling against poverty and the increasing pressures on public services have been widely shared, and the response of churches through support of individuals, families and communities has been substantial. The Forum commends those churches that have delivered practical projects to meet human need, including through the provision of emergency food aid or to offer warm spaces for people to gather during the winter. However, important though it is that those who are able to help do so, the emergency stop-gap provision offered by churches and charities must not become normalised or an expected response to poverty. Governments and society have a moral duty to provide a social security safety net that is sufficient to allow people to live with dignity and thrive.

8.2 The Forum is grateful to Fife Presbytery for establishing a Poverty Task Force in partnership with the Priority Areas team, which convened a Poverty Hearing Day in Methil in November. The event was addressed by Gordon Brown, former UK Prime Minister. The Forum had earlier in the year collaborated with Church partners to share research and ideas about the growing urgent need for policy-makers to respond to the impact of rising prices and cuts to public services. ^[v]

9. SCOTTISH FAITHS ACTION FOR REFUGEES AND FAITHFUL WELCOME

9.1 The Forum continues to host Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees (SFAR: <https://www.sfar.org.uk/>), and the project co-ordinator is an integral part of the Public Life and Social Justice staff team in the Church of Scotland national office. SFAR was involved in a faith-based response to the passage of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 through the UK Parliament, and has continued to advocate for a return to the principles of the UN Refugee Convention and against the proposed Rwanda deportation flights. SFAR has also supported Scottish churches and faith groups in speaking out against the treatment of people seeking sanctuary through crossing the English Channel. SFAR has also been working to influence the Scottish Government's New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy to ask that it takes more account of faith and belief issues in refugee integration. SFAR has also offered a comprehensive response to the displacement of Ukrainians and the dispersal of asylum seekers to other parts of Scotland, supporting dozens of local congregations as they welcome New Scots in their communities. Every year engaging resources are produced for congregations to mark Sanctuary Sunday (25 June 2023) and we encourage the celebration of this day across the Church.

9.2 The Faithful Welcome project reported at the last General Assembly concluded in autumn 2022. This partnership project with Faith in Community Scotland was funded by the European Union and aimed to support faith communities to welcome refugees and asylum seekers to enable them to be an integral part of community life. The Faithful Welcome partnership and work will continue in a new form after securing further external funding. *Somebody Reaches Out* is the name of a summary report of focus groups held throughout the project which helps faith communities shape their responses to New Scots. ^[vi]

10. PARLIAMENTARY AND POLITICAL AFFAIRS

10.1 Scottish independence

Following Brexit and the Covid pandemic, the last year has seen a renewal of arguments for and against Scottish independence, and political disagreement and legal arguments about whether or not the Scottish Parliament should have the power to legislate for a referendum.

The General Assembly of 2012 agreed a deliverance: *Confirm that the Church will remain impartial with regard to the question in the forthcoming referendum.* The Forum believes that, ten years on, it is the time to invite the General Assembly to reaffirm this position. It is clear that within the membership of the Church there are passionate supporters of independence and passionate defenders of the union. There are also many undecideds. The Forum believes it would be unwise for the Church to take a corporate position for or against independence at this time. If the Church were to express an opinion on the highly politicised and controversial debate about whether or how there should be a referendum, or if the next UK Parliament election should or should not be considered a *de facto* referendum, there is a real risk of alienating a large section of society and impairing the mission of the Church. It is also likely to severely impede our role as an institution that builds bridges across the constitutional and party-political divides and our role in society as a safe space that puts the highest interests of the people above the political rifts of the day.

10.2 Human Rights Reform – UK Bill of Rights Bill

In 2022 the UK Government consulted on new reforms to human rights legislation. The Forum responded on behalf of the Church, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee, based on the reports received and deliverances agreed by the General Assembly in 2013 and 2016. The response echoed the view of these earlier Assemblies in opposing reform of the Human Rights Act. At the time of writing, the Bill of Rights Bill is waiting for its Second Reading in the House of Commons.

10.3 National Care Service (Scotland) Bill

Over the last year the Faith Impact Forum has continued to work with CrossReach on the Scottish Government's proposals for a 'National Care Service for Scotland', implementing recommendations of an independent review headed by Derek Feeley which reported in early 2021. A "Framework" Bill, which proposes governance structures for the National Care Service has been introduced to Parliament, and – at the time of writing – is expected to complete Stage One consideration by 17 March. Under the proposals, responsibility for social care will be transferred from local to national government. The details of how the National Care Service will operate are to be developed through a "co-design" process, which gives care providers including CrossReach the opportunity to give input from their experience. Further legislation is likely to follow the "co-design" process and we will continue to follow this and provide opportunities for churches to share their views. For more information please see <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-views/social-care-reform>

10.4 Assisted Suicide

Liam McArthur MSP has proposed an Assisted Dying Bill in the Scottish Parliament. The Forum responded on behalf of the Church to his proposal. At the time of writing, it is expected that the Bill will be introduced shortly and there will be a chance for parliamentary scrutiny and wider public debate, possibly happening in Spring of 2022. The Forum has continued to promote the view of the General Assembly, which is to support the current law prohibiting assisted suicide. The Forum plans work in 2022 to support engagement with MSPs, so decision-makers are aware and informed of the views of the Church.

10.5 Gender Recognition

Last year the Forum reported to the General Assembly that it would consider the Gender Recognition (Reform) (Scotland) Bill. The Forum agreed a process which led to the submission of written evidence and the giving of oral evidence to the Scottish Parliament Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee. This generated some feedback from some within the Church who were unhappy at the position the Forum presented, or who had expected a broader level of consultation across the Church before making a public statement.

Some Church of Scotland people complained that the Forum had adopted a position and made a public statement that went beyond the decisions of the General Assembly, and which it therefore did not have the competency to do so. Here, the Forum asserts its role and remit as a General Assembly-appointed Forum, which includes a "making theological, ethical and spiritual contributions to public policy and decision-making on issues of societal, economic, and political significance". When the political world moves faster than our Assembly timetable, developing positions and making statements would seem to be a necessity if we want to retain a credible public voice. But the Forum does acknowledge that in this case its position did go too far for some members. One particular sticking point which has been highlighted is a section in the 2022 FIF GA Report, which said:

7.6.3 On the first debate about the Bill, the Faith Impact Forum will seek to consult and engage constructively on the issues that will soon come before Holyrood and where the views of the public will be invited. We urge individual ministers, elders and members to consider the ideas for reform themselves, and if they are so moved, to make representation to their own MSPs. The Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office will publish a briefing on the issues once the legislation is introduced.

Some Church members who were surprised at our response went back to the Report to find this, and were disappointed not to have been consulted. It became obvious that there was a difference in our understanding about that commitment to 'consult' and what others might have expected of us. We are sorry for this misunderstanding and our part in it. Between the January 2022 drafting of this section and the May 2022 submission of written evidence to the Committee, the Forum discussed this on a number of occasions, and unusually for this topic, recognising its sensitivities, the written response was shared for comment from several other departments and key stakeholders at the level of the national Church. The Forum has reflected on this process. We are sorry to those Church members who wanted more involvement or who felt that the view that was presented did not reflect their opinion. We aim to improve our processes for future controversial topics, and will make sure that that this experience is not forgotten when the Forum is dissolved and the new committee structure introduced.

The second main focus of internal criticism was that, in taking our position, the Forum was seeking to push for or create a theological position with regards transgender identity. In our responses we sought to make clear that this is not the case, but we have instead been following the pastoral care and sensitive approach agreed previously by the General Assembly. Our views on changes to civil law about how a person applies for a Gender Recognition Certificate were about how to make an administrative process less harmful for the individuals concerned.

A webpage has been created which includes links to the Forum's response to the Parliamentary Committee, as well as other reports and information about the Church and diverse gender identities: <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-views/diverse-gender-identities>

10.6 Conversion Therapy Ban

Following the decision of the General Assembly 2022 to support a ban on conversion therapy, the former Convener, the Very Rev Dr Susan Brown, was invited to be part of a Scottish Government independent group on conversion therapy. The Scottish Government are expected to consult on plans and introduce legislation in the near future. The Forum expects that the Faith Impact Forum (or any successor body) and Public Life and Social Justice Programme Group will continue to represent the Church's position at the appropriate time.

10.7 Abortion Buffer Zones

In summer 2022, Gillian Mackay MSP launched a consultation on a proposed Abortion Service Safe Access Zones (Scotland) Bill. This proposes a ban on protest – possibly including static or silent prayer – outside health care facilities providing abortion services. The Bill's supporters argue that there has been a recent rise in the number of aggressive and intrusive campaign protests which are harming the wellbeing of patients and staff, and that if people want to campaign

against the law on abortion they should protest outside Parliament. Opponents have argued that the right to freedom of expression is deeply held, and that would be a deeply serious matter if the state were to decree that there are places in Scotland where it were not permissible to pray, if it did not interfere directly with another person. The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2022-23, published in September, said they would support the development of legislation on this topic as soon as practicable. The Forum expects that the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and Public Life and Social Justice Programme Group will continue to monitor news, and engage in the debate where appropriate.

11. DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE

11.1 Background and language

It is sadly well known that Scotland has a problem with drugs and alcohol, and that the challenges our society faces are greater than in other parts of the UK and Europe. The police, NHS, social work, courts and prisons service as well as other statutory and voluntary agencies will attest to the financial costs. As the Church we can add the spiritual and emotional impact of addiction on individuals, their friends, families and communities. It was with this in mind that the General Assembly last year instructed the Faith Impact Forum to prepare a report on issues relating to drugs and substance use. The following paper has been prepared on the Forum's behalf by the Society, Religion and Technology Project. We are inviting the Assembly of 2023 to agree a new deliverance instructing further work and action on this topic.

One issue that we have considered and is worth highlighting at the start of this report is about the language deployed in relation to this subject, namely do we talk about drug *use* or drug *misuse*. Across the sector there is sometimes differing approaches, no doubt related to how language and our approach to an issue evolves over time.

One problem with talking about drug *misuse* is that it might be perceived that there is a degree of judgement or stigma against the individual struggling against addiction: they have misused the substance, they are to blame. To talk about 'drug use' might remove this sense of apportioning individual blame or judgement. As you will see, our report emphasises that addiction is not a choice, and that to reduce drug harm we need to tackle stigma and judgemental attitudes towards drug users.

There is a contrary – and valid – view that would say that talking about drug use may normalise attitudes towards consumption, which downplays the medical issues for individuals and the scale of Scotland's public health crisis.

Our conclusion is that there is not one single answer, but that how we talk about this issue might well depend on context and audience. You will note that in the following report we have chosen 'misuse' and we do so on the basis that this is a social policy report and it felt more appropriate. With this comment we underline that our position is non judgemental and we believe the Church should work actively to tackle stigma. There may be other circumstances that it would be better to choose 'use'. We invite Commissioners and readers of this report to think about their language before they write or speak about this topic.

11.2 Introduction

The growing use of recreational drugs in UK, particularly Scotland, is having devastating effects on individuals and their families. Perhaps most obvious is the tragic death toll due to drug misuse.

Substance misuse, in its most severe form, is referred to as addiction. Medical researchers are increasingly of the view that substance use leading to addictive behaviour is best understood as a chronic illness caused when addictive substances, such as heroin, overstimulate and reset specific brain circuits involved in reward and self-control. "Opioid dependence is not just a heavy use of the drug but a complex health connotation that has social, psychological and biological determinants and consequences, including changes in the brain. It is not a weakness of character or will." (World Health Organisation 2006.)

It is important to realise that substance use disorders are preventable and treatable and Church congregations can have an important role in healing those whose lives are dominated by drugs.

11.3 The size of the problem.

Illicit drug use is global, affecting millions of people of all ages from all sections of society. Estimating prevalence is difficult because of its hidden nature, but data on drug use from the National Records of Scotland reveal that around 10% of survey respondents aged over 15 are using drugs, the commonest being cannabis (8%), cocaine (3%) and ecstasy (1.6%). "Problem" drug users, who are most likely to have severe and life-threatening health and social problems, are mainly those regularly taking heroin, morphine or methadone (opiates), often in combination with other substances. The number of individuals in this group has remained fairly steady over the past decade at around 60,000 or 1.6% of the Scottish population; the majority are male and tend to live in the cities. In this group there were 1339 deaths in 2021, nearly twice the number recorded for 2009, and a fivefold increase compared to 1996. 84% of deaths involved heroin and in nearly every case the user was taking a combination of drugs, often with alcohol and Valium. The rate of drug-misuse deaths is 3.7 times higher in Scotland than in UK as a whole, and is among the highest in Europe.

In addition to drug misuse, 24% of adults in Scotland drink alcohol at harmful levels of over 14 units a week, presenting a major public health challenge due to the associated risks of physical and mental health problems. Excessive alcohol consumption leads to an increased risk of high blood pressure, liver cirrhosis, pancreatitis, cancers, mental illness, accidents and infections such as tuberculosis HIV and hepatitis. In 2021 there were 1,245 deaths in Scotland where alcohol was the underlying cause of death- a similar number of deaths attributed to drug misuse, though in much larger section of the population. (However, it should be remembered that, in comparison to drugs, alcohol is freely and legally available.)

11.4 What is substance misuse?

Substance misuse can be defined simply as the use of drugs or alcohol in a way that causes harm to the user and those around them. Each substance causes its own pattern of physical problems, and can be linked to the breakdown of relationships at home and work contributing to unemployment and poverty, partner violence, child neglect, increased risk of accidents and, at its most severe, death from overdose. There is a growing body of research evidence relating Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) and substance use. This is being used by organisations such as CrossReach to seek to reframe the question from “why are you behaving like that?” to “what happened to you that has contributed to your current behaviours?”. Adopting a new, compassionate, approach can help reduce stigma surrounding substance misuse.

The substances most frequently misused are opiates such as heroin, stimulants such as cocaine and ecstasy, hallucinogens including LSD and ketamine, cannabis, some drugs prescribed as pain relievers, sleeping tablets, and tranquilisers and also “designer drugs” which are synthetic variations of a legally prohibited drug devised to circumvent drug laws.

11.5 What is addiction?

Some people develop addictive behaviours and need to take a substance regularly to function normally. They have built up a tolerance to the drug, needing increasingly larger amounts to get the same effect, and experience withdrawal symptoms when they try to stop. They give priority to getting the next fix, disregarding cues for other rewards to be gained from family and social life. This complex pattern of changes to a person's thinking, feelings and behaviours is caused by adaptations in the reward system of the brain, in response to repeated stimulation by an addictive substance.

Substances that cause addiction share the property of activating the reward system of the brain, producing feelings of pleasure, euphoria or even ecstasy referred to as a “high”. This group of interconnected brain structures is responsible for the feelings and behaviours associated with wanting, desiring, or craving a reward. Primary rewards, for most animals are water, food, parental care and sex. Reward circuits have evolved to sustain and reinforce the fundamental behaviours on which survival and successful reproduction depend. When a substance such as alcohol or heroin repeatedly over-activates the reward system, these crucial brain pathways respond by overly reinforcing reward seeking behaviours which then become dysfunctional.

Not everyone who misuses a substance will become dependent and millions of people use alcohol and illicit drugs without developing serious complications. Why some people are more prone to dependency than others is not well understood, but drug addiction is more common in some families and genes make a substantial contribution to risk. The frequency, duration and amount of a drug used is also important, as is the age when a person starts to use drugs. Adolescents and young adults are at particular risk of serious drug use disorder because the developing brain is more sensitive to damage- especially the frontal cortex and the other brain regions mediating impulse control and reward.

Increased mortality linked to alcohol and substance misuse is partly due to the direct adverse effects of these substances on liver, heart and other organs, but several other factors, including serious mental illness which is over-represented in this group, poverty, social isolation and reduced likelihood of seeking medical care may each contribute to the high mortality rates measured.

As a public health issue, drug misuse with addictive behaviours has features in common with disorders such as heart disease, diabetes or asthma. All of these disrupt the normal, healthy functioning of an organ in the body, are influenced by genetic, behavioural, social and environmental factors and in many cases are preventable and treatable. If left untreated they can last a lifetime and may lead to death.

