

Nomination Committee – General Assembly 2019

Moderator, as we come towards the end of the General Assembly, I am delighted to present the report of the Nomination Committee which sets out the names of those identified to serve on the various bodies of the Church for the year ahead.

The names contained within the report have been identified following an annual process during which, names are gathered using the nomination forms which members of the Committee use in order to present names for approval by the Assembly.

Behind each form we receive, there are people who are willing to serve, to use their gifts and talents to benefit the Church. The Church is indebted to all those who are willing to serve in this way. The Committee would like to express thanks to all of those who were nominated; not just those who have been invited to serve on this occasion but to all those who were nominated more widely. The Committee is also thankful for those who take the time to nominate people; those in their churches and presbyteries.

For those not familiar with the process, all of the forms which are received are read and considered by the whole committee and as a group we discern which names will go forward into the report. As part of this we consult with conveners in relation to the specific needs of the body they serve, often identifying people based on the skills they may bring to a particular piece of work being carried out by that body. We aim to balance a number of different factors including, but not limited to, gender, geography, age and experience. We also try to ensure that there is representation from ministers, elders and deacons across the bodies. This balancing act is something that we reflect upon before, during and after our process and is something that we work hard on each year to try and obtain as good a balance as we can across the various bodies. This is something which is naturally easier to achieve if there are more names available to consider.

The Nomination Committee itself is a diverse committee who cover a large geographical spread, has a good balance in terms of ministers, deacons and elders and has been consistent in involving young people in its own work. Even with that diversity, we rely on nominations being brought to us by the wider church to equip us for our task. As we pursue greater representation and diversity on our different bodies, we would encourage you all to make the many opportunities to serve known to those in your congregations and members who you know further afield.

The Committee understands that serving on a body is no small commitment and with this in mind, would encourage those who have an interest in serving to come forward even if this is to simply find out more about it – there may be opportunities to participate in the work of a particular body and the Nomination Committee has always been keen to facilitate this where possible.

Serving on a body of the Church can be hugely beneficial to the wider Church and can be rewarding. The Nomination Committee is sincerely grateful for all who come forward and to all who encourage others to come forward.

In order to be transparent about what we do, Section 4 of the Report provides some statistical information in relation to the nominations received by the Committee. These statistics give us focus as we continually review our work so that we can consider different factors going forward.

This year our nomination process incorporated a new process for nominating members of the Church to the various committees and bodies which deal with particular legal matters on behalf of the church, working closely with the Legal Questions Committee in this task. As noted in the report, this was a positive experience for the committee and the names are contained within Section 5 of the Report alongside the other nominations.

Last year the committee reported on encouraging bodies to make better use of technology. This is something that the committee itself has been trying to embrace by taking gradual steps towards conducting its business in a paperless way by having members pilot this method of doing business and by conducting more of the additional meetings outside of our main ones by teleconference. This has been a positive experience and something that the Committee will aim to develop upon next year.

In section 3 of the proposed deliverance to our report we ask the Assembly to make alterations to the standing committees and councils as set out in section 5 of the report.

There are some more novel points I would draw to the Assembly's attention in addition in respect of the proposed nominations.

At paragraph 5.1 of the report, you will note that we wish to nominate Rev Colin Renwick for a second term, for three years, as one of the vice-conveners of the Judicial Commission. We appreciate his willingness to serve a further term and in order for this particular nomination to process, the General Assembly will be asked to agree to the suspension of Standing Order 122 to permit this extension.

In light of some developments since our report went into the blue book and following developments this week, there is a proposed amendment within the Assembly papers. Part of the amendment relates to decisions made on Monday at the Assembly in relation to the upcoming discharge of the Assembly Arrangements Committee, the Council of Assembly and the Panel on Review and Reform. The amendment sets out to withdraw the nominations for these particular bodies.

In addition to the withdrawn names, the amendment also sets out some additional names for various bodies following nominations which have been confirmed by the Committee since the publishing of the report. There is also one correction contained within the amendment.

The Committee recognises that there are further changes to come in respect of the Councils of the Church. The Councils concerned are set to remain in their current structure until January and therefore, the Nomination Committee seeks to keep the appointments as noted within the report with the membership of the merged Councils to be considered by a Special Commission in due course.

To finish up, over the year the Committee has benefited greatly from the support of its Secretary and central staff. The Committee would like to note its particular thanks to Valerie Jenkins who has provided great support to the Committee and, on behalf of the Committee, I wish her all the best in her retirement.

The Committee has also been blessed to have as its vice convener Rev John Collard. He has been faithful in serving on the Nomination Committee for a number of years and has supported me in my role as convener. The Committee is thankful for the work John has done and wishes him well as he continues his work in serving the Church. The Committee looks forward to welcoming Rev Bill Wishart into the role of vice convener.

Moderator, I present the report. I am not a commissioner and I would ask the Principal Clerk to move the deliverance and the amendments to section 3 of the deliverance as contained in the Assembly Papers.