Drug misuse is a public health issue, but the field is highly stigmatised and criminalised. A medical explanation may benefit someone living with addiction by reducing stigma. A better understanding of pharmacology opens exciting possibilities for new kinds of interventions (for example clinical trials are being conducted on an anti-cocaine vaccine and treatment of addictions using hallucinogens. Proposals to legalise cannabis and other potentially harmful substances, lie between the two extremes of prohibition and a completely free market. Understanding how drugs affect the brain can inform this debate.

11.6 Can a person dependent on a substance recover and stay well and what treatments are available?

Recovery is a process of change to which both preventative programmes and treatment strategies contribute. Prevention measures aim to reduce substance use in the general population among recreational users who are not adversely affected. Treatments are available for the smaller numbers of people with severe addiction. Guidelines published by The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) reviews the evidence for different treatments of drug misuse under the headings: detoxification, pharmacological treatments and psychosocial interventions including the 12-step approach of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Although it remains controversial to what extent the spiritual component of the 12-step approach of Alcoholics Anonymous is essential to the effectiveness of the treatment, the programme is widely followed to help people remain abstinent. The first three steps are:

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

Mindfulness-based psychotherapy is a secular behavioural programme that has roots in spiritual meditation practices. It is at least as beneficial as other types of psychotherapy in a variety of settings including treatment of addictive behaviours.

The importance of spirituality in treatment interventions is supported by many published studies which tie various aspects of spirituality to a number of improvements- including fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety, a lower incidence of suicide and lower severity of alcohol and drug use. One recent US study using data from over 100,000 participants who were followed up for 16 years, reported that deaths from suicide, unintentional poisoning by alcohol

or drug overdose and chronic liver disease and cirrhosis were substantially reduced in the group of men and women who identified themselves as Church attenders, even after adjusting for medical and psychiatric history and other lifestyle factors.

11.7 What is the Church of Scotland doing?

CrossReach is responsible for this aspect of the Church's ministry, employing around 1,700 staff and mobilising over 300 volunteers in order to support more than 11,000 people each year. The Church of Scotland has committed to supporting CrossReach as a vital outworking of Jesus' command to love our neighbours as ourselves. CrossReach provides a range of responses to Drug or Alcohol dependency, including harm reduction advice and support, provision of over 100 residential rehabilitation placements every year, places for people under the new Prison to Rehab initiative to help people whose offending is linked to substance use, supported accommodation for people learning to live their lives free from drugs or alcohol, and a training programme to help people in recovery use their experiences in a positive way to help and inspire others.

In addition to the work of CrossReach, a number of individual congregations also run volunteer-led activities in their communities which support local people by providing a welcoming, non-judgemental safe space where local people can drop in. Congregation-led services often have the advantage of being friendly, informal places and in some cases, this can make it easier for people to discuss what's on their minds. Examples are:

- Havilah, St Andrew's Church in Arbroath started in 2006 and is named after a place of abundance mentioned in the book of Genesis. Havilah offers a drop-in service, providing simple food and drink, activities and a welcome to anyone seeking company and non-judgemental listening, five days a week.
- The Shed Project, Martin's Memorial Church in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis. This community resource, initiated and managed by Martin's Memorial Church in Stornoway, fulfils the Church's vision for a community space. The Shed focuses on providing safe spaces for women and men affected by addiction, to meet and socialise without anything getting in the way
- Menzieshill Parish Church, Dundee provides a range of supports into the community and works with CrossReach and Bethany Christian Trust to offer advice and support to people who want to stop using drugs or alcohol.
- Parish Nursing, The Steeple, Dundee: The Parish Nursing initiative has been set up to provide whole-person health care for people who are experiencing homelessness, or are at risk of becoming homeless, life and health inequalities, addictions, and loneliness. The project operates as a drop-in clinic which runs twice a week at the Steeple Church where the parish nurses provide a broad range of services

There are a number of practical ways for congregations to respond to the suffering caused by substance misuse, including:

1. Seeking to help reduce stigma experienced by people living with substance misuse and recognise that substance misuse is a major public health issue.
2. Open your doors. Create an inclusive supportive Church community where individuals and families coping with addiction are welcome.
3. Support the work of CrossReach and other Christian charities and encourage volunteering to work with homeless people.
4. Promote spiritual healing as a part of medical and social interventions – the bio-psycho-social-spiritual model. (John Swinton – Disability Theology.)

As part of this work, we invite the General Assembly to instruct the Faith Impact Forum to undertake a series of conversations with key players in this area, with aim of developing the twin themes:

1. identify the views of people in Government, the NHS, Social Work and academics in the field, about the importance of Churches taking a role responding to the drugs epidemic.
2. Discuss the theology of addictions and, together with CrossReach and other charities, suggest a practical toolkit of ways that congregations can be involved.

The Forum suggests that this work be carried out through the Church's Society, Religion and Technology project.

11.8 References See Appendix 2

Addendum

VERY REVEREND SUSAN BROWN

The Church is indebted to the commitment and dedication which Susan has shown in her willingness to serve the national church in a variety of ways over many years, not least as a previous moderator of the General Assembly and as a member of the Chapel Royal in Scotland. Susan's breadth of expertise and talent has served the church well in the mission field both here in Scotland and abroad, having been past Convener of World Mission. When Susan was appointed as the first Convener of the new formed Faith Impact Forum in 2020, we could not have had a better person to lead us through what was going to be a difficult time as the world found itself gripped by a global pandemic.

Forum members valued her compassionate empathy and self-effacing humour as both a delight and encouragement as we grappled together with new ways of working together. Susan led the Forum through its inception, helping to shape its work in those early days. We are indebted to her especially for her contribution towards the compilation of the Jewish-Christian glossary, which in itself is an important piece of work that is being presented to this year's General Assembly.

Susan's legacy to the Church is far reaching and beyond summarising in a couple of short paragraphs here. On behalf of the wider Church, the Faith Impact Forum would like to express our grateful thanks to Susan and wish her every blessing in her continued ground-breaking ministry within the Presbytery of Duns.

KAREN HENDRY, CONVENER PRO TEM

The Faith Impact Forum would like to heartily thank the Reverend Karen Hendry for her hard work, leadership, wisdom and the calm style in which she led the Forum since August 2022. Her guidance through a time of great change and at times, anxiety has been very much appreciated. She has steered the Forum towards becoming part of the greater whole when uniting with the Faith Nurture Forum as the new Faith Action Programme Leadership Team. This has been no easy task which involved taking on the role at short notice and keeping up the excellent standard set by her predecessor. A true talent within the church who is self-deprecating, full of gently humour and yet as sharp as a pin, Karen is willing and able and has much to offer the church in leadership terms in the future having proven her worth with the Faith Impact Forum. A joy to work with and for – many, many, thanks.

REVEREND PETER JOHNSTON

Peter is a man of many talents and the Church is grateful for his commitment to the variety of ways in which he has served.

At this year's assembly Peter completes his term as Vice Convener of the Faith Impact Forum, having served on the previous Church and Society Council. He has aided the Church well in various capacities, sitting on many of its sub-committees. In particular, the Forum is grateful for his contribution to the ongoing work of the Science, Religion and Technology (SRT) Committee, the exploring the world of artificial intelligence.

The Forum would like to express our heartfelt appreciation and thanks to Peter for his commitment and servitude to the wider Church.

In the name of the Faith Impact Forum

REV KAREN HENDRY, *Convener pro tem*
REV PETER JOHNSTON, *Vice-Convener*
REV DR SCOTT SHACKLETON, *Secretary*

Appendix 1

Legacy of Slavery Report References

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GENERAL TRUSTEES MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report (*Section 1.2*).
2. Welcome progress on the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) (*Section 2*).
3. Welcome the appointment of further Presbytery Buildings Officers and encourage other new reformed Presbyteries to take advantage of this offer (*Section 3.2*).
4. Manses
 - (a) Instruct Congregations to ensure that all retained Manses are fully wind and water tight and meet the Repairing Standard as per the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 by 31 December 2024 (*Section 5.4*).
 - (b) Instruct Congregations to provide a valid Energy Performance Certificate and a report on compliance with the Repairing Standard along with the next Manse Condition Schedule sent to Presbyteries (*Section 5.3*).
 - (c) Remind Presbyteries of their oversight obligations in regard to each of the above (*Section 5.5*).
 - (d) Establish a Manse Liaison Group to present a proposal on manse provision to the General Assembly of 2024 with the involvement of the General Trustees, the Faith Nurture Forum, the Assembly Trustees, Presbyteries, Presbytery Buildings Officers and the Law Department (*Section 5.8*).
5. Property Disposals
 - (a) Remind all Congregations and Presbyteries about how funds in the Consolidated Fabric Fund can be utilised (*Section 6.4.6*).
 - (b) Approve the creation by the General Trustees of Presbytery-based sub-funds of the Central Fabric Fund (*Section 6.4.8*).
 - (c) Note that consideration will be given in the coming year to amendments to the operation of the "Application of a Levy on Proceeds of Sale Regulations" (*Section 6.4.9*).
6. Note the delay of the Consolidating Act until the General Assembly of 2024 (*Section 7.1*).
7. Note and endorse the position of the General Trustees in relation to ongoing discussions with the Scottish Government about the significant adverse impact on the Church of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 (Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land) Regulations 2021 (*Section 7.2*).
8. Appoint Mr Alan Kennedy as Chair and Rev Scott Rennie as Vice-Chair of the General Trustees (*Section 8.1.1*) and Mr Michael Craig, Rev Alan Gibson and Mrs Isobel Gray as members of the General Trustees (*Section 8.1.3*).
9. Authorise the payment of £1,900 to each of Mr Alan Kennedy as Chair Pro Tem and Rev Scott Rennie as Vice-Chair Pro Tem for their services over the past year (*Section 8.1.2*).

Report

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *"The General Trustees support Congregations and Presbyteries in maintaining and developing appropriate flexible, robust and sustainable facilities capable of supporting local mission and worship."* (Mission Statement)

1.2 The Trustees submit to the General Assembly their ninety-sixth report since their incorporation under the Church of Scotland (General Trustees) Order Confirmation Act 1921.

1.3 The Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2022 are not yet to hand. An unaudited summary of asset values is presented in Appendix 1.

2. PRESBYTERY MISSION PLANNING

2.1 The Trustees recognise the pain that has been felt throughout the Church with the re-categorisation and impending loss of churches across the country. At the same time, we have been greatly encouraged and inspired by the courage and commitment of Presbytery Mission Planning Committees across Scotland in their grappling with the need to reduce our estate to a size that can be well managed and resourced for the future mission of the church. Painful though it has been for many congregations, communities and individuals, we firmly believe that because of the considered yet radical nature of Plans so far approved, the disappointments of this process will be rewarded in the future by good stewardship of buildings which are well-equipped spaces in the right places.

2.2 The Trustees would like to take this opportunity to record their grateful thanks to the Faith Nurture Forum and members of PMPIG for the wholly collaborative approach they have taken in working together in the consideration of Presbytery Mission Plans (PMPs). The process has been a learning curve for us all, but as the year has gone on we have acquired a great deal of knowledge and learning for the future and, as a consequence, a resource of experience in Presbytery Mission Planning has been built up. We hope this model of committed collaborative working is a positive example of what is possible when we collaborate in the service of the Church at large. We look forward to continuing this collaborative approach with PMPIG and Presbyteries in the years ahead.

2.3 Through the Presbytery Mission Planning process, together with the work of Presbytery Buildings Officers in Presbyteries, we have learned a great deal more about the condition of the Church's estate at large. Whilst there are some great examples of well-resourced and high standard buildings which are a real asset for mission, we are sorry to

report that too often this is not the case. Even within the estate that will be retained in PMPs there is a considerable amount of works to be done and resources required to bring what is being retained up to even a satisfactory state.

2.4 Good quality, inviting, warm, well-maintained and resourced buildings are not a luxury, they are a vital asset for the mission of the Church. We are fortunate to have a wide variety of buildings, modern and ancient, sacred as well as secular. For meaningful mission within communities in the 21st century we need to provide better physical spaces. As difficult as it is to divest ourselves of much-loved buildings in the present, we will simply not be able to forgive ourselves if, in 10 years' time, we do not have a markedly improved estate of buildings which are an asset for mission and financially self-sustaining in their communities.

2.5 The Trustees believe that the traditional stewardship model is failing when it comes to investing and retaining buildings as a resource for mission and a new model of financial planning and stewardship is urgently required across the church. We look forward to working with others across the church to develop thinking in this respect.

2.6 The Trustees are also greatly looking forward to working together with Presbyteries and Congregations in investing in the retained necessary buildings in PMPs so that these can be the best possible resource for the mission of the Church and are, in future, maintained at a standard that makes them a blessing to the wider communities which they serve. The Trustees would encourage the whole Church to use the proceeds that arise from the sale of buildings categorised B in PMPs to reinvest in innovative and imaginative ways. The properties that remain should be the best resource they can be, a true community resource and financially self-sustaining wherever possible.

2.7 Historic Signature Churches

2.7.1 One part of the Church's estate that has come to the fore in our concern and thinking is a small number of what we would describe as historic signature churches which, due to their history and place in public life over many centuries, hold a special place in national life and in their ecclesial history. These buildings consequently often face very specific challenges in terms of resourcing for congregations, financially and materially. The Trustees feel that we have much to learn in terms how we vision and plan as a denomination for these styles of buildings from other denominations such as the Church of England.

2.7.2 These buildings are cultural assets that we believe have great potential for mission, particularly in the public and wider cultural life of our communities and the nation. We believe that in some cases they remain too often an untapped resource for mission. It is our intention this year to develop a programme in partnership with Presbyteries and other bodies to explore how we can better develop the place of these unique buildings in the life of the nation and their communities.

2.7.3 The Trustees want to partner with the congregations who are the faithful and committed stewards of these buildings to explore with them how their ministry and mission, rooted in these sacred spaces, can develop in the years to come. We want to learn from other denominations in this regard, but also garner the expertise of other civic bodies and organisations who can help us develop our thinking. We also recognise the urgent need to explore a financially sustainable model for these historic churches going forward that will help them thrive and innovate in their unique circumstances, as part of the mixed economy that is our wider estate.

3. LAND AND BUILDINGS

3.1 The Church's Estate

3.1.1 A detailed analysis of the property vested in the General Trustees at the end of 2022 is not yet to hand. Figures at the end of 2021 are shown below.

Property	End 2021
Churches	1,276
Manses	770
Halls	1096
Miscellaneous Congregational Properties	330
Total	3,608

The acreage of Glebeland was 12,500 at the end of 2021.

3.1.2 Land and Property Disposals in 2022

Full details are not yet to hand but provisional figures show there were 73 property sales in the year including glebe land, churches, halls, manses and miscellaneous properties. Sales proceeds for these disposals totalled £13,872,954.

3.2 Presbytery Buildings Officers (PBOs)

3.2.1 The appointment of PBOs has proved to be of enormous benefit to the Presbyteries and congregations involved, as well as the Trustees. There is little doubt that the appointment of PBOs in partnership with Presbyteries has been the most important advance in the care of our buildings as a resource for mission that has taken place in the last decade. As well as their valued work in giving professional advice within Presbyteries, working together as a team, with their varied backgrounds as buildings professionals, they bring a cumulative expertise in the care and maintenance of buildings to the Church as a whole.

3.2.2 Presbyteries remain involved in the day-to-day working of the PBOs but line management will remain the responsibility of the Trustees' staff team.

3.2.3 The Trustees would encourage any new reformed Presbytery that has not yet taken advantage of this offer to do so. The Presbyteries of Clyde, Edinburgh & West Lothian, Fife, Forth Valley & Clydesdale and North East & Northern Isles currently have Presbytery Buildings Officer post allocations and the Presbyteries of Perth and Lothian & Borders have requested that posts be advertised.

3.3 Energy Supply Scheme

3.3.1 On 1 April 2020, the General Trustees entered into fixed rate utility supply contracts on behalf of congregations participating in the scheme. The gas contract is with Scottish Hydro (SSE) and runs until 31 March 2024 while the electricity contract is with OPUS and runs until 30 September 2023.

3.3.2 The General Trustees provided participating congregations with the longest fixed term periods then available, unaware of just how beneficial this would turn out to be in the recent period of extreme energy market turbulence.

3.3.3 955 congregations with 1,392 supply points currently participate in the electricity scheme while 715 congregations with 796 supply points are in the gas scheme. The Trustees' staff continue to assist congregations wishing to join the scheme and any that face administrative difficulties.

3.3.4 Although market prices have subsided somewhat recently, we remain pessimistic about the terms that will be available when the supply contracts are renewed.

3.3.5 Initial approaches have been made to the suppliers about the nature of contracts currently being offered. Unfortunately, OPUS has announced that they are withdrawing from this sector of the market (multiple sites with individual billing). SSE has confirmed that it can provide both gas and electricity on the current basis.

3.3.6 Both OPUS and SSE will provide the Trustees' staff with data to enable a full tender exercise to be undertaken in early course. As in the past, once terms have been agreed, congregations will have the opportunity to "opt out" of the scheme if they so wish while others may choose to join.

3.4 Heating Consultant

3.4.1 The Trustees provide advice on efficient heating design for congregations through the Trustees' Heating Consultant. Mr Andrew W MacOwan (Andrew MacOwan Associates Ltd) carries out independent surveys of existing heating systems at churches, halls and manses and gives advice on new heating systems and advises congregations on how they may improve standards relating to the efficiency of heating systems, lowering carbon footprint and reducing costs. Despite the difficulties posed by Covid during 2022, Mr MacOwan undertook a total of 41 surveys.

3.4.2 Mr MacOwan carried out 10 surveys to manses to assess the heating requirement and engaged with 5 congregations relating to approvals for heating works. Trustees cover one-third of the cost of surveys in respect of Church of Scotland premises.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

4.1 Fabric

4.1.1 The Trustees continued to provide guidance and financial assistance to congregations in terms of repairs to and works on buildings. The pandemic continued to have an effect on the number of applications which were presented to the Fabric Committee, via Presbyteries and the Presbytery Planning process has necessitated the approval of works, during each Presbytery's Planning phase, which are of an emergency or wind/watertight nature only. However, the Trustees look forward to assisting congregations with buildings requirements where those buildings have been categorised "A" in an approved Presbytery Plan.

4.1.2 Specialist advice continued to be made available in the areas of:

- Assembly legislation
- Procedures and Processes
- Lighting
- AV equipment
- Heating
- Communion-ware, memorials and movables
- Planning and Ecclesiastical exemption
- Release of funds held for the benefit of congregations in the Consolidated Fabric Fund for utilisation against costs for a variety of fabric and related items

4.1.3 Despite the smaller number of applications for approvals for works to buildings and financial assistance, the Fabric Committee made available grants of £728,000 to a total of 25 congregations, and loans of £1,366,000 to a total of 5 congregations for the year ending 31 December 2022. The Fabric Committee continued to meet regularly, by video conferencing, and although visits by Trustees and staff were significantly curtailed much guidance was given either by telephone, video conferencing or email.

4.2 Safe Buildings

4.2.1 Health and Safety

4.2.1.1 The online Health and Safety (H&S) Toolkit has been revised and updated with current best practice to guide responsible persons in managing statutory requirements for the safe operation of Church of Scotland buildings.

4.2.1.2 The H&S toolkit and its contents will be advertised through social media, the central Church of Scotland website, and the 'Life and Work' magazine. In addition, printed handbooks will be available in 2023 where required to assist with managing buildings safety. The H&S Toolkit will be updated to allow provision of guidance for the general safe use of buildings.

4.2.1.3 Health and Safety (iHASCO) online training suite has been acquired and offers a comprehensive package of health and safety training and safety awareness courses. Links to access the training suite are provided under each relevant safety topic within the online H&S toolkit. The training package aims to support congregations with an understanding of statutory health and safety requirements to manage buildings effectively.

4.2.1.4 Concern was expressed from records held showing that around 50% of active congregational sessions do not have a nominated Health and Safety administrator. It has also been noted that there are a number of congregations not following good health and safety practice which presents a risk to the individuals concerned and the Session members who may be liable were an incident to occur.

4.2.1.5 Food safety training continued throughout 2022 and it is anticipated that this will be outsourced in future.

4.2.1.6 The Health & Safety Adviser offered assistance to a large number of congregations covering a range of incidents and worked closely with Presbytery Buildings Officers on a significant number of issues requiring risk assessment and analysis.

4.2.2 Fire Safety

4.2.2.1 Fire Risk Assessments: The Fire Safety Adviser continues to work with supporting congregations proactively and reactively in the development and implementation of fire safety risk assessments and fire evacuation plans, including required fire safety equipment.

4.2.2.2 Fire safety awareness training webinars to support congregations has been delivered by 5 individual sessions provided in 2022. A total of 462 people attended and positive feedback on the content and delivery was received. Future webinars to include the review and content of the H&S toolkit.

4.2.2.3 Fire Legislation – Domestic Premises – February 2022: The Scottish Government implemented new fire legislation to protect all domestic properties (manses) with the requirement of interlinked fire alarms. Information, support and continual guidance has been provided over the last year by the General Trustees to ensure that all congregations are aware of the new requirements. The Manse Condition Schedule has been revised to define the new provision for interlinked fire alarms. Information and statistics on compliance across all manses and relevant premises will be gathered electronically in early 2023 to give a level of assurance to the General Trustees that all manses are up to current fire standards.

4.2.2.4 Concerns have been raised that following fire safety inspections of church and church halls, some congregations have been installing domestic grade smoke/heat alarms within non-domestic premises. This follows Scottish Government legislation for ensuring all domestic premises have interlinked smoke alarm systems. This requirement and equipment type should only be implemented for manses (domestic premises) under the control of congregations and the General Trustees not churches or church halls (non-domestic premises).

4.2.2.5 There were four recorded incidents of fire concerning church premises and grounds. All four incidents were caused by wilful fire-raising out with the usual times of occupation, with damage to property only.

4.2.2.6 The Fire Safety Adviser will work with external agencies to assist those congregations that do not yet have an agreed Fire Evacuation Policy in place.

4.3 Glebes

4.3.1 The Trustees encourage all congregations who have glebes to engage with the Trustees in the management of glebeland, either to generate income for their congregation – by leasing or sale – or to utilise land for mission purposes. In order to maximise income for the long term and, in many cases, provide much needed housing in rural communities, the Trustees are keen to engage with local congregations on long term planning for potential development of glebeland. Last year, the Scottish Government published two draft bills – The Agriculture Bill and the Land Reform Bill – both of which will affect glebeland, and the Trustees responded to consultations on both these proposed pieces of legislation.

4.3.2 All income received from glebeland, whether rent or capital receipts, accrues for the benefit of the local congregation.

4.3.3 Leases: The Trustees report that income from agricultural, grazing and amenity lets in 2022 was around the same level as in the previous year. Throughout 2022, 108 new leases were approved by the Trustees and 142 rent reviews of existing leases were carried out to ensure that rents remain at market rates. Total income generated from glebe rents was £434,000 which assists the financial commitment of congregations to support their Giving to Grow contributions. The Trustees are particularly focused on letting to young farmers and new entrants to farming and thus supporting local rural communities.

4.3.4 Sales: Where glebeland is sold the capital received is credited to the Consolidated Stipend Fund and, as with glebe rents, the income accrued annually is applied towards Giving to Grow in that particular parish. There has been a moratorium on glebe sales through much of last year due to staffing difficulties. However, it is hoped that the recruitment of additional staff will enable sales to be brought back on line in 2023.

4.4 Historic Properties – Dissolution

4.4.1 The Historic Property Portfolio Group (HPPG) was established to deal with the disposal of large A-listed churches which, in terms of Church law, have come to the General Trustees following a Presbytery's decision the dissolve the congregation. As a consequence, such buildings are effectively redundant for use by the Church of Scotland but disposal of such buildings can be difficult.

4.4.2 They may have been, or even still are, landmarks in the community and much loved by the former congregations, but they are expensive to maintain and not readily saleable or indeed suitable for alternative uses. The very attributes of historic or aesthetic importance which resulted in the building being A listed, places restrictions on alteration which make many unattractive to any potential buyer. In the meantime, the obligation of maintenance imposes a burden on the Church. Currently HPPG has 2 historic buildings in its portfolio – the Kirk of St Nicholas in Aberdeen and Brechin Cathedral.

4.4.3 The Kirk of St Nicholas has been a landmark in the centre of Aberdeen literally for centuries, and its A listing extends not only to the architecture but some of the internal features. Continuing maintenance is being undertaken and there is still some demand for use by local bodies. However, so far, none of these bodies has shown any appetite to take over its ownership with the costs involved – even when the transfer of ownership was offered with a significant sum of money as a “dowry” towards future maintenance. The long search continues for an effective solution.

4.4.4 Brechin Cathedral is an A-listed building of regional and national importance and the Trustees have established a formal arrangement with the Society of Friends of Brechin Cathedral in terms of access and maintenance protocols. The Trustees continue to engage with local and national bodies (including Historic Environment Scotland who own the adjacent Round Tower) in terms of its future use and ownership.

4.4.5 The Trustees are, of course, aware of the sensitivities surrounding the disposal of such buildings and of the requisite obligations concerning continued good stewardship and maintenance. They do also equally acknowledge that their work is focussed on assisting continuing congregations with their buildings’ requirements and, as such, appropriate disposal of HPPG properties remains the required outcome.

4.5 Audit and Assurance

4.5.1 The financial accounts of the General Trustees and other financial reports are prepared to the highest level of competence, accuracy and integrity by professional staff of the Stewardship and Finance Department. They are ably supported by the staff of the General Trustees and the work of the internal and external auditors who report to the appropriate Committee regularly.

4.5.2 The governance of all the work of the Trustees is upheld by meeting the highest level of responsibility and integrity. The identification and assessment of risks faced by the General Trustees is ever present in all their deliberations.

4.6 Finance & Resources

4.6.1 The General Trustees’ principal activities are the support of parish ministry and support of congregations in the provision of ‘*well-equipped spaces in the right places*’. In doing so, the Trustees administer a significant level of funds which are applied towards the achievement of their trust purpose and charitable objectives.

4.6.2 Although administration charges are levied on all the funds, these only partially cover the actual costs incurred by the Trustees in operating them and so the balance of such costs is met by the General Fund. Details of the various funds and the costs are referred to in section 6 below.

4.7 Investment

4.7.1 In September 2022, the General Trustees commissioned an external Investment Policy Review not having carried one out for some years. The aims of the review were to consider:

- the current and ongoing appropriateness of investing in the funds of the Church of Scotland Investors Trust (“COSIT”) to meet the Trustees’ objectives;
- the target investment mix for each of the funds for which the Trustees have responsibility including the Consolidated Stipend Fund; and
- how the Trustees might practically consider additional Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors when determining the investment policy for each fund.

4.7.2 The results of this review were presented to the Trustees’ Finance & Resources Committee and, in summary form, to the full Board. Throughout the process, the Committee has engaged with COSIT which informed the Committee that it was independently carrying out its own internal review.

Representatives of the Committee have been invited to attend the March meeting of the COSIT Board after which it will consider how to take the review forward.

4.7.3 During 2022, the Committee had a hybrid meeting with the Special Committee on the Ethics of Investment Practice and currently awaits sight of its final proposals in that regard.

4.7.4 The Committee also undertook a detailed assessment of the feasibility of the replacement of CrossReach’s facility at Gaberston being financed by a loan from the Consolidated Stipend Fund. This has been agreed in principle with the security of the loan being guaranteed by the Assembly Trustees. The maximum amount of the loan is £3.2m and this investment proposal was agreed by Faith Nurture Forum.

5. MANSES

5.1 The collated deliverances of the General Assembly of 2022 included the following three that related to manses:

- a) Remind Financial Boards of their duty to provide a habitable manse and to keep it in a good state of repair and decoration and remind Presbyteries of their oversight obligations in terms of Regulations VII 2007.
- b) Instruct Congregations (1) to provide a valid Energy Performance Certificate with the Manse Condition Schedule when this is submitted for inspection to Presbytery from 31 December 2022 and (2) to ensure the Energy Performance Certificate Rating for the Manse is within Categories A – C by 31 December 2025 as a target date through carrying out any necessary improvements to the building or through the sale and purchase of an approved Manse by that date.
- c) Instruct the General Trustees and Faith Nurture Forum to work with Presbyteries to help them audit and assess the current stock of manses and other residential properties across the Church in such areas as energy efficiency, provision of services, maintenance to a good standard and future sustainability and to remind Presbyteries of

their ongoing responsibility to ensure that where there are concerns around the condition of a manse they should consider what action should be taken, which may include working with the congregation to upgrade or replace said manse.

5.2 The General Trustees have started to assess manses (deliverance c) and, even at an early stage, it has become apparent that too many manses do not meet the required standard of being “habitable and in a good state of repair” (deliverance a). Indeed, some have been found to be in incredibly unsatisfactory condition and not even wind and watertight.

5.3 Moreover, it appears that the General Assembly instruction to Congregations to provide Presbyteries with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for each manse is still not being implemented even though such an instruction was first given in 2013 (deliverance b1).

5.4 As a consequence, the General Trustees consider that it is necessary to reprioritise the improvement process (deliverance b2) and to focus on having all manses that are being retained by Congregations meet the Repairing Standard that covers the legal and contractual obligations of private landlords as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 (the “Act”) by 31 December 2024. The General Trustees consider it is unacceptable that some manse families are not treated as well as private tenants. Obligations under the Act are shown in Appendix 2.

5.5 The primary responsibility for the good maintenance of all buildings, including manses, rests with a Congregation’s Financial Board but Presbyteries are expected to utilise the inspection regime for oversight. That process will be supported by the General Trustees and Presbytery Buildings Officers who will be pleased to provide advice and answer questions about the Repairing Standard and EPCs. Reports on both should accompany Manse Condition Schedules.

5.6 The General Trustees will continue to support Presbyteries and Congregations through the process of improving their manses through the EPC categories but this requires improved compliance with the reporting regime and meeting the following conditions:

- The Presbytery has agreed that the manse has a long-term future.
- The Congregation has access to the funds necessary to pay for the work.
- The Congregation involves a Presbytery Buildings Officer at an early stage to ensure that a robust planning process for the necessary works is agreed.
- There is an assessment of whether a Deep Retrofit process or replacement of the manse is the optimal solution.
- Reporting is provided on upgraded manses to assess the improvements undertaken and their cost.

5.7 The General Trustees are considering whether to appoint a project manager or an external consultant skilled in upgrading works to provide an overview of such projects.

5.8 The General Trustees are establishing a “**Manse Liaison Group**” to investigate the present-day challenges of manse provision. The Group’s membership will include representatives of the General Trustees and their support staff, the Faith Nurture Forum, the Assembly Trustees, Presbyteries, Presbytery Buildings Officers and the Law Department. It will focus on two aspects; monitoring and improving the condition of current manses and considering alternative models of manse provision looking at ownership, size, location, affordability, build quality and sustainability. The transition from the current model to any proposed new one will also be considered. It will present a proposal on future models of manse provision to the General Assembly of 2024.

6. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

6.1 Funds Supporting Parish Ministry

6.1.1 Glebe Funds

6.1.1.1 The Trustees hold glebe land on behalf of individual congregations. The Trustees wish to emphasise that the assessed accounting value shown in the Trustees’ accounts is *illiquid* which means it neither represents cash available to be spent nor is it an indication of the open market value if the land were to be sold. Rental income is transferred to the Faith Nurture Forum to be applied as a contribution to each congregation’s ministry costs.

6.1.1.2 Funds arising from the sale of glebe land totalling £376,000 were transferred to the Consolidated Stipend Fund in 2022 (2021: £934,000) with the capital being held for the benefit of that congregation.

6.1.1.3 The administrative costs of the Fund are met entirely by the General Fund which is only permitted to charge £55,000 to the rental income. In 2022, the true cost of operating the Fund was £156,000 and so £100,000 was transferred from the General Fund to cover the difference.

6.1.2 Consolidated Stipend Fund

6.1.2.1 The Trustees administer the Fund on behalf of congregations with holdings in it. The total value of the fund was £111,187,000 at the end of 2022 (2021: £111,972,000) and it is almost wholly invested in the Growth Fund of the Church of Scotland Investors Trust (COSIT).

6.1.2.2 This is in accordance with the Fund’s investment policy that was revised at the 2021 General Assembly so that (a) it aims to distribute £3.2m each year from 2021 to 2025 inclusive comprising dividend income and sale proceeds and (b) its objective is otherwise to maximise the long-term capital value of the Fund to benefit future levels of income and capital.

6.1.2.3 The administrative costs of the Fund are met entirely by the General Fund which is only permitted to charge 1% of the fund’s income. In 2022, the true cost of operating the Fund was £121,000 while the permitted charge was £22,000 and so £100,000 was transferred from the General Fund to cover the difference.

6.1.2.4 Distributions in 2022 totalled £3,200,000. After the deduction of administration costs, the balance was passed to the Faith Nurture Forum to help the individual congregations meet their parish ministry costs.

6.1.2.5 On the recommendation of the Presbytery and with the concurrence of the Faith Nurture Forum, General Assembly Regulations provide for the possibility of surplus capital in a congregation's holding in the Consolidated Stipend Fund being transferred to its holding in the Consolidated Fabric Fund. No such transfers were made in 2022 (£10,000 in 2021).

6.1.2.6 The Trustees' agreement to lend up to £3.2m CrossReach from this fund is described in Section 4.7.4.

6.2 Funds Assisting Congregations in the Provision of Suitable Buildings

6.2.1 Central Fabric Fund

6.2.1.1 This Fund is the main resource which enables the Trustees to provide financial assistance in the form of grants and loans to congregations for repairing and improving the buildings which they use as local resources for Christian mission. Loans totalling £1,366,000 and grants totalling £728,000 were awarded in 2022. Both these figures are lower than usual due to the pausing of major projects during Presbytery planning.

6.2.1.2 The administrative costs of the Fund are met entirely by the General Fund which is only permitted to charge 6.5% from distributions of income from the investments. In 2022, the true cost of operating the Fund was £265,000 while the permitted charge was £131,000 and so £134,000 was transferred from the General Fund to cover the difference.

6.2.2 Consolidated Fabric Fund

6.2.2.1 In this Fund, the Trustees hold both properties and investments on behalf of congregations.

6.2.2.2 The heritable properties are those occupied by congregations which are vested in the Trustees as owners in trust. These properties principally comprise churches, halls and manses. At the end of 2022, their total value in the Trustees' accounts was £504,877,000. The Trustees wish to emphasise that this amount is *illiquid* which means it neither represents cash available to be spent nor is it an indication of the open market value if the premises were to be sold. However, valuations are undertaken prior to each and every disposal. Local congregations are responsible for the repair, maintenance and insurance of the buildings they occupy and for the health and safety of all those who use them.

6.2.2.3 The Fund also comprises investments derived from the past sale of properties that are held on behalf of individual congregations. The total value of these investments including accrued revenue was £83,500,000 at the end of 2022. Subject to various safeguards and approvals, both capital and accrued revenue may be withdrawn to meet a wide range of buildings-related expenditure incurred by the congregations on churches, halls and manses to enable them to maintain, repair and improve these buildings. In 2022, £1,376,560 was withdrawn from capital accounts and £2,793,000 from revenue accounts for fabric purposes.

6.2.2.4 Accrued revenue may also be withdrawn to meet the cost of utilities and insurance. In 2022, the sums withdrawn were £677,000 and £319,000 respectively.

6.2.2.5 On the recommendation of the Presbytery and with the concurrence of the Faith Nurture Forum, General Assembly Regulations provide for the possibility of surplus capital in a congregation's holding in the Consolidated Fabric Fund being transferred to its holding in the Consolidated Stipend Fund. No such transfers were made in 2022 (£100,000 in early 2023).

6.2.2.6 The Trustees are entitled to deduct an administration charge of 6.5% from distributions of income from the investments, and rental income, though they omitted to do so for some investments prior to the end of 2021. No charges are made in respect of properties even though much of the work of the staff of the Trustees relates to them. In 2022, the true cost of operating the Fund was £657,000 while the permitted charge was £186,000 and so £471,000 was transferred from the General Fund to cover the difference.

6.3 Funds Supporting the Work of the General Trustees

6.3.1 General Fund

6.3.1.1 The General Fund, which is unrestricted, is used to meet all the expenses incurred by the Trustees in the administration of their business, the main item being staff salaries and associated costs. The net incoming resources of this Fund (primarily the payments received under Gift Aid from Church of Scotland Insurance Services Ltd) are applied towards reserves or may be transferred to other Funds such as the Central Fabric Fund to assist in the making of grants and loans to Congregations.

6.3.1.2 Transfers totalling £806,000 were made in 2022 to subsidise Restricted Funds where the true costs incurred in their operation were not covered by the permitted level of charges.

6.3.2 Historic Property Fund

6.3.2.1 The Trustees established this designated fund when they agreed to assume administrative responsibility for certain substantial historic listed buildings that present challenges that mean they are not capable of being disposed of when congregations are formally dissolved. The costs associated with the upkeep of these buildings over an extended period may well be substantial and the number of such buildings will become clearer as Presbytery Plans are developed.

6.3.2.2 The Fund benefits from the heritable and moveable assets of these dissolved congregations with these monies being used to meet the cost of keeping such buildings in good order until such time as a satisfactory outcome is achieved either by outright disposal or the liabilities of ownership are no longer the sole responsibility of the General Trustees.

6.3.2.3 The sale proceeds of buildings in other dissolved congregations continue to be credited to the Central Fabric Fund.

6.3.3 Church of Scotland Insurance Services Limited

6.3.3.1 The Church of Scotland Insurance Services Limited ("the Company") is a limited company incorporated and domiciled in Scotland with registered company number SC001777. The registered office is 121 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 4YN.

6.3.3.2 The Company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the General Trustees and all profits are paid over to the General Trustees by a tax efficient distribution (Gift Aid.) All the company's assets, liabilities, and results for the year are consolidated with those of the General Trustees.

6.3.3.3 CoSIS provides competitively priced insurance with comprehensive cover specifically tailored for the typical activities of congregations of the Church of Scotland in respect of the operation of their church, hall, and manse.

6.3.3.4 During 2023, CoSIS will continue to engage with Congregations, Presbyteries and the General Trustees to develop insurance solutions for the Church that are appropriate during this time of change. This will include support for the insurance of the increasing number of unoccupied properties expected to arise from the disposal process and assistance with finding a suitable solution for the insurance valuation of the Church's buildings, many of which have not been revalued in over ten years.

6.3.3.5 The present insurance arrangement with AVIVA is scheduled to run until each Congregation's policy renewal date in 2025. Although this may appear some way off, CoSIS is already considering how to take the Scheme forward in the best interest of Congregations. However, even now, it is clear from wider market conditions, that material premium increases should be expected.

6.4 Allocation of the Sale Proceeds of Properties

6.4.1 The collated deliverances of the General Assembly of 2022 included the following one that relates to the disposal of properties:

"Instruct the General Trustees, jointly with the Assembly Trustees, the Legal Questions Committee and the Faith Nurture Forum, to review current law and practice with a view to bringing legislation to General Assembly 2023 that would allow greater flexibility in relation to the allocation of the sale proceeds of properties found to be surplus to requirements following the dissolution of a congregation or the union of one or more congregations and exploring with the encouragement and support of Presbytery whether some monies might be released for mission, and provide a transparent process with adequate criteria by which decisions on the use of such funds are made."

6.4.2 The General Trustees widened the scope of the review to cover all sales of congregational property; namely, sales arising from dissolution and other sales irrespective of whether the decision to sell a property is as a result of a union.

6.4.3 The Solicitor to the Church provided the General Trustees and the Assembly Trustees with a review on the background legislative information which essentially reaffirmed what was presented in the Assembly Trustees' report to the General Assembly of 2022. In summary, it stated that:

- In the event of a dissolution, the free proceeds from the sale of properties (subject to the deduction of certain outstanding monies) are allocated to the Central Fabric Fund which is the restricted fund of the General Trustees from which all grants and loans are provided to congregations for fabric purposes. This operates as a single fund and no account is taken of the Presbytery from which the funds originated.
- In the event of the sale of a property other than due to dissolution, the proceeds of sale (net of the costs of any congregational fabric project such as the purchase of a replacement building or the refurbishment of another building) are credited to the Consolidated Fabric Fund for the benefit of that congregation after the deduction of a 10% levy that is allocated to the Central Fabric Fund.

6.4.4 These limitations on the use of sale proceeds held in the Consolidated Fabric Fund flow from two civil law factors.

- First, the funds are subject to trust conditions which require the property and funds of congregations to be applied towards the maintenance of the Church of Scotland in that area. This does not inevitably lead to the conclusion that they can only be applied for the fabric purposes of the congregation concerned. It may be possible for a congregation to decide to contribute towards the maintenance of the Church of Scotland in a wider geographical area than the parish, looking outward to the near environs and neighbouring congregations who have need of funds to support them. This could include the use of funds to support ministry in such congregations.
- Whether this is possible will largely depend on the second factor, which is the duty of both the General Trustees and congregational trustees, as charity trustees, to act in the best interests of the charity at all times. What that means, in this context, is that both sets of trustees have a duty to ensure (so far as possible) that the congregation has sufficient assets to meet its liabilities. The liabilities attached to ownership of a church building are well known. A fabric fund of £50,000 will not go far towards the long-term maintenance and repair of an A or B-listed Victorian church. It would be unlawful for the General Trustees to retain ownership – and thus ultimate responsibility for maintenance – of the remaining properties of a congregation but to divest themselves of the means to perform that duty. The General Assembly cannot direct either the General Trustees or congregational trustees to do anything which cuts across these trusteeship responsibilities.

6.4.5 The Solicitor's review concluded that:

- It is evident that the extent of the current flexibility in the allocation of such funds is not widely understood, and steps should be taken to increase awareness of what is possible.
- Civil law permits only limited further flexibility in relation to the sale proceeds of properties of uniting congregations.

- In the light of what we know about the current poor condition of many of our church and manse buildings and the anticipated costs of bringing manses, in particular, up to a good standard of repair and with satisfactory Energy Performance Certificate ratings, coupled with increasing buildings insurance and energy costs, it would not at this point be prudent for the funds held in trust for fabric purposes to be released for other purposes.
- More flexibility is possible in the case of the sale proceeds of the properties of dissolved congregations.

6.4.6 Summary of Existing Flexibility: Consolidated Fabric Fund

6.4.6.1 The Solicitor restated that it is possible in terms of current Church and civil law to apply congregational monies in the Consolidated Fabric Fund ("CFF") for the following purposes:

- For fabric expenditure of the congregation for which monies are held – this includes expenditure on repair and renewal of heritable property, central heating systems, grounds and gardens, floor coverings, white goods, some furnishings, buildings insurance, heating & lighting costs (following an Energy Survey).
- For fabric expenditure of a linked congregation or (with Presbytery support) of another congregation within the Presbytery.
- For non-fabric purposes which are within the spirit of the 2001 "Church Without Walls" Report if a congregation's holding is greater than £50,000 (only accrued revenue may be released).
- If a congregation's holding in the CFF is in excess of its reasonable requirements for fabric purposes, the whole or part of the surplus may be transferred to its holding in the Consolidated Stipend Fund. If there are still surplus fabric endowments, these may be transferred to the Central Fabric Fund, where they will be available to provide financial assistance by way of grants and loans to congregations for buildings-related purposes. See also section 6.2.2.5.
- The 10% levy on property sales introduced by the Application of a Levy on Proceeds of Sale Regulations imposes a "tax" of 10% on net sale proceeds, to be applied on CFF holdings of more than £75,000 and credited to the Central Fabric Fund to benefit congregations without immediate access to capital reserves for their fabric needs.

6.4.6.2 The Trustees and Stewardship & Finance have regularly tried to promote the use of holdings in the CFF revenue account for utilities, insurance, cleaning etc but the uptake by Congregations has been very disappointing. For example, in 2021, only 78 congregations (roughly 10% of congregations with a CFF holding) submitted claims for energy costs. This represents around 7% of total energy costs. Over the past seven years, 181 congregations have made no claims whatsoever against their revenue fund holding in the CFF.

6.4.6.3 The above will apply equally to congregational funds being allocated in future to the CFF as a result of disposals arising from the union of congregations.

6.4.7 Dissolved Congregations: Central Fabric Fund

6.4.7.1 The Solicitor also restated that the net sale proceeds of the properties of dissolved congregations are credited to the Central Fabric Fund which was established in 1979. This is the fund from which the General Trustees provide grants and loans to Congregations.

6.4.7.2 Concerns have been raised with the General Trustees regarding the fact that funds paid into the Central Fabric Fund arising from a dissolution in one Presbytery are available to be used in the provision of grants or loans to congregations in all Presbyteries. The General Trustees' view was that earmarking such amounts for the use of given Presbyteries was not the intention of the legislation nor was it practical or realistic to attempt to do so with the large number of Presbyteries in existence prior to their rationalisation.

6.4.8 Proposed Changes within the Existing Legislative Framework: Dissolutions

6.4.8.1 The General Trustees have agreed that they could create a series of new restricted funds (one in respect of each of the new Presbyteries) being effectively sub-funds of the Central Fabric Fund.

6.4.8.2 The dissolution proceeds (other than from the proceeds of sale of Historic Properties) would be shared equally between the main Central Fabric Fund and that of the Presbytery sub-fund. Such sub-funds would continue to be administered by the General Trustees and Congregations in a given Presbytery would be expected to draw down on that Presbytery sub-fund before seeking grants and loans from the main Central Fabric Fund.

6.4.8.3 If approved in principle by the General Assembly, the Trustees would consult with Presbyteries before implementation to ensure the process is transparent with adequate criteria.

6.4.9 Levy on Proceeds of Sale

6.4.9.1 The General Trustees currently charge a levy of 10% on the net proceeds as described in Section 6.4.6 with that payment being made to the Central Fabric Fund. As the General Trustees cannot currently exercise any further flexibility once monies have been allocated to congregational holdings in the Consolidated Fabric Fund, they are turning their attention to the levy itself.

6.4.9.2 Consideration will be given to amending the Regulations so that an additional component could be added to the levy that could be made available for non-Fabric purposes within the Congregation or for Fabric or non-Fabric purposes within the Presbytery.

6.4.9.3 The feasibility of such proposals will have to address how to frame rules so that (a) the Central Fabric Fund is adequately funded, (b) the Congregations affected will have sufficient resources to meet their future Fabric costs and (c) whether and how any of the money raised could be shared more widely within the Presbytery.

6.4.9.4 The Trustees will consult with Presbyteries and the Assembly Trustees.

6.5 Services from the Office of Assembly Trustees

6.5.1 The staff of the General Trustees are provided by the Assembly Trustees through the employing agency of the Central Services Committee (CSC) that also provides support services including legal, financial, premises, IT, HR and Communications. The cost of the staff working directly for the General Trustees, as well as the support services provided by the CSC, is re-charged to the General Trustees and met by the General Fund and not from other sources.

General Trustees' Expenditure	2022	2021
General Trustees' Staff Costs	£ 955,000	£ 941,000
Support Services Costs (paid to CSC)	£ 767,000	£ 719,000
Total staffing and services overheads	£1,722,000	£1,660,000

7. LEGISLATION

7.1 Legislative Change

7.1.1 In the General Trustees' report to the 2021 General Assembly, reference was made to proposals to undertake a review of Assembly legislation (both Acts and Regulations) pertaining to and governing the work of the Trustees. It is not intended that major amendments are proposed but the Trustees felt that a review was required to make it easier to access and reference the legislation and to update the legislation where appropriate.

7.1.2 Having consulted with other committees and departments (in particular the Office of the Principal Clerk), the Trustees envisage that all current Assembly legislation pertaining to the General Trustees be brought together, with any proposed amendments, into a single consolidating Act and, whilst it was initially envisaged that this would be submitted to the General Assembly of 2023, potential legislative amendments in conjunction with the Assembly Trustees and the diversion of senior management workload to Presbytery Planning issues has necessitated a delay in submission to the General Assembly of 2024.

7.2 Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land

7.2.1 For the past couple of years, the Trustees have reported to the Assembly on the significant compliance burden imposed on the Church in the form of the new Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land, which became effective as of 1 April 2022. It has the policy aim of showing who has significant influence or control over dealings with land/buildings by the owner (or tenant, in a lease of more than 20 years) where this information is not publicly available elsewhere. This is done by requiring a property owner, and those who are "associates" of the owner (and thus deemed to have significant influence or control), to notify the Keeper of the Register of certain personal details: name, contact address, date of birth and date on which the "association" was formed. There is provision for non-disclosure in the case of anyone who may be placed in danger if their details were made public, and dates of birth will not appear in the public Register.

7.2.2 In terms of the legislation, office-holders within a congregation are deemed to be "associates" of the General Trustees, where title is vested in the General Trustees. This means that the details of office-holders (usually the Minister, Session Clerk and Treasurer) in each congregation will require to be provided to the General Trustees, who will then be responsible for making the necessary entries in the Register and notifying each associate that this has been done. It will also be necessary to amend the Register each time any of this information changes.

7.2.3 Statutory duties are placed on the property owner to supply this information to the Register, and also on the "associates" to provide the requested information to the owner and give notice of any changes to the information previously supplied. The same duties also apply where congregational properties are vested in local trustees. So, where there is a clause in the title placing it under the control of the General Assembly, local trustees will have to notify details of the General Trustees as an "associate", and in all cases will have to register details of the current congregational office-bearers if they are different to the property-holding trustees named in the title, and update the Register each time there is a change of trustee.

7.2.4 The Scottish Government proposes to extend the initial 12-month period of grace, until 1 April 2023, to 1 April 2024. After this, criminal penalties attach to non-disclosure, and to the provision of false or misleading information.

7.2.5 The register applies retrospectively, so all landowners and tenants have a duty to enter their details and update them when there are any changes. It will be a huge logistical task for the General Trustees, at a time of severe financial constraint, to achieve the registration of the approximately 5,000 properties to which they hold title and it is difficult to perceive any public benefit which will flow from compliance given that it is currently a straightforward matter for a member of the public to find out who to contact in relation to any Church property. In any case, the concept of individuals having "control" over our properties is misleading as it does not consider the reality that our Presbyterian polity is designed to preclude such control.

7.2.6 The Solicitor of the Church has sought to engage with the Scottish Government over the past year in an attempt to achieve an acknowledgement of all of this and an exemption from or amendment to the legislation so as to recognise its disproportionate impact on the Church. She has also pointed out that – unlike charities constituted in other ways – charities (such as congregations) who are constituted as unincorporated associations will be subject to two transparency regimes once the Charities (Regulation and Administration) (Scotland) Bill which is currently in the Scottish Parliament becomes law. The Bill creates a new public register of charity trustees which will contain the names of all trustees, along with a principal office/contact address. Charities constituted as Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIOs) are exempted from the registration requirements of the Register of Persons Having a Controlled

Interest in Land on the basis that they are currently subject to a similar transparency regime. Once the Bill becomes law, it will make no sense to treat other charities differently and fail to “join the dots” between these two separate exercises in transparency.

7.2.7 Unfortunately, these arguments have fallen on deaf ears. The Minister for Environment and Land Reform continues to adhere to the view that to grant any exemption would not be consistent with the policy intention of the legislation and would undermine the integrity of the Register. She has suggested that to offer an exemption to the Church, or implement the constructive alternative proposal put forward, would be discriminatory against “other groups” although she has not identified which other groups are equally impacted by the legislation. She has not addressed the issue of the difference in treatment accorded to SCIOs and to other types of charity, given that all are equally subject to another transparency regime. We have been told that the extension of the transition period to 1 April 2024 should be sufficient to answer our concerns.

7.2.8 Given the Minister’s response to date, the Solicitor and her team are, at the time of writing this Report, engaging with the Scottish Parliament in relation to the Charities Bill in the hope of securing a more equitable approach via this avenue. A written response on behalf of the Church to the call for views on the Bill has been submitted and oral evidence has been given to the Social Justice and Social Security Committee, which will produce reports before the Bill is debated and voted on by MSPs. The General Trustees are very grateful to the many Session Clerks who earlier this year responded to the Solicitor’s request that they contact their MSPs to highlight the impact of both pieces of legislation on the Church of Scotland and are hopeful that this will feed into the debate on the Bill and may yet produce a positive outcome.

7.2.9 Consideration is also being given to other arguments in relation to the lawfulness of the interference with the right to the protection of personal data, particularly since such interference is neither limited to what could be seen to be strictly necessary, nor proportionate to the stated objective of transparency around who controls decisions in relation to land.

7.2.10 The Trustees anticipate further developments in these areas, which will be reported to the Assembly.

7.3 Determinations under Regulations V 1995

7.3.1 The Regulations provide a mechanism to re-allocate the capital held by the Trustees for the benefit of congregations in the Consolidated Stipend and Fabric Funds. No such transfers were made during 2022 (one in 2021). See 6.1.2.5 and 6.2.2.5.

7.4 Determinations made under Act VII 1995

7.4.1 The Trustees report that, under the powers delegated to them by the General Assembly by Act VII 1995 (as amended by Act XIII 1996), they have made 93 Determinations as set out below in Appendix 3.

8. OPERATION OF THE GENERAL TRUSTEES

8.1 Trustees

8.1.1 Due to resignations in March and April 2022, the Trustees were unable to put forward names for either the Chair or Vice Chair at the time of the 2022 General Assembly. Mr Alan Kennedy has since acted as Chair Pro Tem along with Rev Scott Rennie as Vice-Chair Pro Tem. Elections for these positions were conducted in March 2023 and the Trustees now ask the General Assembly to confirm the appointment of Mr Alan Kennedy to be the Chair of the General Trustees and Rev Scott Rennie to be the Vice-Chair.

8.1.2 The Trustees recommend that Mr Alan Kennedy and Rev Scott Rennie each receive £1,900 for their services as Chair Pro Tem and Vice-Chair Pro Tem over the past year, as authorised under S.38 of the 1925 Act.

8.1.3 The Trustees ask the General Assembly to appoint Mr Michael Craig, Rev Alan Gibson and Mrs Isobel Gray as new members of the General Trustees.

8.1.4 The Trustees wish to record their thanks for the dedicated service given to them and to Congregations by the following who have retired or resigned since the General Assembly of 2022:

General Trustees:

- Rev Sheila M Kirk (December 2022)
- Mr Robert Balfour (May 2023)
- Mr Robin Stimpson (May 2023)

Advisory Members:

- Mr Iain Ogilvie (October 2022)
- Mr Tom Nelson (December 2022)
- Mr A Graham Biggerstaff (May 2023)

8.1.5 One Advisory Member has been appointed by the Board since the 2022 General Assembly:

- Mrs Lydia Fotheringham (September 2022) who serves on the Glebes Committee

8.1.6 The General Trustees are actively seeking members to serve on the Board or as Advisory Members. Those interested are asked to contact the Chair, Vice-Chair or Chief Executive & Clerk for further information.

8.1.7 The General Trustees have reviewed the role of Advisory Members, giving them the opportunity to serve as Committee Members without being expected to attend Board meetings. It is hoped that this will assist in the recruitment drive mentioned above.

8.2 Assembly Trustees

8.2.1 The General Trustees thank the Assembly Trustees for agreeing to propose to amend their Constitution so that the Chair of the General Trustees will no longer be obliged to be a member of the Assembly Trustees all of whom bear full trusteeship responsibility for the Unincorporated Entities of the Church of Scotland. The already improving communication between the two bodies will be taken forward in other ways.

8.3 Staffing

8.3.1 The staff of the General Trustees have faced an increased workload in the past year during which several members of staff departed including the Chief Executive and all this when hybrid working was still in place. Their willingness and ability to contribute for the benefit of Congregations and the wider Church has been commendable. In February, the Trustees appointed Mr Brian Waller as Acting Secretary & Clerk with Mrs Morag Menneer as his depute. She also agreed to take on the line management responsibility for the Presbytery Buildings Officers on a temporary basis. Upon the conclusion of a recruitment exercise in April, the Trustees were pleased to appoint Mr Brian Waller to the post of Chief Executive & Clerk of the General Trustees.

8.3.2 Going forward, the implementation of Presbytery Plans will require increases in both the General Trustees and the Law Department staff. It is anticipated that the sales of buildings will commence along with plans for the upgrading of the churches and halls identified as being needed for the furtherance of Christianity in Scotland. Presbyteries who choose to appoint a Building Officer will now have the additional technical support to efficiently maintain and safely operate their properties.

8.3.3 Current staffing numbers are 23 (21.63 full-time equivalent).

8.3.4 Future Staffing and Resourcing is continually under review by the Trustees. The introduction of more Presbytery Building Officers will see the staffing complement continue to grow as Presbyteries move to adopt the support of Building Officers.

In the name of the General Trustees

ALAN F K KENNEDY, *Chair Elect*
SCOTT RENNIE, *Vice-Chair Elect*
BRIAN D WALLER, *Chief Executive & Clerk*

Appendix 1**Funds of the General Trustees**

	31/12/2022 (£'000)	31/12/2021 (£'000)
Held for Congregations (Consolidated)		
Glebes (Land)	36,987	36,996
Stipend Fund (Investments)	111,187	111,972
Total Stipend	148,174	148,968
Buildings (Churches & Halls)	217,122	218,697
Buildings (Manse)	287,755	288,555
Fabric Fund (Investments – Capital)	74,123	65,021
Fabric Fund (Investments – Revenue)	9,377	9,264
Total Fabric	588,377	581,537
Individual Funds	4,473	4,419
Temporary Funds	12,358	11,456
Total for Congregations	753,382	746,380
General Trustees' Funds (Central)		
General Fund	10,827	10,147
CoSIS	8,048	8,048
Central Fabric Fund	22,121	21,090
Glebe Improvement Fund	381	–
Heritage Property Fund	770	906
Individual Bequests	3,816	3,832
Total Central	45,963	44,023
Grand Total	799,345	790,403
Total for Buildings and Land	541,864	544,248
Total for Investments (Consolidated)	211,518	202,132
Total for Central	45,963	44,023
	799,345	790,403

The figures for 2022 are provisional and do not yet take account of investment gains or losses in the year.

Appendix 2

Manse: The Repairing Standard

The Repairing Standard, contained in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, covers the legal and contractual obligations of private landlords to ensure that a property meets a minimum physical standard.

Landlords must carry out a pre-tenancy check of their property to identify work required to meet the Repairing Standard (described below) and notify tenants of any such work.

Landlords also have a duty to repair and maintain their property from the tenancy start date and throughout the tenancy. This includes a duty to make good any damage caused by doing this work. On becoming aware of a defect, landlords must complete the work within a reasonable time.

A privately rented property must meet the repairing standard as follows:

- the property must be wind and watertight and in all other respects reasonably fit for people to live in
- the structure and exterior (including drains, gutters and external pipes) must be in a reasonable state of repair and in proper working order
- installations for supplying water, gas and electricity and for sanitation, space heating and heating water must be in a reasonable state of repair and in proper working order
- any fixtures, fittings and appliances that the landlord provides under the tenancy must be in a reasonable state of repair and in proper working order
- any furnishings that the landlord provides under the tenancy must be capable of being used safely for the purpose for which they are designed
- the property must have a satisfactory way of detecting fires and for giving warning in the event of a fire or suspected fire
- the property must have satisfactory provision for giving warning if carbon monoxide is present in a concentration that is hazardous to health
- the property must meet the statutory **Tolerable Standard** (see below)

To comply with the repairing standard, private landlords must have regard to the guidance issued by Scottish Ministers on:

- satisfactory provision for detecting and warning of fires
- electrical installations and appliances in private rented property
- the provision of carbon monoxide alarms in the private rented sector

Manse: The Tolerable Standard

The Tolerable Standard is a basic level of repair your property must meet to make it fit for a person to live in. A home may not be fit to live in if:

- it has problems with rising or penetrating damp
- it's not structurally stable (for example, it might be subsiding)
- it does not have enough ventilation, natural and artificial light or heating
- it is not insulated well enough
- it does not have an acceptable fresh water supply, or a sink with hot and cold water
- it does not have an indoor toilet, a fixed bath or shower, and a wash basin with hot and cold water
- it does not have a good drainage and sewerage system
- the electric supply does not meet safety regulations
- it does not have a proper entrance
- there are no cooking facilities – this does not mean the landlord has to provide a cooker, but there must be somewhere suitable for a tenant to install their own

Appendix 3

Determinations made under Act VII 1995

General Sales:

In the following cases, the General Trustees made determinations authorising the sale or let of the property concerned and directed that the proceeds should be credited for the benefit of the congregations in the Consolidated Fabric Fund:

Aberfoyle – sale of manse; Auchterless and Auchaber – sale of Auchaber Church; Berneray – sale of manse; Blairdaff & Chapel of Garioch – sale of manse; Catrine – sale of church; Coatbridge Calder – sale of church and manse; Cumbernauld St Mungo's – sale of manse; Daviot and Dunlichity – sale of church; Dornock – sale of church building; Dulnain Bridge – sale of church; Dulnain Bridge – sale of 'Tin Church'; Dun and Hillside – sale of manse; Dundee: St David's High Kirk – sale of church; Dunfermline: St Ninian's – sale of manse; Foveran – sale of North Church; Dunglass – sale of churches at Oldhamstocks and Innverwick; Earlston – sale of manse; Errol – sale of manse; East Kilbride Greenhills – sale of manse; Edinburgh: Bristo Memorial – sale of church/hall; Edinburgh: Meadowbank – sale of manse; Edinburgh: Tron Kirk (Gilmerton & Moredun) – sale of manse; Edinburgh St Nicholas Sighthill – sale of ground; Falkirk Grahamston United – sale of manse; Foveran – sale of car park ground; Gretna Old, Gretna St Andrew, Half Morton and Kirkpatrick Fleming – sale of manse; Gretna Old, Gretna St Andrew's Half-Morton and Kirkpatrick Fleming – sale of Gretna Old Hall; Glasgow: Bridgeton St Francis in the East – sale of manse; Glasgow: Castlemilk – sale of manse; Glasgow: Cranhill – sale of church/hall building; Glasgow: Queen's Park Govanhill – sale of church/hall building; Glasgow: Shawlands Trinity – sale of manse; Glasgow: Springburn – sale of manse; Glasgow: St Christopher's Priesthill and Nitshill – sale of manse; Glasgow: St Columba – sale of church; Glasserton and Isle of Whithorn – sale of Glasserton Church; Greenock Lyle Kirk – sale of Old West Kirk and Esplanade; Inverkeithing Parish – sale of flat, church, hall and ground; Irvine Fullarton – sale of Fullarton Centre; Irvine St Andrew's – sale of manse; Inverness Old High St Stephen's – sale of Old High building; Kilfinichen & Kilvickeon & the Ross of Mull – sale of St Ernan's Church; Kilfinan – sale of church; Killean and Kilchenzie – sale of manse; Kilmarnock St Marnock's – sale of former Riccarton building; Kilmarnock St Marnock's – sale of manse; Kilmun, Strone and Ardentenny: The Shore Kirk – sale of manse at Dunoon; Kingswell – sale of manse; Kirkinner – sale of church and manse; Langholm, Eskdalemuir, Ewes and Westerkirk – sale of Ewes Church; Livingston Ecumenical – sale of manse; Monigaff – sale of church; Musselburgh Inveresk St Michael's – sale of St John's Church; Netherlee & Stamperland – sale of Stamperland Church; North Mull – sale of hall; North and West Islay – sale of manse; Orphir – sale of manse; Orwell and Portmoak – sale of manse; Penicuik Trinity Community Church – sale of former Penicuik South Church; Perth: St John's and St Leonard's-In-The-Field – sale of manse; Rousay – sale of hall building; Scone and St Martin's – sale of St Martin's Church; Shetland Church – sale of Cunningsburgh North Church; Shetland Church – sale of Dunross Ness Church; Shetland Church – sale of Gulberwick Church; Shetland Church – sale of Lunna St Margaret's; Shetland Church – sale of St Magnus Church; Shetland Church – sale of Skerries Church; Shetland Church – sale of Voe Church; Shetland Church – sale of Whalsay Church; St Mark's St Andrew's – sale of Strathkinness church and hall buildings; St Mungo – sale of church; Stranraer – sale of manse; Strath and Sleat – sale of Elgol Church; Strathbrock – sale of hall; Stromness – sale of manse; Strontian – sale of church/hall building; The Bengairn Parishes – sale of church and hall buildings; Tillicoultry – sale of manse; West Lochfyneside, Cumlodden, Inverary & Lochgair – sale of manse

Glebe Sales:

In the following parishes, the General Trustees made determinations authorising the sale of Glebe subjects and directed that the proceeds should be credited to the benefit of the congregations in the Consolidated Stipend Fund:

Auchinleck – sale of Auchinleck glebe; Largo – sale of Newburn glebe; Balmacellan, Kells & Dalry – sale of Balmacellan West glebe; Beith – sale of Beith glebe; Campbeltown – sale of Campbeltown glebe; Innerleithen Traquair Walkerburn – sale of Traquair glebe; St Madoes and Kinfauns – sale of Kinfauns glebe; Kirkpatrick Juxta – sale of Kirkpatrick Juxta glebe; Midmar – sale of Midmar glebe; Penpont Keir and Tynron – sale of Penpont glebe; Shetland Church – sale of Tingwall glebe; Stenness – sale of Stenness glebe

Miscellaneous Sales:

The General Trustees made the following miscellaneous determinations:

Brechin Cathedral (Dissolved) – sale of Cathedral, Stracathro Church, Manse, Hall and offices and proceeds credited to the Historic Properties Fund; Kilspindie and Rait (Dissolved) – sale of church and hall buildings, proceeds credited to the Central Fabric Fund; Twechar (Dissolved) – sale of church and hall, proceeds credited to the Central Fabric Fund.

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD – MAY 2023**Proposed Deliverance****The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Commend the Assembly Trustees for the work being done on issues of Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity, and the Faith Impact Forum for its research into the Historic Legacy of Slavery, and urge all Church people to continue to take appropriate action on these issues at a local, regional and national level (*Section 2.4*).
3. Urge the Church at all levels to remain informed, vigilant and engaged with issues of justice and peace for Israelis and Palestinians, and to use its voice to condemn illegality and violence wherever these are apparent (*Section 2.10*).
4. Deplore the continued escalation of war in Ukraine and in other parts of the world, and the use of language that dehumanises victims and distances us from the horror of war (*Section 2.14*).
5. Commend the Iona Community for its development work with young people, in particular the focus on environmental issues, and look forward with interest to the creative use of the MacLeod Centre on Iona (*Sections 3.1/5.6*).
6. Are grateful for the work of the Iona Community in its renewal of worship, and thank it for the wealth of worship and contemplative material it has made available to the whole Church (*Section 4.1-4.3*).

Report

*May the God of peace inspire us,
may the God of justice empower us,
may the God of hope encourage us
to live the Good News. Amen.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The context in which this report is written is one of economic despair for many, including the thousands of striking workers seeking a more just economic order; climate catastrophe as the planet heats up beside the insatiable desire amongst many to continue consuming beyond our means; escalation of war in central Europe, Israel/Palestine and other parts of the world; and a commensurate shrinking in Scotland and elsewhere of Church membership. It is within this context that the Board of the Iona Community commends the work of Christians and people of goodwill everywhere to the work towards justice, peace and wholeness rooted in the calling of Christ to love and justice for all.

2. UNITY AND RECONCILIATION

2.1 The Iona Community's Common Concern Networks (CCNs) work together, recognising that actions for environmental justice, for example, cannot be divorced from actions for a world free of war. Members meet regularly focussing on Environment, Poverty & Inequality, Tackling Racism, Interfaith Relations, Faith & Spirituality, Refugees & Migration, LGBTQ+, Peace, and Israel/Palestine.

2.2 The Migration and Refugees CCN actively spoke out in March this year against the hostile 'Illegal Migration Bill', focussing on the common humanity we all share, and the Gospel imperative to welcome the stranger.

2.3 With a growing global membership, the Iona Community continues to work in close partnership with the Wellspring Community in Australia and Iona Community North America to ensure that community at a local level remains the focus.

2.4 Aware of the colonial past and the ongoing detrimental impact on indigenous communities across the globe of climate change, poverty and inequality, the Iona Community continues to seek forgiveness for the wrongs of the past, and dedicates the movement to working for deeper understanding about how all can live well together.

2.5 Members of the Iona Community say that the combination of a commitment to the Gospel of Christ, along with calling for actions for an end to poverty, to divestment from fossil fuels, to the de-escalation of all forms of war that cause untold misery on millions of migrants is what binds them together in community.

2.6 Through its Tackling Racism CCN, the Iona Community is engaged in and committed to concerns around the Historic Legacy of Slavery and current issues of racial and social justice. In this regard, the Board is aware of the work being done by the Faith Impact Forum and encourages the Church at all levels to be informed by the Forum's reports, to be fully engaged with these issues at a local level and to take such action as is proportionate and appropriate.

2.7 The ecumenical identity of the Iona Community – the sense of belonging together as a global Christian community – unites members like never before, with members of the Iona Community hailing from a range of traditions including Pentecostal, non-conformist, orthodox and mainstream Church.

2.8 As a Christian community, the Iona Community is called to the wider Oikumene which compels it to work closely with all people of goodwill, including friends in all other world faiths. As this work develops, particularly through the Interfaith CCN, there is an openness to honouring beliefs and practices of friends in all faith traditions, and to being changed by them.

2.9 This involves a process of letting go of pride and assumptions in order fully to embrace the gifts and wisdom of the other. We call for our churches to do the same, to take every opportunity to reach out to our friends in other denominations and faith traditions affirming: “where we can work together, we will.”

2.10 Through its Israel/Palestine CCN, for example, the Iona Community continues to have deep concerns regarding the tensions and violence in Israel-Palestine. The current situation faces us with an alarming recent increase in violence, as well as the Israeli government’s latest proposals relating to the Supreme Court, settlement expansion and formal recognition of ‘outposts’.

2.11 In the light of this, the Iona Community is encouraged by the growing groundswell of Jewish ‘voices of peace’ and signs in media coverage of more sympathy for the Palestinian cause.

2.12 Our Christian sisters and brothers from Israel-Palestine call to us in increasing desperation. The culture, history, lives, futures, children and homes of Palestinians are still being destroyed, now with increasing physical and legal ferocity. In addition, Jews have also been victims of terror and violence, remembering the murder of seven people at a synagogue in Jerusalem on Holocaust Memorial Day.

2.13 The Board is inspired by the continued informed engagement of the Iona Community with Israel-Palestine issues and expects the wider Church community and political institutions to remain equally informed, vigilant and committed to justice and peace in this area of conflict and unrest.

2.14 As wars escalate in Ukraine and elsewhere, the Iona Community’s Peace and Reconciliation CCN supports Members in working for the eradication of all weapons of war. We deplore the use of language such as ‘tactical’ nuclear weapons which continues to dehumanise the thousands of victims of war, including the millions of displaced people forced into exile and migration.

3. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CATASTROPHE

3.1 2023 will be a year of experimenting as the Iona Community develops its vision for the retrofitted MacLeod Centre on Iona. With a focus on youth engagement, on the environment and on offering flexible stays for groups of pilgrims to Iona, the aim is to reimagine that space as a sign of commitment to the radical survival of our planet. Members of the Environment CCN continue to bring their expertise to this work.

3.2 Five of the authors of [‘Young, Woke and Christian: words from a missing generation’](#) spent a week with Members of the Iona Community on Iona exploring themes of racism, sexual identity and political engagement from the perspective of those under thirty.

3.3 Membership of the Young Adults Group (18-30) has doubled in the last 12 months. Young members and volunteers say that the combination of a down-to-earth faith and worship style, along with focussed engagement in the politics of justice and peace is what attracts them to life in Community.

3.4 A team of four staff from the Camas youth centre spent the winter months in two flats – “Mac Houses” – in the Maryhill area of Glasgow. Their task was three-fold: to live together in intentional community; to work alongside young people in the local church communities; and to offer follow-up support to groups who had visited the islands centres on Mull and Iona in the previous years. They worked closely with the priority area parishes in Maryhill and Ruchill, supporting local church groups.

3.5 While this team will return to the Camas Centre on Mull for the 2023 season, work is underway with partner churches in Glasgow to maintain a presence in the Mac Houses into the future, offering space for young people to live together in community. Thus the Iona Community maintains, through this and other work, a longstanding commitment to the eradication of poverty, through the Poverty and Inequality CCN.

4. RENEWAL OF WORSHIP

4.1 Finding a language and a pattern of worship that reflects a desire for God and for justice remains a key objective of the Iona Community. The ethos and practice of the Community affirms that “we seek to be radically contextual, inclusive, and participatory in our worship” which “is rooted in our relationships with God, each other, and the world around us.”

4.2 Members affirm this desire through their annual recommitment process. Staff lead worship at the centres offering space, language and song in a tone that unites, inspires and compels all to contemplation and action. Guests join in worship renewal weeks at Iona Abbey, and engagement with Iona Community worship material and the Wild Goose Resource Group at events such as ColumbaFest, Greenbelt and Glastonbury Festivals, affirming the desire to find “new ways to touch the lives of all.” Members and Associate Members join together in the Faith and Spirituality CCN to explore themes of unity, a shared theology of justice and of care for creation.

4.3 As part of our commitment to the renewal of worship the Iona Community is refreshing the vision and priorities for work in this area, building on the remarkable body of work, in word, workshop, teaching and in song, generated over the past decades by skilled staff and volunteers.

5. RENEWAL OF FAITH THROUGH ACTION AND CONTEMPLATION

5.1 At the islands Centres on Iona and Mull staff teams are supported to live well in community and to welcome, week by week, others to join them. At the Camas centre on Mull guests have included refugees, school groups, youth groups and groups from priority area parishes, enjoying a week of off-grid adventure, learning and reflection.

- 5.2** At Iona Abbey 91 guests were welcomed in 2022 under the Unlocked programme which offers free space and financial support for travel for those adversely affected by poverty or exclusion.
- 5.3** Scotland's Interfaith leaders celebrated 20 years of Interfaith Scotland at Iona Abbey in 2022. Inspired by this milestone, the Community launched its ninth Common Concern Network, which focuses on Interfaith Relations. After a few years of their absence, in 2022 Students Week and Youth Festival at Iona Abbey were re-launched.
- 5.4** Through committing to the Community's four-fold rule of life, the 272 Members and 1,700 Associate Members join together on-line for monthly worship. Members continue locally to meet on-site monthly in the 48 family groups, and more widely in the 25 global regions, for reflection, solidarity, and to engage in joint actions for justice and peace.
- 5.5** Since opening membership globally in 2021, there has been an increase in members from around the world, including Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Australia, Germany, Canada, and the United States. The New Members programme for those seeking full membership currently has 24 members, engaging in a 2-year discernment programme.
- 5.6** Wild Goose Publications (www.ionabooks.com) and the magazine Coracle/eCoracle, continue to publish fresh and compelling liturgical and reflective material available online or through the Iona Community shop on Iona.
- 5.7** The renovation of the buildings on Iona will continue with the MacLeod Centre being retrofitted as a youth centre focussed on environmental justice. In addition, internal systems and structures also continue to be 'retrofitted', ensuring they are lean and fit for purpose.

Go in the power of the Spirit.

Go, and do not try to separate politics and prayer.

Go, not to escape, but to engage with God's world.

Go, to live hopefully, as people of the Resurrection.

Amen

In the name of the Committee

TOM GORDON, *Convener*
RUTH HARVEY, *Leader*
TORSTEN HAAK, *Executive Director*

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND PENSION TRUSTEES MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the appointment of Stuart Stephen and George Russell as Employer Nominated Trustees of all three Schemes.

Report**1. BACKGROUND & STATISTICS**

As at 31 December 2022, The Church of Scotland Pension Scheme for Ministers and Overseas Missionaries (the “**Ministers Scheme**”), The Church of Scotland Pension Scheme for Staff (the “**Staff Scheme**”) and The Church of Scotland Pension Scheme for Ministries Development Staff (the “**MDS Scheme**”) (together referred to as the “**Schemes**”) collectively covered approximately 4,600 members. This Report is made by the Trustees of each of those Schemes (the “**Trustees**”). As at 31 December 2022 the Trustees held, in aggregate, total assets of approximately £352 million for the purposes of the Schemes.

1.1 Scheme funding

A summary of the respective funding positions of the Schemes at 31 December 2022 following completion of the annual actuarial updates are set out below:

Scheme	Funding level at 31/12/2021	Funding level at 31/12/2022
Ministers Scheme, Main Pension Fund	106%*	108%
Ministers Scheme, Widows & Orphans Fund	111%	112%
Ministers Scheme, Contributors Fund	110%	109%
Staff Scheme (CSC Section)	101%	101%
Staff Scheme (SCC Section)	101%	98%
MDS Scheme	101%	98%

The Trustees are pleased to advise that each Scheme/ Section remains well funded.

This means the Schemes are self sufficient, with all the money needed to pay benefits and expenses already held within the Schemes. This is no requirement for funding from the Employing Agencies of the Church.

The Scheme Actuary excluded data relating to the period of the pandemic, in line with industry practice. The Trustees accepted a recommendation to review mortality assumptions at the next triennial valuation as at 31 December 2024, when more information would be available about the lasting impact of the pandemic and its associated restrictions.

The Trustees record thanks to the Assembly Trustees and each Employing Agency for their past and continued support for the Schemes.

1.2 Increases to Pensions in Payment**1.2.1 Statutory increases**

The statutory increases applied to pensions in payment across all of the Schemes, from 1 January 2023, were 5.0% in respect of benefits accrued between 6 April 1997 and 5 April 2005 and 2.5% in respect of benefits accrued after 6 April 2005.

The MDS Scheme had increases applied in respect of benefits accrued prior to 6 April 1997 and these were awarded at the statutory rate of 5.0%.

1.2.2 Discretionary increases in the Ministers Scheme

Within the Ministers Scheme the Trustees have the unilateral power to award discretionary increases to benefits.

2023 pension increases

The Trustees of the Ministers’ Scheme decided to implement increases as follows

- Ministers Main Fund: 10.1% increase on pre-1997 pensionable service for all pensions in payment as at 1 January 2023
- Widows and Orphans Fund: 12.6% increase on benefits as at 1 January 2023 for all deferred and pensioner members’ benefits
- Contributors Fund: 12.6% increase on benefits as at 1 January 2023 for all deferred and pensioner members’ benefits.

1.3 Investment Strategy

The investment strategy employed by the Trustees reflects the high funding level and the desire of the Trustees, with the support of the participating employers to minimise the risk of any future deficit contributions. This means holding predominantly assets which match the nature and duration of the Scheme’s liabilities. These matching assets are typically fixed income securities, gilts and inflation linked gilts.

Adopting a low risk investment strategy means the volatility of the funding position of the Scheme is reduced, leading to improved security of member benefits and more certainty for the employer around the requirement for future contributions.

The Trustees have agreed to target a return from the Scheme's assets of 0.3% per annum above the liability matching assets. This is achieved by investing in a diversified manner. This target return is met by taking a low risk approach which should result in a risk of the assets moving against the liabilities by no more than 1% per annum in two years out of three. This new strategy was implemented in the first quarter of 2021.

1.3.1 Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG)

The Trustees' policy is for the pooled investment funds, and the underlying investment managers, they select going forward to have the highest ESG rating available for the asset class they are looking to invest in, as determined by the Trustees' Investment Adviser. They will also consider going further by investing in explicitly sustainable approaches as the sector evolves and more funds become available.

During the year, one of the existing funds managed by Blackrock was reviewed and replaced by a new fund with similar risk and investment return objectives, managed by Alliance Bernstein, that invested in line with the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

1.3.2 Investment Markets

Once again this year markets have been very volatile. Particularly in the aftermath of the invasion of Ukraine and the so called mini budget of 23 September 2022.

The year was dominated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As a result, the small level of rouble assets (less than 0.02%) the Scheme held were sold by the Scheme's investment managers. The Trustees have a policy not to hold any Russian assets going forward.

Gilt yields rose significantly in the year directly impacting both asset and liability values which both reduced sharply.

The Schemes' low risk investment strategy means that their funding positions have been largely immunised from these moves, as seen in the table.

1.4 Changes in Staff and Trustees

1.4.1 Staff

Helen Osborne, our payroll supervisor, left the employment of the Church having completed over forty years' service. The Trustees would like to thank Helen for her dedicated service over the years. Suzanne Nolte continues in her appointment as Payroll and Accounting Manager.

1.4.2 Trustees

Graeme Caughey and Adrian Bark retire as Employer Nominated Trustees of all three schemes in May 2023 after 12 years' service and 6 years of service respectively. The Trustees are grateful for their dedicated service to the Pension Schemes.

We are pleased to propose the appointment of Stuart Stephen and George Russell as Employer Nominated Trustees of all three schemes with effect from May 2023. Stuart Stephen will take over the Trustee Chair role from Graeme Caughey.

The Pension Scheme for Ministers and Overseas Missionaries.

Pauline Gordon resigned as a MNT in July 2022 and Susan Zappert was appointed with effect from 1 April 2023.

We are fortunate to be served by so many skilled and experienced people, willing to serve in this way. With regular Trustee retirements we are always looking for new Trustees, so please consider serving yourself or nominating someone who would make a good Trustee.

2. SCHEME ADMINISTRATION

2.1 The Trustees monitor the administration team's performance by receiving quarterly reports on service achieved and welcoming feedback from Scheme members on the service they have received from the team.

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1 The Trustees completed a formal review of the Scheme's auditors and after due consideration decided to continue to engage the services of the incumbent providers, Chiene+Tait.

3.2 The Trustees continue their focus on training and development. Each new Trustee completes the Pensions Regulator's Trustee Toolkit. On-going training this year included a day of training from the Schemes' advisers prior to the November Trustee meeting and shorter topical sessions as part of quarterly meetings.

In the name of the Pension Trustees

GRAEME R. CAUGHEY, *Chair*
LIN MACMILLAN, *Vice-Chair*

Addendum

Graeme Caughey is retiring as a Trustee of the Pension Schemes, after serving for 12 years, the last 6 of which he has been the Chair of the Board.

Graeme has brought a wealth of financial knowledge and experience to the Pension Trustees from his professional life. He has chaired meetings with quiet firmness, always alert to ensuring that every point of view is heard fairly and discussed fully. This has been particularly challenging during the pandemic, when all meetings were held on line.

He has worked hard to build up productive relationships with the Assembly Trustees and senior staff within the Church offices. He has also nurtured good working relationships with the Trustees' professional advisors.

Underpinning all his work is his unstinting concern for the beneficiaries of the Pension Funds, and his care that every decision made by the Trustees should have this at its heart.

He leaves all the Pension Funds in a healthy position – a major achievement in such turbulent financial times.

LIN MACMILLAN, *Vice-Chair*
JANE MCLEOD, *Secretary*

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND TRUST MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and thank the members of the Trust for their diligence.
2. Re-appoint the Very Rev Dr Lorna Hood and the Rev Dr George Whyte as members of the Trust from 1 June 2023.

Report

The Church of Scotland Trust, which was established by Act of Parliament in 1932, submits its Ninety first Report to the General Assembly.

1. THE WORK OF THE TRUST

1.1 General

1.1.1 The function of the Church of Scotland Trust is to hold properties outwith Scotland and to act as a trustee in a number of third party trusts. During the year it has dealt with various matters which have arisen regarding these properties and trusts. Matters of particular significance are noted hereafter.

1.2 Third Party Trusts

1.2.1 The Trust is currently trustee of 49 third party trusts which benefit different areas of the Church's work. In 2007 the Trust instigated a Rolling Review Programme for these trusts. The Trust's Secretary and Clerk undertakes a review of the trusts annually, producing reports on half the third party trust portfolio to each of the February/March and September/October Trust meetings.

1.3 Pakistan

1.3.1 The Trust is disappointed to report that there has been little progress in the registration of the new Succession Trust which it is intended will take title to the Church's property interests in Pakistan in terms of the Church of Scotland Trust Order Confirmation Act 1958. The deed was signed on behalf of the Trust, Faith Impact Forum and local trustees in Pakistan in 2019. At the time of writing urgent action is being taken to progress this and it is hoped that by May the Chairman will be able to report further on this matter.

1.3.2 The Trust continue to seek an alternative institution to take over Murray Christian College in Sialkot in order to ensure its future use as a Christian College. The Government in Pakistan have still to process the denationalisation of the College before any transfer could take place.

1.3.3 The Trust and Faith Impact Forum meet regularly with their attorney for Pakistan, Dr Peter David, to monitor developments and agree future strategy.

1.3.4 As reported for a number of years, the Trust continues to be a party to a number of court cases involving its property interests in Pakistan. Some cases which have been found in favour of the Trust are now the subject of an appeal. The Trust is legally represented in all these cases but, due to the nature of the Pakistan legal system, it is anticipated that the cases will be ongoing for some time.

1.4 Israel

1.4.1 The Trust continues to be consulted by Faith Impact Forum regarding ongoing and future developments relating to property in Israel.

1.4.2 In December 2022 the Trust entered into a loan agreement with St. Andrew's Scottish Centre Ltd to enable the Guesthouse to carry out refurbishment works.

1.5 Act II – the International Presbytery Act

1.5.1 Since the General Assembly of 2016 all congregations in the International Presbytery require the approval of both Presbytery and the Church of Scotland Trust for (a) any extensive alterations to their building/s; (b) any property purchase and (c) the lease of any property in excess of one year. The Trust continues to work with the International Presbytery to fulfil these responsibilities. The Trust has given approval for a number of property related matters in the last year.

1.5.2 Every congregation in the International Presbytery is required to produce a Property Report to Presbytery each year with details of the management, maintenance and insurance of congregational buildings which is copied to the Trust.

2. ACCOUNTS FOR 2022

2.1 The Trust's Accounts for the year 2022 have been audited and copies thereof are available on request from the Secretary and Clerk.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 In accordance with the constitution of the Trust, the following two members retire by rotation on 31 May 2023 but are eligible for re-appointment: The Very Rev Dr Lorna Hood and the Rev Dr George Whyte. It is suggested to the General Assembly that the Very Rev Dr Lorna Hood and the Rev Dr George Whyte be re-appointed as members of the Trust from 1 June 2023.

In the name and by the authority of The Church of Scotland Trust

LEON MARSHALL, *Chairman*
MORAG ANGUS, *Vice-Chairman*
MADELAINE SPROULE, *Secretary & Clerk*

CHALMERS LECTURESHIP TRUST MAY 2023**Proposed Deliverance****The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Appoint the Rev Dr Ruth Morrison (Minister) and Mr Jamie Sutherland (Elder) as Trustees of the Chalmers Lectureship Trust (*Section 3*).
3. Re-appoint the following Trustees for the periods of office specified: Rev Dr John McPake (2022-2025), Rev Janet Mathieson (2022-2026) and Rev Dr Scott McKenna (2022-2026) (Ministers); and Mr Roy Pinkerton (2022-2025), Mrs Kay Keith (2022-2025) and Mrs Isobel Hunter (2022-2026) (Elders) (*Section 2*).
4. Welcome the appointment of the Rev Professor John Swinton and Dr Katie Cross as the joint Chalmers Lecturers for the cycle 2022-26 and note that the Trustees will bring to the General Assembly 2024 detailed proposals for this Lectureship cycle (*Section 3*).

Report**1. CHALMERS LECTURES 2018-2021**

1.1 The Trustees would like to thank the Rev Dr Sam Wells for delivering his series of six lectures in the autumn of 2019 entitled 'A Future that's Bigger than the Past' and for the publication of his associated book, the proposals for which were reported to the General Assembly of 2019.

2. NEW TRUSTEES

2.1 There are two vacancies for General Assembly appointed members of the Trust who serve alongside the Trustees ex officio who are the Moderator and Clerks of the General Assembly and the Principals or Heads of the Colleges of Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrews and Aberdeen. The Trustees, propose the appointment of the Rev Dr Ruth Morrison (Minister) and Mr Jamie Sutherland (Elder) as Trustees of the Chalmers Lectureship Trust (2022-2026). The following Trustees, all of whom who have completed one term of office, have agreed to be re-appointed as follows: the Rev Dr John McPake (2022-2025), the Rev Janet Mathieson (2022-2026) and the Rev Dr Scott McKenna (2022-2026) (Ministers); and Mr Roy Pinkerton (2022-2025), Mrs Kay Keith (2022-2025) and Mrs Isobel Hunter (2022-2026) (Elders).

3. THE NEXT CYCLE OF LECTURESHIP

3.1 The Trustees met for the first time since the pandemic in Autumn 2022 to begin discussions about the next cycle of lectureship. The funds available to the Trust mean that there is a real opportunity to do something imaginative with the next series of lectures with the aim of engaging with as wide an audience as possible. The Trustees were also very keen to give their support to a younger generation theologian. The Trustees are delighted to confirm the appointment of both The Rev Prof John Swinton and Dr Katie Cross as the joint Chalmers Lecturers for 2024. The overarching theme for the lecture series is 'Hope in the world today'. Both lecturers will deliver three online lectures on the theme of hope and then come together to reflect on their different approaches in the final lecture of the series which will be in both in person and online. The joint lecture series will be published as a resource for congregations and further publications are also planned.

In the name of the Trust

FIONA E SMITH, *Chair*

NOMINATION COMMITTEE MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Instruct the Nomination Committee to carry out a strategic review of the General Assembly's nomination process and put forward proposals for reform to the General Assembly in 2024 (*Section 1.2*).
3. Make alterations to the Standing Committees of the General Assembly as set forth in the Report (*Section 7*).
4. Reappoint Bill Hewitt as a Convener of the Appeals Committee of the Commission of Assembly (*Section 7.3*).
5. Reappoint David Burns as a Convener of the Discipline Tribunal (*Section 7.3*).
6. Appoint Michael Mair as Convener of the Assembly Business Committee (*Section 7.3*).
7. Appoint Tommy MacNeil as Convener of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (*Section 7.3*).
8. Appoint Anikó Schütz Bradwell as Convener of the Iona Community Board (*Section 7.3*).
9. Appoint Marjory MacLean as Convener of the Legal Questions Committee (*Section 7.3*).
10. Appoint Andrew Gardner as Convener of the Nomination Committee (*Section 7.3*).
11. Appoint Adam Dillon as Convener of the Safeguarding Committee for one further year (*Section 7.3*).

Report

1. COMMITTEE REMIT AND PROCESSES

1.1 Preamble

1.1.1 The remit of the Nomination Committee is to identify Ministers, Deacons, Elders and members with particular skills and experience for serving on the Standing Committees of the General Assembly. The Nomination Committee works with the Standing Committees to ensure an open and transparent process for identifying the Convener or Vice-Convener so suggested by the relevant Standing Committee.

1.1.2 The Communications Department created and developed online content to promote the nominations process.

1.1.3 We were pleased to see an increase in the number of nominations this year. We worked with Conveners to find the best match for their vacancies. Some vacancies remain unfilled even though there were nominees who were not invited to accept nomination. This was mainly due to our commitment to achieving balanced membership. The Committee would also like to remind potential nominees and their supporters, that Candidates in Training, Probationers and Ministers in their first year after ordination will not normally be nominated to serve on a Standing Committee.

1.1.4 The Committee continues to encourage individual nominations but in addition there is an expectation that the Standing Committees and presbyteries will also generate nominations each year. All nominations received will go into a general pool and nominees may be invited to serve elsewhere if the committee feel their gifts can be used.

1.1.5 On behalf of the Church, the Committee would like to thank all of those who serve in this way, bringing their gifts, experience and vision to the various strands of work.

1.2 Looking ahead

1.2.1 It is a time of change for the Committee and for the nominations process. The Convener will stand down in May and the Committee is pleased to nominate Andrew Gardner, current Vice-Convener, to become Convener.

1.2.2 Staffing arrangements are also changing with the support and coordination of the nominations processes and the work of the Nomination Committee now moving from the Office of the Assembly Trustees to the Office of the General Assembly. Thanks are offered to Dave Kendall and Carron Lunt for their support and oversight, for their patience, skills and willingness to go the extra mile for committee members. The breadth of knowledge of how the Kirk works and eye for detail have been a key resource to the Committee. We wish them well as they continue to serve the Church in the future.

1.2.3 The Committee welcomed Gordon Macnaughton who took up post as Nominations and General Assembly Support Administrator in January. At the time of writing this Report, it was anticipated that the new Presbytery Resource Adviser would begin in April. The postholder will undertake the role of Secretary to the Nomination Committee and as such will oversee and develop the nominations processes to best serve the needs of the Church.

1.2.4 The new Secretary will lead a strategic review of the General Assembly's nomination process, enabling proposals for reform to be brought to next year's Assembly and will be responsible thereafter to implement the new process.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF ASSEMBLY TRUSTEE SUB-GROUP/COMMITTEE AND APPOINTMENT OF AN ASSEMBLY TRUSTEE

2.1 The Assembly Trustees are responsible for appointing members to its sub-groups/committees. Those who wished to be considered for membership of the new Seeds for Growth Committee and The Church of Scotland's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group were invited to submit a nomination through the nominations process.

2.1.1 The Convener and Vice-Convener represented the Committee on a sifting group also comprising representatives of the Group and the Assembly Trustees. The suggested appointments to the EDI Group were put to the Assembly Trustees when they met on 9 February for agreement.

2.2.2 A selection panel was created to consider membership of the Seeds for Growth Committee with The Church of Scotland's Seeds for Growth Fund scheduled to be launched in January 2023. The Vice-Convener represented the Committee on the panel alongside a representative of the Assembly Trustees and staff from the Grants Unit of the Office of the Assembly Trustees. Interviews were held for the Convener and Vice-Convener roles. The Assembly Trustees were then asked to ratify the appointments when they met on 9 February.

2.2 The above processes and results were intimated to the Nomination Committee when they met in February.

2.3 The Nomination Committee Convener was consulted in March on the process and recommendations for appointment of one new Assembly Trustee in May 2023.

3. NOMINATION TO LEGAL BODIES

3.1 The Committee received names at its February meeting as agreed by the Legal Questions Committee, Principal Clerk and Solicitor of the Church.

3.2 Nominations reported below for the Judicial Panel will result in 21 members. It was anticipated that a request would be made by the Legal Questions Committee to the General Assembly to increase the number of members. Currently it is 20 people being ministers, elders, deacons and members nominated by the Nomination Committee and appointed by the General Assembly.

3.3 The Convener acted under delegated authority to nominate to the Mission Plan Review Group. The two names reported below provide for full membership.

3.4 Two nominations to the Personnel Appeal Group are reported below. The Convener has existing delegated authority to fill any of the five current vacancies should suitable persons be identified by the Solicitor of the Church.

4. NOMINATIONS TO COMMITTEE TO NOMINATE THE MODERATOR

4.1 Although this year's process saw an increase in the number of nomination forms received, there was a lack of nominations for the Committee to Nominate the Moderator 2024. At the committee meeting in February each of the nomination forms received were considered. Members of the Nomination Committee suggested names for consideration. Following the meeting, 3 people were approached to be nominated. A nomination form was not received from 2 of these additional nominees.

4.2 Standing Order 119 states that the Nomination Committee shall not nominate for Committees any of its own number except in special circumstances which must be stated to the Assembly. Due to the challenges once again this year in populating the Committee to Nominate the Moderator an allowance is sought for 1 proposed nominee to join both the Nomination Committee and the Committee to Nominate the Moderator.

5. NOMINATIONS TO THE FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM AND PROGRAMME GROUPS

5.1 Further to the previous Reports of the Assembly Trustees and its 'D10 Group' the Assembly Trustees produced supporting documents and additional information on the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (FAPLT) and Programme Groups and this was made available on the Assembly Trustees webpage. The Nomination Committee was tasked with making nominations for membership and so this new Agency of the Church was included in the nominations processes for the Standing Committees.

5.2 An insufficient number of nominations were received for the Convenership roles and so the Convener sent a communication to those who had indicated that they wished to be considered for membership of FAPLT, to ask them to consider whether they felt called to serve in a convenership role.

5.3 Nominations for membership are reported within Section 7. The Assembly Trustees' Report to the General Assembly contains detailed descriptions and remits for the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (FAPLT) and Programme Groups.

6. FACTS AND FIGURES

6.1 Details on facts and figures are provided as a means of highlighting and encouraging the engagement of the Church as a whole with the nominations process. Figures do not include applications received for Charity Trusteeship which is a separate process.

6.2 A total of 136 proposed nominees were considered with several individuals proposed for more than one committee.

- From the online nomination forms submitted, 1 person stated a preference to attend meetings in person only and 5 people to attend online only. The remainder indicated that they would attend in person or online.
- 1 nominee withdrew due to personal reasons prior to the February meeting of the Nomination Committee.
- 3 nominees withdrew from the nominations process in February.

- 10 nomination forms indicated that they wished to be considered only for the new Assembly Trustees' Seeds for Growth Committee and so these forms were passed to the sifting panel and not brought to the Nomination Committee to be considered for the Standing Committees.
- 15 names were received for the nomination process to legal bodies. Nomination forms were not received and these nominations are not included in the below breakdown.
- Nomination forms were not received from 4 nominees. One nomination was supported by the Standing Committee itself and 3 nominations were supported by the Nomination Committee Convener.

6.3 A breakdown of the 107 nominees considered for the Standing Committees is provided below (the 4 nominees who did not submit a nomination form are included).

- 50 nominations from Ministers (compared with 12 in 2022 and 34 in 2021), with 36 being approached (plus 1 person who was appointed to the EDI Group);
- 1 nomination from a Deacon (compared with 1 in 2022 – the nomination form was edited in 2022 to include nomination from a Deacon), with 1 being approached;
- 5 nominations from Kirk Sessions (compared with 6 in 2022 and 13 nominations in 2021), with 4 being approached;
- 24 nominations from Presbyteries (compared with 1 in 2022 and 4 in 2021), with 20 being approached;
- 1 nomination from The Guild (compared with 0 in 2022 and 1 in 2021), with 1 being approached;
- 7 nominations from Nomination Committee members (compared with 2 in 2022 and 4 in 2021), with 7 being approached;
- 19 nominations from the Standing Committee Convener (compared with 22 in 2022 and 26 in 2021), with 19 being approached.

6.4 A total of 103 vacancies were considered this year for the Standing Committees. Following the above 9 vacancies remain unfilled and the Committee may act under delegated authority to fill some of these.

7. NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEES

7.1 The following appointments will require the General Assembly to suspend Standing Order 122. It is anticipated that the Convener of the Procedure Committee will arrange for that question to be put to the General Assembly at the appropriate point in the proceedings.

7.1.1 The Committee wishes to nominate Adam Dillon for a further one-year term as Convener of the Safeguarding Committee. At the February committee meeting exceptional circumstances were noted which make reappointment desirable.

7.2 The following appointments will require the General Assembly to suspend Standing Order 118. It is anticipated that the Convener of the Procedure Committee will arrange for that question to be put to the General Assembly at the appropriate point in the proceedings.

7.2.1 The Convener plus three members of the Legal Questions Committee will complete their term this year. This is in addition to mid-term resignations received from the Vice-Convener plus two members, making a total of seven members leaving as recorded below. The Committee wishes to nominate two of the retiring members for reappointment noting that one of those has served a second term as a member and that person is nominated to serve for one year only. The Committee also wishes to nominate retiring member Alan Reid, who has served a second term as a member, as Vice-Convener for one year.

7.2.2 Two of the three members retiring from the Theological Forum have specific skills and experience which are of great benefit at this time and so re-election of both, and therefore more than one-half of the retiring members, is desirable. The Committee wishes to nominate both of the two of the three retiring members for reappointment to serve a second term on the Theological Forum.

7.3 The Committee recommends the following appointments:

** denotes a reappointment*

Assembly Business Committee

Convener Retiring Donald McCorkindale

Convener Appointed Michael Mair (Edinburgh: St David's Broomhouse)

Vice-Convener Resigning Michael Mair

Vice-Convener Appointed Sheila Kirk (Deer) (2yrs)

Minister Resigning Sheila Kirk

Minister Appointed Douglas Reid (Edinburgh: Palmerston Place) (1yr)

Audit Committee

Minister Appointed Fiona Anderson (Strathaven: Trinity)

Member Retiring Douglas Horn

Member Appointed Douglas Horn* (West Kirk of Calder)

Chaplains to HM Forces Committee

Ministers Appointed Amy Bender Nov 2022 (Keith: North, Newmill, Boharm and Rothiemay), Neil Galbraith (Glasgow: Cathcart Old), Rory MacLeod (Fort William Kilmallie, linked with Kilmonivaig), Peter Sutton (Edinburgh: St Cuthbert's)

Members Retiring Alexander Bolland*, Colin Hogg*

Committee to Nominate the Moderator

Ministers and Deacons Appointed Mark Evans DCS (Edinburgh: Colinton), John Ferguson (Presbytery of Perth), Joanna Love DCS (Glasgow: Gorbals), Alisa McDonald (Meldrum and Bourtie), Mandy Ralph (Annbank linked with Tarbolton), Monika Redman Jun 2022 (Muir of Ord Urray and Kilchrist), Julie Rennick (Presbytery of Forth Valley and Clydesdale), Christopher Wallace (East Mainland), Timothy Mineard (Barrhead: St Andrew's)

Minister Withdrawn Elisabeth Spence May 2022

Elders Appointed John Dent (Dundee: Logie and St John's Cross), Helen Eckford (Port Glasgow: New), Barbara Finlayson (Edinburgh: St Andrew's and St George's West), Scott Paget (Lanark: Greyfriars), Jeanette Third (Edinburgh: Colinton), Pauline Weibye (Edinburgh: Craigmillar Park linked with Edinburgh: Reid Memorial), Tom Burnham (Earlston)

Ecumenical Relations Committee

Vice-Convener Retiring Eileen Miller

Vice-Convener Appointed Pauline Weibye (Edinburgh: Craigmillar Park linked with Edinburgh: Reid Memorial)

Minister Retiring David Coulter

Minister Resigned Elisabeth Spence Dec 2022

Ministers Appointed Peter Sutton (Edinburgh: St Cuthbert's) (3yrs), David Coulter* (Guernsey: St Andrew's in the Grange), Eileen Miller* (Burntisland) (3yrs), Alisa McDonald (Meldrum and Bourtie)

Member Retiring Ian Russell

Member Resigning Pauline Weibye

Faith Action Programme

-Leadership Team

Convener Appointed Tommy MacNeil (Stornoway: Martin's Memorial) (4yrs)

Vice-Conveners Appointed Alistair Cumming, Depute Convener and Resource and Presence Programme Group Leader (London: St Columba's linked with Newcastle St Andrew's) (3yrs), Emma Jackson, Public Life and Social Justice Programme Group Leader (Lyne and Manor linked with Peebles: St Andrew's Leckie) (3yrs), Richard Lloyd, Mission Programme Group Leader (Edinburgh: Dalmeny linked with Edinburgh: Queensferry) (2yrs), Bill Wishart, People and Training Programme Group Leader (Edinburgh: St Martin's) (2yrs)

Ministers and Deacons Appointed Morag Crawford DCS (Bathgate: High) (3yrs), Doug Gay (Glasgow: Govan and Linthouse) (4yrs), Michael Goss (Barry linked with Carnoustie) (2yrs), Scott McRoberts (Inverness: St Columba's) (3yrs)

Members Appointed Marie Locke (Stronsay: Moncur Memorial) (3yrs)

Ministers from Presbytery Appointed Lynsey Brennan (Dundonald, Presbytery of the South West) (2yrs), Graham Duffin (Loanhead, Presbytery of Lothian and Borders) (3yrs), Peter Johnston (Aberdeen: Ferryhill, Presbytery of the North East and the Northern Isles) (3yrs), Rory MacLeod (Strath and Sleat, Presbytery of the Highlands and Hebrides) (4yrs), Amanda MacQuarrie (Bo'ness: Old, Presbytery of Forth Valley and Clydesdale) (4yrs), Aaron Stevens (Budapest: St Columba's, Presbytery of the International Charges) (4yrs), Julia Wiley (Armadale, Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian) (4yrs), Graeme Wilson (Bearsden: Cross, Presbytery of Clyde) (3yrs)

Members from Presbytery Appointed Elizabeth Fox (London: St Columba's linked with Newcastle St Andrew's, Presbytery of England) (4yrs), Lorraine Fraser (Dunfermline: Abbey, Presbytery of Fife) (2yrs), Amy-Louise Scott (Arbroath: St Andrew's, Presbytery of Perth) (2yrs), Linda Watt (Glasgow: Langside, Presbytery of Glasgow) (2yrs)

-Mission Support Programme Group

Ministers Appointed Jonathan Fleming (Greenock: Lyle Kirk) (4yrs), Tony Foley (Broughton, Glenholm and Kilbucho linked with Carllops linked with Kirkurd and Newlands linked with Skirling linked with Tweedsmuir linked with West Linton: St Andrews (The West Tweeddale Parishes)) (3yrs), Emma McDonald (Dundee: St David's High Kirk) (4yrs)

Member Appointed John Hodge (Edinburgh: Newhaven) (3yrs)

-People and Training Programme Group

Ministers Appointed Scott Blythe (Netherlee and Stamperland) (4yrs), Irene Bom (Rotterdam: Scots International Church) (3yrs), David Clarkson (Edinburgh: Barclay Viewforth) (4yrs)

Member Appointed Lorna Laughland (Stonehouse: St Ninian's) (3yrs)

-Public Life and Social Justice Programme Group

Ministers Appointed John Ferguson (Presbytery of Perth) (3yrs), Sheena Orr (West Kirk of Calder) (4yrs)

Members Appointed Frances Heafield (Ashkirk linked with Ettrick and Yarrow linked with Selkirk) (3yrs), Valerie Rose (Alloa: Ludgate) (4yrs)

-Resource and Presence Programme Group

Ministers Appointed David Gray (Glasgow: Govan and Linthouse) (4yrs), Timothy Mineard (Barrhead: St Andrew's) (3yrs)

Member Appointed Tom Burnham (Earlston) (4yrs)

Faith Impact Forum Discharged May 2023

Convener Resigned Susan Brown Jun 2022

Interim Convener Appointed Karen Hendry (Glasgow Yoker) Sept 2022

Vice-Convener Resigned Karen Hendry Sept 2022

Interim Vice-Convener Appointed Peter Johnston (Aberdeen: Ferryhill) Sept 2022

Minister Resigned Peter Johnston Sept 2022

Faith Nurture Forum Discharged May 2023

Minister Resigned Robert Hamilton Feb 2023

Iona Community Board

Convener Retiring Tom Gordon

Convener Appointed Anikó Schütz Bradwell (Humbie linked with Yester, Bolton and Saltoun)

Minister Appointed Urzula Glienecke (Edinburgh: St Andrew's and St George's West)

Members Retiring Joanna Love DCS*, Maggie MacKay

Member Appointed Maggie MacKay* (Glasgow: Newlands South)

Legal Questions Committee

Convener Retiring Grant Barclay

Convener Appointed Marjory MacLean (South Ronaldsay and Burray)

Vice-Convener Resigned Victoria Linford Apr 2023

Vice-Convener Appointed Alan Reid (Kinross) (1yr)

Ministers Resigned Marjory McPherson Sept 2022, Adam Dillon Nov 2022

Minister Retiring Alan Reid*

Minister Appointed Fran Henderson (Shetland)

Members Retiring Gilbert Anderson, Andrew Gibb*

Members Appointed Gilbert Anderson* (Glasgow: Newlands South), Shona Cook (Edinburgh: Blackhall St Columba's) (2yrs), Andrew Gibb* (Edinburgh: Corstorphine St Ninian's) (1yr), Eunice McConnach (Aberdeen: Rubislaw)

Appointment to Legal Bodies

-Appeals Committee of the Commission of Assembly

Convener Retiring William Hewitt

Convener Appointed William Hewitt* (Kilmarnock: St Andrew's and St Marnock's)

Vice-Conveners Retiring Janet Foggie, Grahame Lees*

Vice-Conveners Appointed Janet Foggie* (Lindores), Grahame Lees* (Dunblane Cathedral)

-Discipline Tribunal

Convener Retiring David Burns*

Convener Appointed David Burns*

Vice-Convener Appointed Norma Shippin

-Judicial Panel

Minister Resigned Marjory McPherson Sept 2022

Minister Appointed Norman Smith (Lothian and Borders Presbytery)

Elders and Deacons Retiring Tim Edward, David McClements, Robert McDougall

Elders Appointed Tim Edward* (Edinburgh: Wardie), David McClements* (Lenzie: Old), Robert McDougall* (Cambuslang), Janette Wilson (Edinburgh: Duddingston)

-Ministries Appeal Panel

Vice-Convener Retiring Leslie Milton

Vice-Convener Appointed Leslie Milton* (Musselburgh St Andrews High)

-Mission Plan Review Group

Ministers Appointed George Whyte (Edinburgh: Mayfield Salisbury) Nov 2022, Angus Morrison (Edinburgh: Liberton) Jan 2023

Minister Withdrawn Scott Blythe May 2022

Minister Resigned Mike Gargrave Jul 2022

Minister Resigning Angus Morrison

-Personnel Appeal Group

Minister Appointed Norman Smith (Lothian and Borders Presbytery)

Member Resigned Eilidh Wiseman Nov 2022

Member Appointed Grahame Lees (Dunblane Cathedral)

Life & Work Advisory Committee

Minister Retiring Tina Kemp*

Member Appointed Scott Paget (Lanark: Greyfriars)

Nomination Committee

Convener Retiring Julie Rennick

Convener Appointed Andrew Gardner (Dundee Barnhill St Margaret's)

Vice-Convener Resigning Andrew Gardner

Vice-Convener Appointed Bryan Kerr (Lanark: Greyfriar's) (2yrs)

Ministers Resigning Bryan Kerr, Anikó Schütz Bradwell (mid-term appointment Aug 2022)

Ministers Appointed Marc Bircham (St Madoes and Kinfauns), Stephen Blakey (The Isla Parishes), Mark Nicholas (Gorebridge), Linda Pollock (Aberluthnott linked with Laurencekirk), Moira Taylor-Wintersgill (Birsay, Harray and Sandwick) (3yrs), Corne Randall (Aberdeen: Mannofield) (3yrs)

Members Resigned Fiona Blair DCS Mar 2023, Mark Taylor Mar 2023

Member Retiring Daniel Gunn

Members Appointed Lynette Jardine (Uddingston: Old), John Kirk (Edinburgh: St Cuthbert's), John Dent (Dundee: Logie and St John's Cross)

Registration of Ministries Committee

Convener Resigned Hazel Hastie Apr 2023

Safeguarding Committee

Convener Retiring Adam Dillon

Convener Appointed Adam Dillon* (Glasgow: Sherbrooke Mossbank) (1yr)

Social Care Council – CrossReach Board

Vice-Convener Retiring Sarah Wood

Vice-Convener Appointed Mike Cantlay (Callander)

Minister Appointed David Nicolson (Erskine)

Member Resigning Mike Cantlay

Members Retiring Jo Elliot, Christine Johnson

Members Appointed Donald Carmichael (Giffnock: Orchardhill), Christine Johnson* (Edinburgh: Gracemount linked with Edinburgh: Liberton), Lorna Gilhooly (Edinburgh: Gracemount linked with Edinburgh: Liberton) (1yr)

Theological Forum

Ministers Retiring Lynn McChlery, Ruth Morrison*

Ministers Appointed Rebecca Bartocho (Williamwood), Lynn McChlery* (Auchterarder)

Member Retiring Jennifer Stark

Member Appointed Jennifer Stark* (Edinburgh: St Andrew's and St George's West)

In the name of the Committee

JULIE RENNICK, *Convener*
ANDREW GARDNER, *Vice-Convener*
DAVE KENDALL, *Secretary*



Addendum

Julie Rennick, Convener

Julie Rennick has brought many gifts and skills in her leadership of the Nomination Committee. She has helped the committee navigate a period of significant change when the Covid-19 pandemic meant that meetings moved from in person to online. Julie's personable manner has helped new members of the committee feel welcome and integrate well. Julie's dynamism and energy has helped the committee's voice to be heard during a time of challenge and change for the Kirk. Her clarity of thinking and capacity for hard work have been appreciated, particularly as new structures have evolved and new groups have sought the best people to serve Christ in his Church

In the name of the Committee

ANDREW GARDNER, *Vice-Convener*
DAVE KENDALL, *Secretary*

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